

Greta Hexe
& The Misfits

by

g.r. reid

3

Dedicated to my
Mother, Family, and Friends.

Chapter I

Greta Hexe

It has been quite a traumatic year for eleven and a half year old Greta Hexe. Up until now, she had been living a normal life, back in her little village of Quedlinburg, Germany. A small, simple place that combines the old world, and the modern. She lived there with her mother and father, and they were all very happy. Her mother was a model. Greta inherited her mother's good looks. Her father, was a real estate developer in Halberstadt, Germany. She went to a private school where she excelled in all her classes. She enjoyed ice skating, reading, and socializing with a few close friends. Then, one day tragedy struck when she was the sole survivor of a plane crash that took

the lives of her mother and father. They were en route to Paris for a photo shoot her mother was booked for, when a sudden storm took out one of the plane's engines causing the plane to crash. She recuperated in the hospital. With nowhere else to go, she was sent to live with her paternal grandmother, Frieda Hexe in America. Though Greta was schooled in Germany, she was taught English by her father and was quite fluent in it. The transition was not a difficult one, as she knew her Oma (grandma) from visits she made to Germany during the holidays.

Oma Frieda is a successful defense attorney. She lives in a small Pennsylvania town in a large Victorian style house with plenty of space for Greta to have her own room and a beautiful rec room in the basement. Frieda has lived alone since the death of her husband several years ago and welcomed the addition of Greta to her home.

She enrolled Greta into the local middle school, and today was Greta's first day.

Greta is still asleep, in her bed, dreaming about the new friends she will make. She is a very pretty girl with long brown hair, blue eyes, and a slender build. Her pet cat, Alice is curled up in a ball at the foot of the bed, she is a Domestic short haired black cat. Now, the next few things are going to seem a little strange to you, and there's a reason for that, which I will get to soon.

While Greta still sleeps, the door to her room opens. A baby elephant slowly strolls inside! It positions itself next to Greta's head, and lifting its trunk proceeds to TRUMPET! The loud blast is as powerful as a full grown elephant's TRUMPET. Greta is abruptly awakened, and nearly falls out of her bed. Alice equally startled, runs

quickly out of the room. As soon as the baby elephant finishes trumpeting, it disappears into thin air.

“*Meine Güte!*”(oh my goodness) she cries! “I hate when it Oma wakes me like that!”

She yawns and stretches. Alice returns to the room now that it is quiet again, and jumps on the bed, and glances up at Greta and MEOWS to her.

“*Guten Morgen* (good morning) Alice, well today's the day!” she says happily. “My first day in an American school, I do hope the other kids will like me.”

She gets out of bed, while Alice puts her head back down, and tries to go back to sleep. Greta runs to her closet, which is a large walk in, and starts throwing clothes onto her bed so she can put together an outfit for her first day. Her room, is tastefully decorated in purple and white and has the features of any pre-teen's bedroom. She has a tv, a

desk, and a narrow bookcase lined with many books, and knick knacks on the shelves. An oval shaped, self-standing mirror is near the closet door. She proceeds to go through the pile of clothes she's thrown on her bed.

She tries on a pink t-shirt and jeans. Looking at her reflection in the mirror, she frowns shaking her head. "*No, that won't do.*" she thinks to herself. She tries on a semi short, floral print skirt with a long sleeve white knit top, and tops it off with a big floppy black felt hat. She smiles at her reflection turning from side to side. Greta, then gestures to her reflection as if she were saying, turn around so I can see the back.

The reflection in her mirror does exactly as she says! She turns around while Greta, still facing the mirror, looks at the back of her outfit.

"Ok, turn back again." says Greta.

The reflection turns back around, and faces Greta again. They both smile and nod. Satisfied with the outfit choice, She rushes out of her bedroom, while her reflection, still in the mirror watches, waving goodbye. Alice, quickly jumps off the bed, and follows Greta out. The two walk down the long hall of the second floor when they come to the top of the stairs. Greta takes hold of the railing, and says;

“Down, stairs.”

The steps begin to vibrate, then start moving downward like an escalator. Greta and Alice hop on, and ride the stairs down to the bottom. When they arrive, there are two large pedestals, one on each side of the stairs. On the left pedestal, is a life size bronze statue of a 15th century Japanese Samurai in full military gear. A bow, and quiver on his back, and a large samurai sword at his side. The

expression on his face is a stern one, and quite menacing. The pedestal on the right, which normally has a beautifully detailed suit of medieval English armor is empty.

“Good morning Nobu.” says Greta.

The large imposing statue’s head slowly begins to turn and looks down at Greta. A smile slowly appears on his bronze face. He then turns back as if standing guard to protect the house, and its inhabitants. Greta turns to the other pedestal, and sees it is empty. She casually shrugs her shoulders, and heads for the kitchen, with Alice, following behind her. She enters the kitchen, Oma Frieda is seated at the table. She is a very beautiful woman, blond, green eyes, with an attractive figure. She barely looks old enough to be Greta’s mother, let alone, her grandmother. She has on reading glasses and is peering over some legal papers from her defense attorney job.

“Good morning Oma.” says Greta sitting down at the table.

“Good morning Dear.” replies Oma Frieda.

