

PROMPT #2: You open a book and a note with a letterhead falls out. At the top it says: If you are reading this, ...

Here's What You Need to Know

by **Whitney Hale**

If you're reading this, then there are two things you should know: First, I am dead. Second, you are the last of us. Third, things are about to get a lot more difficult for you. Oh, I guess that is three things. Well, then there are *three* things you need to know. Honestly, I'm not good at this sort of thing. I didn't think... I... Ugh, where do I even begin? There's just so much you don't know. But, I have to tell you. That's my job. To tell you what you need to know. I guess I should start at the beginning.

In the beginning there were people... Yikes, that's a terrible start to a story. Maybe I'll just start where things started for me. Here goes...

I was nineteen, had nothing and everything figured out. I had a plan and a dream and the world all in my hands. I yearned to see and do and experience *life*. Real life. Not the life I had known before. Something about college does that to you. Do you know what I mean? One day I was sitting in my favorite coffee shop, sitting by the window, computer open but not really studying. How could I on a day that full of wonder? The way the clouds were backlit with sunlight and- that laughter- what a beautiful thing! Next thing I know, this handsome guy is right next to me at my table. He had a coat on and a Taylor Swift boy smile, so I knew he would be trouble for me, but I was ready. So I thought. And what does this guy do? Slides a small book onto my table in-between my laptop and my arm... I giggled like the foolish, naïve girl I was, glanced down at the book (Jane Austen's *Emma Vol. 1*, ca. 1816 edition- sound familiar? Please be careful with it!), looked up and he was gone. Out the door on the other side of the window glancing back in at me. Then down at the book. Despite a beautiful random man knowing the key to my heart, curiosity took over. Yeah, I know, I'd be that cat. The one that curiosity kills. Heck, that's probably what killed me... I digress.

Gently, I picked the book up and turned it around in the sun light to better observe it. Then I noticed a thin sheet of paper poking out at an odd angle in-between the pages of the book. I placed the spine of the book onto the table and carefully opened the book up to where that extra sheet of paper was. I'll never forget that moment. Mr. Knightly was speaking on the left and on the right was a letter folded up and mysterious- much like this one is.

That letter changed my life, and I never saw the Taylor Swift boy again.

In the letter I found out that the world was nothing like I thought it would be...and, now, I feel like the world is somehow just like I hoped it would be. Minus all the atrocities, illness, natural disasters... you get the point. It's just that I have seen so much of it because of that letter in *Emma* and just having the opportunity and responsibility to experience the world has made all the difference.

Admittedly, I hope my letter to you isn't quite so doom and gloom as mine was, but here's the gist of it:

You know the three things- me being dead, you being the last one, and things getting harder from here, but there's more. So much more. You're the last one because there is always only one of us. Anywhere. At any time. This is one of those, "you're on your own, kid," moments. It's really not so bad, though.

There's only one of us at a time because the world simply couldn't handle any more. We have been, historically, a lot to handle. And other people know that, which means they will try to "handle" you. Don't let them.

Before I go any further, I need to tell you that you don't have to do anything. You don't have to accept your role. But if you don't, burn this letter immediately. You'll be better off for it. If you don't want a life of mystery, intrigue, and danger. And unbelievable friendships and cool clothes and gear and travel and books and... Oops, I don't think I should really say all that. So, if you don't want all those things and more,

BURN THIS LETTER.

If you are interested, keep reading.

I'm going to have to trust that you are the person I think you are and that you are interested in all this.

Here's the nitty gritty of it (do they still say that? *Nitty gritty*?) You have been chosen (as I was and hundreds of people before you) to change the world. You see, the world is usually changed by lots of small things. Sure, the Queen of England could make a proclamation or Ghengis Khan could take over all of Mongolia, but it's the everyday actions of regular people that really change the world. It's the one person smiling at a little kid and talking to them when everyone else just gets annoyed- that kid could be Steve Jobs. Or it's the person holding the elevator door open for that person running trying to catch it- that person could have the exact answer to a global supply chain issue only if they aren't late to their meeting.

See, you are going to be the person who keeps things happening. Good things for people all over the world. Your role (and mine and the others) is to be present. See the needs and identify the people who can provide the answers. Then, give them the little push or boost they need to do the thing they need to do.

This will take time, exploration, observation, and courage. You will end up places and talking to people and doing things without really knowing what moment you are looking for until it happens. Then, all of a sudden, you'll know.

I mentioned something about danger before, that's because people don't always like "progress." Each of us has had our battles to face. Some of those battles are facing your own demons and others are spent defying the regime or the status quo.

Fortunately, everything you need is one of three places: inside you, inside someone else, or, in the iconic words of Hermione Granger, "the library."

Personally, the library is my favorite. We have been building up libraries throughout history and there is one just for us. Don't forget, the library holds knowledge, and knowledge is power.

What you do with your knowledge and influence will literally change the world.

I'll be sure to leave my journals, notes, and other things I think will be helpful for you in the library, where all the others' things have been collected.

When you're ready, go to the house with the blue door in the center of everything and say, "But you know what I am. You hear nothing but truth from me."

Welcome to *Les Mains*.