

### Shan's Spectual Spot

Amelia spun around on pointed toes as the music flowed through her ears, creating a rhythm that fueled her imagination. Her cats lazily watched from the bed at the graceful steps that girl was performing, the only audience that Amelia really wanted. She spun around, bouncing up and down before stopping right before the song ended. Her chest tightened and she fell onto the bed. Amelia giggled, resting a hand on her heart and stared at the ceiling. The next song on her playlist lulled into her ears. It was a slow song and at that moment, Amelia didn't really feel like dancing.

Instead, she lay there and counted the connecting lines of the white ceiling. The late afternoon sun flitered through the window and caused a firey orange to spread across.

### Kano's Spot

Kaix and Lefon sat down across from each other. Lefon set down his staff and stared at Kaix, clearing his throat. "Like I told you minutes ago, something is approaching but it is certainly not a human's."

Kaix didn't know what to say. He has never felt such a strong magical pressure before so why now? All he could was nod at his master.

Lefon continued. "We must act quickly before the village is put in danger."

"I'll go get Kaien." Before Kaix stood up, Lefon spoke once again. "Be careful, child. This isn't like any other creature you hunted."

He nodded as he headed out of the hut, grabbing his spear that was sitting next to the entrance. He whistled for Kaien, who came in an instant. He hopped on his wolf companion and headed straight towards to where the magical pressure was coming from. The pressure was getting stronger and stronger when they headed deep into the woods. Kaien halted when he heard noises around him. Kaix looked at the wolf, then looked around his surroundings. There was a blackish purple aura around the trees, causing the branches to wilt.

"What is this? Some form of dark magic?" Kaix stepped off Kaien and took out a small knife from his side. He pricked his finger, a droplet of blood seeping out. He then grabbed a small piece of paper from his pocket and drew a star symbol.

## MJ's Corner

The boy walked into a large, open room, with two windows reaching from the floor to the ceiling flooding the room with light. "This is our living room," he announced proudly. The room felt large, spacious, and airy. There was a fireplace in the center of the back wall that emitted warmth and a tiny flicker of light, but most of the room was occupied by furniture. Skylar counted 4 fluffy armchairs, 2 couches, and over a dozen antique bookshelves stuffed with thick volumes.

"Is this your library?" Myra asked.

The boy threw back his head and laughed. "No, no, no. That is a separate room. This is just some of the family classics." He pulled one out and leafed through it. "This one my father read to me before bed every night when I was 7. It's about a boy who builds castles all day in his room escape the real world before he goes out and realizes that he can build castles in real life, to. It's one of my favorites."

Skylar walked over to one of the bookshelves and brushed some dust off, admiring the binding on the books. Myra followed her lead, sensing where this was going.

"Do you have any books on Blue Powder?" she asked, keeping her voice as casual as possible.

The boy looked up, clearly startled. "What?"

"Do you have any books here on Blue Powder?"

The boy nodded. "In the study. Do you want me to take you there?"

"Yes, please." Myra clapped her hands together happily. "We don't have much time here today, but we'll be sure to come back here later," she added.

"Whatever you want to see." The boy shrugged, but Skylar could tell he was disappointed that he couldn't show them around.

"We'll come back later," she promised, "and then you can show us all around. But for now, we really need to see that library so we can help you guys."

"I understand." The boy seemed to brighten slightly at Skylar's promise. "Right this way!" He led them through several rooms, all of them elaborate and decorated with expensive furniture. This house was a lot bigger than what Skylar and Myra had expected. Whoever Tobane was, he must have plenty of money to spare. But how? There seemed to be no opportunities in this town to make it big, but clearly Torbane had figured out a way to earn plenty of money.

The boy stopped in front of two elaborate double doors. "This is the library," he announced. "I will show you the different sections. We have some books that are hundreds of years old, and some that are so rare there are only a dozen copies left in the world." His voice was hushed and revered, and it brought a smile to Skylar's face. He reminded her in so many ways of her younger brother.

The memory brought a pang to her. Every risk she took, she thought about what it would mean for him. Would she ever get to see him again?

She officially resolved that she would fight doubly hard for him so that she could fix the world for him,

one step at a time. She was fighting not just for herself and Myra, but for everyone, so that the next generation could grow up without the threat of a government that despised them for where they were born and who their parents were. That was what every child deserved, and that was what Skylar and Myra were fighting for.

## The Biscuit Tin

There was a soft knocking sound at the door, which upon Makder opening it turned out to be an Aguaken servant thumping their body back and forth against it. Apparently inventing a device with which they could knock had not been included in Elven studies. This Aguaken was slightly pudgier, but even that had only made the splashing spill more water in the doorway.

"My Lord, you requested to be alerted when your sustenance was ready," the Aguaken said.

Amboris sighed and shoved the chair out from under him. It teetered, but he managed to catch it and set it upright, tucked neatly in under the table. He bowed to both Terri and Makder, then followed the servant out the room.

"So, Mak, you scared of me yet?" Terri grinned at him.

Makder giggled. "What did you mean when you said you'd screwed up at swimming? Are you okay?"

"I guess I am pretty non-threatening," Terri admitted, "But it wasn't that bad, really. Just memories."

Makder forced his smile away and sat up straight. "Come on, you know that wasn't your fault, right?"

"Yeah... yeah, I know," Terri said, her voice quieter than it had been all day. "I just wish it hadn't happened."

Makder wrapped an arm round her shoulder, just as she had done as he clutched the pointless towel earlier. "Maybe you should take a nap, Terri. If your room's anything like mine you'll be out the moment you walk in."

Terri smiled. "It has been a long day. Hey, if there's a couch you can nap in my room too for a bit."

Makder grinned. "I mean, I have my own bed in my own room, but your sleeptalking monologues always give me more interesting dreams."

When Terri woke up she literally couldn't remember getting from the table to her bed. She jerked upright and looked around the room. The pictures on the wall jumped out at her as if she'd never seen them before - there was one of a random spiky plant that Terri had never seen before in her life. She stared at that for a moment, but then her eyes drifted down to the couch below.

Makder's grin told her that she'd been saying something particularly amusing at the moment he drifted off. That was good. She hadn't been mumbling about her failings and screw ups, or else he'd be frowning with concern. It was odd, she knew his features so well that she could read the exact kind of stupid thing she'd said, but he was placed right underneath an unfamiliar picture of an unfamiliar plant. Well, at least he was there.

She pushed herself onto her feet and padded as softly as possible into her ensuite bathroom. It was on the opposite side of the room from her one at home if you were viewing from the bed, but it was

remarkably similarly stocked. Some translucent soap bars that bent inwards ever so slightly when you pressed on them, a long, deep bathtub - although ironically there didn't seem to be any water around.

A little water splashed in her face and she was good to go. Go where though? And anyway, it seemed rude to wake Makder.