Behind them on the stove, pans are moving about on their own, whisking scrambled eggs, and flipping pancakes. Up above, two cupboard doors open. Two plates, and two glasses float out and set themselves in front of Greta and Oma Frieda. The stove shuts itself off, and two pans float over and start dishing out their contents onto the two plates. A pitcher of orange juice floats out of the refrigerator and fills the juice glasses next to the two plates full of pancakes and eggs. When the glasses are filled, the pitcher floats back, and puts itself back into the refrigerator. Oma Frieda places her papers into her bag.

You have probably figured out by now, that Greta, Oma Frieda, and their home are a bit out of the ordinary.

Well, there's a reason for that, and it's really quite simple. Greta and Oma Frieda are witches. Light witches to be precise. Actually, all witches are Light witches from birth. It's the path they choose later on that determines if they stay Light witches, or become Dark witches. Light witches perform magic that benefits humans or 'Typicals' as they are referred to by witches. Dark witches, however, perform magic that benefits only themselves, usually at the detriment of 'Typicals'.

“Are you excited for your first day of school Greta?” she asks smiling.

“You bet, I hope to make a lot of new friends. I hope my English is good enough.”

“It will be Dear, I'm sure you'll make friends, do you want me to drive you?”

“No, I want to ride my bike and see what else is near school.”

Suddenly, the kitchen is filled with the sound of loud CLANGING! The sound grows and grows, until, from around the kitchen corner, walks in the suit of armor that should have been on the right side pedestal by the stairs! The suit walks over to the refrigerator, opens it and takes out a glass of tomato juice with a stick of celery. He raises his visor, but there is no face. He drinks the tomato juice down in one gulp, burps, and starts walking slowly past Greta and Oma Frieda.

“Good morning Sir John.” says Greta.

Oma Frieda looks at the staggering armor and casually asks;

“A rough night last night, Sir John?”

Greta chuckles. The suit of armor nods, and slowly walks out of the kitchen toward his pedestal. The samurai Nobu glances his eyes towards Sir John as he stumbles his way onto the pedestal. He rolls his eyes up into his head, then resumes his guard with Sir John.

“I’m beginning to think Sir John may have a little problem.” jokes Oma Frieda.

Greta laughs again.

“Sir John sure likes his ale huh Oma?”

“A little too much if you ask me.”

Sir John, is a spirit, who in life was a knight for the British empire. He died leaving unfinished work behind him. He would walk the moors of England with no real purpose, unaware of what that unfinished work was. Living a spirit’s life was quite lonely and boring for him. It wasn’t

until he, and his armor wound up in an auction house in Manchester where Oma Frieda bought his armor. It was then, that he began to realize that maybe his purpose was to protect her home and its dwellers. Oma Frieda was quite surprised when she found out a spirit lived in that armor, but over the years, they grew very fond of one another and became great friends. While in his armor, Sir John is corporeal, meaning he can move about freely, when he leaves it, he is only a mist that can travel anywhere he desires.

Greta waves her hand over the plate of food she's just finished and the plate floats over to the sink and sets itself down. Oma Frieda grabs her bag and gives Greta a kiss good bye.

“Have a good day Greta, and remember don’t let anyone see what you can do. You’ll frighten the ‘Typicals’.”

“Yes Oma, I won’t let anyone see me doing magic.”

“I mean it Greta!” says Oma more firmly.

“I know Oma, I won’t let anyone see me do any magic. I want the ‘Typicals’ to like me.”

Oma Frieda leaves the kitchen and proceeds outside to the driveway where she gets into her car, and drives down the long driveway to the street, and turns left. Greta grabs her backpack, slings it over her shoulder, and gets her bike from the garage. It’s a girl’s Schwinn, pink and white, with purple streamers on the handlebars. She rides down the driveway to the street, and turns right, heading for Keaton Middle School for her first day of school in America.

Chapter II

The Misfits

In the crowded cafeteria of Keaton Middle School, the students are all seated at tables awaiting for the first bell to ring signaling them to go to their homeroom class. The students have divided their tables according to their social groups. The athletes sit with the athletes, the brainiacs with the brainiacs, etc. At one table, are seated two boys and a girl. Lucas, Eli and Amy. Their table would be designated the table of the less popular kids, because their interests are a little different from the other kids. Lucas, twelve, is a curly haired mop topped boy of slender build, dressed in sneakers, black skinny jeans, a Spiderman t-shirt. Lucas is an only child who lives with his mother in a small two

bedroom house on the other side of town. Though not destitute by any means, they are nowhere near as well off as some of the other citizens. He likes to read comic books, draw, plays video games, and enjoys tv shows, and movies about superheroes, and science fiction. Amy, also twelve, is an adorable Korean girl with long black hair. She is short in stature, and dressed in an oversized blue button down shirt over black leggings. She lives in a nice house with an older sister who is a first year college student, and a younger brother who annoys her every chance he gets. Her parents work in a restaurant they own in town called Bonchon Chicken. Amy is an accomplished gymnast who has been training since the age of four. Her parents have spent a lot on money on her chosen sport hoping she will compete in the next Olympics for team USA. In addition to gymnastics, she likes dancing, music, ice skating, and anything on the CW channel. Eli, is nice looking boy of

thirteen, who was left back a year in an earlier grade which accounts for him being older, and bigger than most of the other students. He is wearing black jeans, and an unbuttoned blue flannel shirt over a black Batman t-shirt. He lives in large house with two sisters, both older than he, and his parents. His father owns a car dealership in town, and his mother stays home and does the accounting for their business. Like Lucas, Eli loves comic books, and science fiction, and would like to be a wrestler when he's older. He is quite strong for his age and maintains that strength by lifting weights. Even when Eli was left back he preferred the company of his friends from his previous year. Lucas, Amy, and Eli have all been the best of friends since the first grade.

“Did you guys hear we're getting a new kid starting today?” asks Amy. Both boys shake their heads no. “I hear

she is going to be in our homeroom,” continues Amy, “and she’s from Europe!”

“Hopefully, she’ll be cool like Madison when she started school here, and nothing like Mackenzie.” said Lucas.

“Anyone would be better than Mackenzie!” replies Eli. “How could someone that pretty be so mean?”

“You think Mackenzie is pretty?” asks Amy somewhat bewildered.

“Well, she’s not un-pretty.” says Eli.

“I wonder if she’s from London like Madison.” wonders Lucas aloud.

As if on cue, their other two friends Rico, and Madison approach their table.

“Hey Guys, check out my sweet new ride!” shouts Rico, a chubby, dark haired, dark eyed boy referring to his new motorized wheelchair. Rico has been confined to a wheelchair since the age of six but has adjusted very well to his disability. He has physical therapy three times a week and vows he will walk before he graduates high school. He is a dapper dresser, well liked, and has a quick wit. He lives with his parents in a nice house, and has one older brother who is away at college whom he worships. His brother comes home whenever he can to spend time with his little brother. He too, likes comic books, superheroes, and video games. He has amassed quite a collection, and would eventually like to design them for a living. Madison, is a Brit who moved to the states three years ago. She and Amy are the best of friends. She is bi-racial with long curly, dark hair and average build. She was born in London, and came to America when her father was transferred by his job

as a mechanical engineer. Her Father is British, and her mother African British. Madison is dressed in a very trendy outfit. She considers herself quite the fashionista, and loves anything from the 1980's, the fashions, and especially the music which she has been slowly introducing Amy to, and is pleased to have converted her to becoming a fan of as well. She is an only child who besides fashion, loves music, movies, and dancing. She takes ballet, and jazz classes, and likes helping her mother in the kitchen. She pushes Rico's chair over to the table and they join their friends.

“Cool chair Rico.” says Lucas impressed.

“Yeah, don't tell my parents, but my brother souped it up, it'll go almost 20 miles an hour!”

“Cool, you'll be able to keep up with us when we're on our bikes!” says Lucas.

“You mean you’ll be able to keep up with me!”
teases Rico. They all laugh.

Meanwhile, on her way to school, Greta spies what appears to be a homeless man going through some trash cans in an alley. She stops riding, and watches the poor man looking for something to eat. He is dressed in tattered clothes, and his face is smudged with dirt. Greta carefully looks around to make sure no one is looking and when she is sure everything is ok, she waves her hand, and says the words;

“*Fest Erscheinen!* (feast appear) The homeless man closes the lid on the last trash can and dejectedly turns around. He cannot believe his eyes! There in the alley just a couple of feet from him, is a chair and a small table with a seven course meal on top. There are even utensils, and a

large bottle of soda. He rubs his eyes, and still seeing the meal before him, quickly sits down. Stuffing a napkin into his collar to use as a bib he begins to eat. Greta smiles, and begins to pedal her bike again on her way to school.

Chapter III

Greta meets the Misfits

Back in the cafeteria, the gang are seated waiting for the bell, when Mackenzie Mills walks toward their table. She is a pretty girl, dressed in an expensive outfit with her light brown hair pulled back into a ponytail. She is followed by two other girls dressed exactly like her, but in less expensive knockoffs. Also, with them is a boy, Chase, who is standing close to Mackenzie. Mackenzie considers herself to be the Queen of social media, she has many followers on Instagram and posts at least twenty times a day. Her Father is hedge fund manager and her mother is a stay at home mom who does a lot of charity work. Mackenzie is well... to put it bluntly, spoiled rotten. Her father indulges her every whim, from buying the best clothes, make up, and hair products, to getting her the latest

I-phone every year. This has led her to believe she is better than everyone, and that she is the school influencer.

“Nice outfit Madison, last year’s?” she says tauntingly.

“Mackenzie, you’re the only person I know who casts four shadows.” Madison retorts referring to Mackenzie’s entourage.

Amy, Lucas, and Eli laugh. Mackenzie then turns her attention to them.

“Well, if it isn’t the three little pigs, still trying to make this year’s worst dressed list?” The two girls behind her snicker along with Chase. Mackenzie then turns to Rico and says in a loud voice;

“At least you always dress nice Rico!”

Rico calmly looks at Mackenzie and softly replies;

“I can’t walk Mackenzie, I can hear perfectly.”

“Good for you Rico!” says Mackenzie loudly again.

Madison leans over to Rico and whispers in his ear;

“Believe it or not Luv, I think she was actually trying to be nice to you.”

“Lucky me!” retorts Rico.

The first bell of the day rings, and everyone begins to head for their homeroom classes. The gang head for Miss Jordan’s classroom. She is standing by the open door greeting each kid by name as they enter.

“Good Morning James, Maria, Mackenzie, Sue, Carla, Chase.” She continues, “Good morning Rico, Amy, Eli.” She pauses, as Lucas slowly brushes by staring up at her with a dopey lovestruck look on his face.

“Good morning Miss Jordan, you look very nice today.” he says.

Miss Jordan closes the door behind Lucas. “Thank you Lucas.” she says rolling her eyes.

Miss Jordan is a very attractive twenty six year old, with dark hair, blue eyes, and porcelain skin. She grew up here, and now works at the same school she went to as a child. She is single, and lives in small apartment about a twenty minute drive from Keaton. She has been teaching for four years and every year, at least one of her students fall madly in love with her, this year, its Lucas. Lucas makes his way to his desk stumbling over a few of the backpacks the kids have placed on the floor next to their desks. He sits down, never having taken his eyes off Miss Jordan. Lucas’ desk is next to Rico’s chair. Rico pulls his history book from his backpack, and places it on the

desktop that attaches to his chair. He looks over at Lucas, still with a dopey look on his face, staring at Miss Jordan and casually says;

“Never gonna happen Luc.”

Lucas turns and frowns at a smiling Rico.

“Class, we are getting a new student today and she should be here soon. Please make her feel welcome.”

No sooner does Miss Jordan says this, there’s a knock at the door, and Greta enters accompanied by Ms. Kim, the school’s guidance counselor. Ms. Kim, like Amy, is also Korean. She is thirty two years old, very attractive, with long black hair, and almond eyes. Like Miss Jordan, all the students love her.

“Hi everyone, Miss Jordan, everybody, this is Greta Hexe. She is from Germany and will be joining your class!”

Greta says hello to Miss Jordan, then turns to the class and says “*Guten Mor...* I mean Good morning!” she says smiling. The rest of the class in unison, says good morning back to Greta. Madison softly says to herself, “Germany! Excellent, a fellow Euro!” Lucas looks up from his desk and sees Greta. His eyes widen,

“Whoa!” he says softly.

“Why don’t you take that empty seat next to Lucas, Greta.” says Miss Jordan. Greta nods, and starts to walk over to her new desk carrying her new textbooks that Ms. Kim gave her earlier. Lucas turns his head, his eyes closed, and mouths the word “yes” to himself, excited that Greta will be sitting next to him. Greta walks by Lucas, and says

hello to him. Lucas barely utters an audible reply. Amy, seated directly behind Lucas taps Eli who is next to her, on the shoulder, and whispers to him;

“I think as far as Lucas is concerned, Miss Jordan has just been replaced!”

Eli laughs. On Eli’s right, is seated Mackenzie who whispers to the doppelgangers behind her;

“She’s cute. Nice hair, nice build, clothes... ehh, could be more stylish, but she has potential! At least, she’s from another country so that should make her at least seem interesting.”

Amy quickly sends a text to Madison from under her desk. “Let’s have Greta sit with us at lunch!” Madison checks her phone and replies, “Lets! 😊”

Later on, after a few lessons, the bell for lunch rings, signaling the last of the morning homeroom classes. After lunch, the students will be going to different classes in other classrooms. They all pile into the cafeteria, and wait on line to pick out their lunches. Rico, being pushed in his chair by Madison to conserve his chair's battery, always gets lasagna. Madison, tacos, Eli, a chiliburger, Lucas, pizza, and Amy, ice cream. Greta, having gladly accepted their invitation joins them at their usual table with her lunch, a hamburger and French fries.

She sits across from Amy. "Thank you all for letting me sit with you." then noticing Amy's lunch asks, "You eat ice cream for lunch?"

"Yeah," replies Amy, "I'm on gymnastics, and my parents have me on a strict diet, lunch at school is the only chance I get to have something sweet."

“How’s your burger?” asks Lucas shyly.

“Good, I wanted bratwurst, but they didn’t have any. I must say, you all are really cool to welcome me the way you did.”

Amy takes another spoonful of her ice cream and says “Yeah, there are a lot of clicks in this school, and everybody tends to stay with their own.”

“Clicks?” asks Greta unfamiliar with the term.

“You know,” says Eli, “Jocks with jocks, cheerleaders like Mackenzie with cheerleaders, brains with brains, they all hang out with their own.”

“What click are you guys?” asks Greta.

They all pause for a moment, afraid to speak up. Then Madison says;

“Uh...we’re uh...”

“Oh, don’t sugarcoat it!” says Rico, “We’re kind of the unpopular kids Greta. We don’t participate in school activities like sports, so that makes us unpopular. We like things other kids think are lame. You know comic books, tv, Sci-FY, video games.

“Gymnastics.” chimes in Amy.

“Things from the 1980’s.” adds Madison.

“How did you put it Lucas?” asks Rico.

Lucas finishing his slice of pizza looks at Greta and hesitantly replies,

“Misfits.”

“That’s it!” says Rico smiling, “We’re the Misfits!”

“Well, I don’t think you’re misfits, I think you are all *Umwerfend!*” Greta says smiling.

They all look at Greta unsure of what she means.
“You know, cool!” she explains.

“Oh!” they all say in unison. Just then Mackenzie, along with her two shadows, and Chase walk by.

“Greta, you don’t have to sit with them, sit with us tomorrow.” says Mackenzie, carrying her tray of lunch.

“Thank you Mackenzie, but I’ll probably sit with my new friends tomorrow too.”

“Suit yourself Greta, if you want to commit social suicide, that’s your business.”

Greta frowns as Mackenzie continues on walking. Chase, the tall boy leans down to Lucas.

“Ready for PE Lucas? Its dodgeball day.” he says trying to intimidate Lucas, “That head of yours is gonna make a fine target!”

“So is yours!” says Eli standing to show he’s bigger than Chase. Chase holds his hands up, and backs away.

“Take it easy Eli, I got no beef with you.”

“See you in PE.” Eli replies unafraid. Now normally, Lucas doesn’t mind when Eli sticks up for him, but to do it in front of Greta made him feel a bit like a coward. He slumps down a bit in his chair.

“They’re not very nice are they?” asks Greta.

“You’ve got a couple of hours Luv?” asks Madison.

The bell rings, ending lunch, and everyone goes to their respective classes. Rico and Amy go to their science class while the others head for the gym where Mrs. Ogden, the coed PE teacher is waiting. The kids split up into boys and girls, and head for their locker rooms to change. Eli and Lucas, Greta and Madison. Greta has a brand new gym outfit provided to her by Miss Kim. After changing, Mrs.

Ogden splits the boys and girls into two groups. Mrs. Ogden, is in her thirties, and overweight. You wouldn't think to look at her now, but she was once a great athlete, having made the Olympic team for the USA in women's volley ball. Mrs. Ogden has been teaching PE at Keaton for about five years. Her husband, Oswald is the school custodian. He is a bit of a henpecked husband who is usually bossed around by Mrs. Ogden, but is generally liked by most of the students. The girls start running laps around the gym, while the boys are divided into two teams for dodge ball. Mrs. Ogden blows her whistle, and the game begins. Lucas gets the first ball while the others scramble for the remaining balls. Lucas hurls his first ball missing everyone. Chase, grabs it, and throws it hitting Lucas right in the face knocking him down. Chase points, and laughs at Lucas. Greta running laps, sees Lucas go

down in a heap and comes to a stop. Mrs. Ogden blows her whistle again.

“I said no headshots!” shouts Mrs. Ogden. “You ok Lucas? Should I send in a sub for you?” Lucas slowly gets up, and tells her;

“No, I’m okay.” getting to his feet.

“Ok, you get a free shot Lucas.” says Mrs. Ogden handing him a ball. Lucas heaves the ball as hard as he can, again, missing everybody. The ball strikes the back wall behind everyone and rolls a few feet before coming to a stop. Greta watching, her hand by her chin, quickly moves her index finger upward while looking at the ball. The ball spins around in place and suddenly flies across the gym straight for the back of Chase’s head. Unfortunately, for Chase, he turns around at that precise moment, and the ball hits him square on the nose. Chase cries out, and falls to the

floor holding his nose. Greta covers her mouth with her hand and gasps, she hadn't meant to hit him in the face.

“My nose,” cries Chase. “I think its broken!” Greta chuckles briefly, then quickly composes herself as Mrs. Ogden checks Chase's nose.

Madison, having witnessed Greta and her moving finger looks on in astonishment. Had she somehow moved the ball toward Chase. She shook her head trying to convince herself that that was silly. How could she have moved that ball with her finger? Magic? There's no such thing, she thinks trying to convince herself Mrs. Ogden looks at Chase's nose.

“You better go see the nurse Chase, Tyrone, you go with him. Tyrone, another boy on Chase's team puts Chase's arm around his shoulder, and they both slowly walk away heading for the nurse's office.

“What happened?” asks Tyrone.

“I don’t know, but somehow I bet it was that Lucas!”

A couple of hours later, the school day finally ends, and the kids all exit the school building. Some go to the bike racks, and some go to the pick-up area where their parents pick them up with their cars. Greta and her new friends head for the bike racks. Lucas asks Greta if she wants to join them at Ollie’s, a local hangout where the kids gather to bowl, play arcade games, or just get a snack before heading home. Greta politely declines wanting to head home, but assures them she will go with them tomorrow. Madison, still unsure of what she saw in the gym eyes Greta with caution. She too, declines to go with the others making up an excuse. The others all head for Ollie’s on their bikes with Rico keeping pace in his new chair.

“See you tomorrow Madison.” says Greta pedaling away.

“Yeah, see you tomorrow Luv.” Madison watches Greta pedal away, waits a few seconds, then starts to follow her. Greta takes the same path home she did going to school that morning. Greta passes the alley with the homeless man, and stops to look. He is sound asleep in the chair she conjured with a big smile on his face. He finished the entire meal Greta provided for him.

She smiles at him, and continues on. Madison soon comes upon the same alley and looks to see why Greta stopped there. She sees the homeless man asleep, and wonders to herself why is there a table set up in an alley. She continues following Greta making sure to keep a safe distance between them. Greta rides down the same treelined streets with various single family houses on either

side. They range from small ranches, to a large Victorian one, like her Oma's house. There's even a house similar to her old house in Germany. She stops in front of one house, and hears the sound of MEOWING from above. She looks up, and sees a small kitten stuck in a tree.

“Oh, you poor thing.” she says to the kitten.

Madison stops, and moves her bike behind a tree, and watches Greta unseen. Greta puffs her cheeks, and gently blows, causing a strong, quiet breeze that lifts the kitten up out of the tree, and carries it down gently into her arms. Madison's jaw drops. “She can do magic.” she says to herself.

A little girl, about 7 years old, runs from the house by the tree. “Mittens!” she cries running to Greta. “You got her down!”

“No,” says Greta, “I was just riding by, and she climbed down to me.” she says not wanting to reveal herself.

“Thank you!” says the little girl, as Greta hands her the kitten.

“I have a cat at home too, her name is Alice.”

“Thank you again!” yells the little girl running back into her house with her kitten. Greta continues on home. Madison, feeling she’s seen enough turns her bike around facing the direction of her home, and rides away.

“This is completely bonkers, wait till the others find out.” she says to herself.

Speaking of the others, they are at Ollies, seated in a booth, Rico, in his chair, is at the table’s edge. Amy asks

aloud what everyone thought of Greta, then quickly turns to Lucas to answer first.

“She’s o.k. I guess.” he replies.

The others snicker. Just then Ollie, the proprietor comes over with a large bowl of ice cream and four spoons. He places the bowl down in the center and passes out the spoons.

“Here, I over scooped on a banana split I was making for another table. So, this is on the house.” The kids all pick up the spoons, thank Ollie, and begin to dig in. They know very well he never over scooped, but was just being nice. Ollie, has been operating Ollies for forty years and watched hundreds of kids grow up over the years. A lifelong bachelor, who never had kids of his own, he has watched generations of them grow up since first opening years ago. Never wanting to be too obvious about it, the

misfits are some of his favorites. He's especially fond of Lucas, and gives him a small discount now and then, knowing he and his mother are not as affluent as some of the other kids in town. As they eat their free ice cream they continue their conversation.

“Who are you kidding Lucas, you know you like her.” states Rico.

“I said she's o.k.!”

“Just o.k.?” asks Amy.

Lucas rolls his eyes and repeats himself again. The others all look at one another and snicker again.

Later that night, Greta and Oma Frieda are seated at the kitchen table having dinner. “How was your first day of school Greta?” says Oma Frieda finishing her meal.

“I met some very nice kids, they let me join them for lunch. I’m eating with them tomorrow too.”

“That’s very nice, I’m happy. Did you behave yourself?”

“Why, whatever do you mean Oma?”

“You know what I mean Greta.” she says, picking up hers, and Greta’s empty plates, and carry's them to the sink. She turns on the water. A bottle of soap, and a sponge float up, and start to clean the plates on their own. She turns back to Greta, and sternly looks at her.

“No Oma, no one knows what I can do.” she says sounding like every other pre-teen girl who doesn’t want to have the conversation she is currently having.

“Good! No one knows what I can do either, I like being able to do magic, but I also like being with the ‘Typicals. Let’s face it, they greatly out number us.”

“Is it alright if I go to my room?” Greta asks,

Oma nods, and Greta gets up, and starts to leave followed by Alice who has finished her dinner as well. Sir John is standing in the doorway. Greta passes by him;

“Feeling better Sir John?” she asks.

“Much better Miss Greta.” he replies in a deep echoey voice with a British accent. Sir John walks over and joins Oma Frieda at the table. His armor CLANGING, and CREAKING as he sits down. The chair SQUEAKS a little under the weight of his armor.

“Honestly Lady Frieda, what would be the harm if Miss Greta’s friends found out what she can do?”

“Three words Sir John, Salem witch trials!”

“Oh, Dear Lady, that was hundreds of years ago. Besides, her friends are children, if they said anything to their parents, no one would believe them.”

“I suppose, but those witch trials were the main reason I became a defense lawyer. No, I’d just feel better if no one knew about us.”

Sir John gets up, walks over to the refrigerator, and pulls out a bottle of ale. He twists off the top, and starts to exit. He turns back to Oma Frieda and says,

“I believe the ‘Typicals’ these days are more understanding than they were hundreds of years ago, you know, back in my day. They are a lot more tolerant of one’s differences.”

“I know Sir John, it’s just that Greta is so young. Most witches begin to get their powers when they’re about eighteen, Greta started when she first came here at age eleven.”

“Perhaps the trauma of losing her parents at such a young age jump started them.” says Sir John.

“Maybe.”

“Think about what I said, about the ‘Typicals’, Lady Frieda, please.”

Sir John exits the kitchen leaving Oma Frieda to reflect on what he has said.

Chapter IV

Sir John and Alice

Lucas is in his room talking to Rico on his laptop. It is a typical boys room, the walls are covered with movie posters. His desk is cluttered with superhero action figures. About a dozen video, and board games sit on a shelf over his desk. In the corner on the floor are several long white boxes filled with comic books. His mother is working late this week, so he made himself a grilled cheese sandwich for dinner. He is playing with an Ironman figure while talking;

“Be honest Rico, did I make a fool of myself in front of Greta today?”

Rico shakes his head, “No, I don’t think so, she was smiling at you a lot in class today.” replies Rico as he does his homework.

“Really? I just wish Eli didn’t stick up for me with Chase in front of her.”

“Eli always sticks up for us. Besides Chase is a jerk and got what he deserved. Greta could see that.”

“Yeah, he did look funny after the nurse bandaged his nose.” chuckles Lucas.

“Yeah, like a gift wrapped Rhino!”

Both boys laugh. Then Lucas adds;

Greta is pretty, don’t you think?”

“Very, and unlike Miss Jordan she’s not twice your age and a foot taller than you! I think you too would be great together.”

“Thanks Rico, I hope you’re right. What are you going to watch on tv tonight?”

“I think I’m in a Netflix’s Luke Cage kind of mood tonight. How about you?”

“I think I’m gonna watch Stranger Things, remind myself how Mike Wheeler got Eleven to like him.”

“Just be yourself Luc, that’s all you can do.”

Lucas smiles at Rico, and says Goodnight. He turns off his laptop and goes into the living room to watch tv.

Amy and Madison are in their rooms chatting as well. After finishing their homework,

Amy brings up the subject of Greta.

“Greta seems very nice, don’t you think?”

Madison thinks for a second about how to phrase her reply.

“Sure, she seems really nice. Her English is very good. I...just feel there’s something more to her than we know.” says Madison thinking about the things she’s witnessed Greta do that day.

“What do you mean?” asks Amy somewhat surprised.

“Don’t get me wrong, I like her, she’s really sweet.” She decides to brush off the rest of what she is thinking, “You know what? Forget it, I’m just being daft is, forget I said anything. Greta is very nice.”

“I think so...and Lucas sure thinks so.” she says laughing.

Madison laughs to. “Yeah, he seems to have forgotten all about Ms. Jordan. I hope Greta kind of feels the same way. Lucas is such a doll.”

“Yeah me too, I’ll see you tomorrow Madison.”

“Good night Luv, I’m going to go watch some telly. See you in the a.m.”

They both hang up and go on to their own endeavors.

In a mystical tavern, somewhere, no one knows where, ghostly revelers have gathered to enjoy tankards of ale and reminisce about their living days. Sir John enters and is greeted by many. He makes his way through the crowd to his usual table, and sits down with some fellow knights all dressed in their armor. He greets them all. There

are four of them at the table. A small, frail old woman carries a heavy barrel on her shoulders, and places it on their table. She removes a spigot from her dirty apron and shoves into the barrel. Five steins float by, and set themselves down in front of the men.

“How are you this evening John?” asks Basil.

“It’s Lady Frieda, she’s worried about Greta, worried that her new school mates will find out she is a witch.” They nod understanding.

“How is young Greta?” asks Henry.

“She’s fine, she is becoming more powerful every day. And she’s not even twelve years of age yet.”

“She got her powers young. The witches I knew, didn’t start till they were older.” says Basil.

“Aye, I remember when Lady Frieda first brought Greta home.”

Sir John begins to recount the tale of when Greta first came to live with Frieda. How Nobu was not allowed to move. And how he could not be in his armor, and had to remain in a non-corporeal state until Frieda told Greta what they were, for fear of frightening her.

“I remember when she first saw her room, and how she smiled when she saw it. It had been a long time between smiles for the poor girl, I’m afraid. Parentless, in a new country, but she adapted well. I would fly over her at night, watching her sleep. I was the first one who actually saw her perform magic, even before Lady Frieda. Alas, she did not know at first what she was doing. One time, she got up from her desk to fetch a soda. A mere second later, there was one right on her desk in front of her. She surmised she

must have brought it up from the kitchen and forgot. Then, there was the time when she wanted to go out and ride the bicycle Frieda had given her, but on this particular day, it was raining, and the forecasters predicted rain for the entire day. Suddenly, the rain stopped, and the clouds disappeared. She eagerly took her bicycle out, thinking it was just a momentary lapse, and rode in the bright sun for the rest of the day.”

“But it was she who ended the rain?” asked Sir Charles.

“Oh absolutely, her desire to ride led to the rain ending. Then, there was one night when she was sleeping in her bed, and she just started floating up! Luckily, she was indoors, or who knows how high she would have risen. She

brushed the ceiling of her room, and then dropped to her bed, bouncing off, and landing on the floor! She thought she had a bad dream, and fell out of her bed, but I was there, witnessing the whole event. She finally realized she was different when she could not come up with an alibi for a strange occurrence. I was down in the kitchen with Lady Frieda, when we heard Greta cry out “Oma! Oma!” “We both rushed upstairs to her room, opened the door, and found her sitting on her bed, soaked. She somehow conjured a rain storm in her room! Wind was blowing over some of the furniture, and lightning struck her desk chair reducing it to kindling. Lady Frieda waved her hand stopping the storm, then got a towel from Greta’s bathroom, and wrapped it around the poor shaken child. It was that night, that she told Greta the truth. That they were witches, as well as her father, Frieda’s son. Greta was frightened a little at first, but relieved she wasn’t going

mad. Lady Frieda gave Greta some old books that explained things more clearly, and she practiced and practiced till she was accomplishing some pretty amazing feats of magic. Personally, I don't see the harm in Greta's friends finding out what she is, because no adult would believe them. Frieda, though, sees things a little different. Greta was quite surprised when she was finally Nobu and myself, and she even melted Nobu's bronze heart with her charm. As for me, I was glad to be back in my armor. I just feel more alive when I have it on." Sir John takes another swig of ale from his stein and sets it down. "Forgive me if I seem out of sorts, I just love Greta and want her to be happy, and have friends."

"You know what you need? Let me tell you the story of my demise in the War of the Roses. That'll cheer you up."

“You’ve told us that story a thousand times Charles.” laments Sir John.

“Well, it’s more exciting than Winston’s death at the hands of Henry the VIII. All he did was stare a little too long at the Lovely Ann Boleyn, eh Winston?”

The knight Winston removes his helmet, revealing a headless body and places it in the middle of their table and raises his visor. Inside the helmet is the head of a cross eyed man who exclaims,

“I wasn’t even looking at her!”

They all burst out laughing, even Sir John. They continue their merry making for several more hours, and another barrel of ale. Later Sir John stands up, bids his friends goodbye, and exits the tavern. He is feeling better, for getting his feelings out in the open. He then begins to stagger back home to Frieda’s.

Greta is in her room on her bed, sitting cross legged, reading her history book, but her mind is elsewhere. Alice is seated at the foot of her bed, licking her paw, and cleaning her face after her dinner. Greta puts her book down on the bed beside her. She gets up, goes to her desk, and takes out a book of spells for young witches that Oma Frieda gave her to read, and practice with.

She starts flipping through the pages and comes across a spell that looks interesting. She places a teddy bear from her bed down on the floor. Waving her hands she says the words,

“Magnum Bär!” (Big Bear)

In a split second the stuffed toy bear transforms into a toy ten feet tall. She smiles. She turns to Alice, who is sitting on the bed watching.

“What do you think? Pretty good, eh Alice?”

She waves her hands again reciting the magic words;

“*Contrarium!*” (Reverse) The stuffed bear instantly reverts back to its normal size. She glances through the book, and finds another spell. She opens the glass doors that lead out to a small Juliet style balcony and steps out onto it. A small mystic ball of energy forms between her fingers, and grows to about the size of a large melon. She starts to push the floating ball of energy upwards but a spark from it shocks her. She recoils in pain.

“Ouch!” She walks back to the book again and rereads what she did. “Ohh!” she says, “Don’t touch it, just push it up and guide its direction with your mind.” She closes the book, walks back out and tries again. She gestures with her hands for the energy ball to rise up. It

floats upward, higher and higher into the night sky, and disappears behind some clouds. The sky grows darker, and thunder starts to echo through the sky. Suddenly, rain begins to pour to the ground. Greta smiles, even though she is getting wet. She steps back inside, closing the doors behind her.

“How about that Alice? I created a storm!” she says excitedly. Alice just sits there not very impressed. “Watch this one Alice.” She holds her arms outstretched and closes her eyes. Greta’s body begins to rise, she is floating several feet above the floor! She continues upward, and bangs her head on the ceiling.

“Ouch!” she says again. Opening her eyes, she lowers herself a little, continues to float for a few seconds, then lowers herself back down to the floor. “I like this kind of homework more than the school kind.” she says to Alice.

“I met some great kids today Alice, and one boy in particular named Lucas.” Alice continues cleaning her face ignoring Greta. Greta sighs, climbing back onto her bed, and pets Alice on her head. She crawls up to the top of the bed by her pillows, turning her glance away from Alice. “Sometimes I wish you could talk, and give me some advice Alice”

A waft of purple smoke gently blows by Greta’s face. She turns, and where Alice was sitting a second ago, is now seated a large heavysset woman, with curly dark hair, wearing a brightly colored dress. She is black, has big bright eyes, and long fingernails.

“Hey Greta! What’s up girl?” says the ebony skinned woman. Greta leans back against the headboard and exclaims;

“*Mein Güte!* (oh my goodness!) Who are you?
Where’s my Alice?”

The woman looks disdainfully at Greta.

“Girl, are you tripping? I am Alice! Your Father gave me to you to be your familiar, sound familiar?” she chuckles at her play on words.

“Familiar?”

“Yeah, it’s like a witch’s assistant. I’m yours. We usually take the form of small animals, mostly cats, but to be honest, we can look like ‘Typicals’ or any other felines.” She removes a mirror from her pocket, and checks her makeup.

“And you look like this when you’re not my Alice? But why haven’t you spoken to me before?”

Alice leans closer to Greta and tells her;

“Because you never wished me to talk before! Now, tell me about your new friends I wasn’t paying attention before, I had some food in my whiskers.”

Greta feeling more relaxed than a minute ago, tells Alice about her day, and the new friends she’s made, but when she gets to Lucas, Alice throws her hands up in the air and cries out,

“Oh Hell no! You’re too young to be thinking about a boy, wait, is he enchanted or a typical?”

“He’s a typical. And I’m not too young, I’m almost 12.”

“12?” Alice laughs out loudly. “Do you know how old I am?” she says, her hands on her hips.

“Daddy gave you to me 2 years ago.”

“Yeah, 2 years with you! I’ve been a familiar for let’s see,” she counts on all her fingers, looks up, and replies,

“Good Lord, next month, it’ll be a 1000 years.”

“A 1000 years!!”

“Hmm Hmm, and don’t I look good for my age? So, as you can see honey, I’ve been around. I assure you there’ll be time for boys when you’re a little older.”

Greta confesses that she’s not sure how Lucas feels about her anyway. Alice tells her she’s known a lot of ‘Typicals’, some are good, some not so much. Then she tells Greta not to be in such a rush to grow up. Greta nods. Alice, then tells her that of all the witches she’s been a familiar for, Greta is her favorite. They hug, and Alice sits back at the foot of the bed and curls up in a ball, a much larger ball. She tells Greta;

“If you ever want to talk again, I’m here for you baby. Now if it’s alright with you, I’d like to go back to being a cat. I prefer being a cat.”

“You do?”

“Sure, I get my three square meals, sleep all day, don’t have to put up with anyone’s nonsense. It’s a great life, all nine of them!” She laughs out loud again.

Greta smiles and tells her “Sure.”

“Goodnight Greta.” Another waft of purple smoke appears, and Alice is a cat once again. Greta stands up, and gets under the blankets. Placing her head against the pillow she says;

“Goodnight Alice.”

Chapter V

Yllek

Yllek, hard to pronounce, is a land neither here, nor there. It is not known in any universe or in any dimension. A place of unknown origin, and time. A place filled with unusual, and mystical things. In Yllek, there are animals that are combinations of several animals. A place where unicorns are real, and plentiful, and butterflies, the size of eagles, soar through the skies. A place where horses are the size of rabbits, and rabbits the size of horses. The people who live there are happy and content, but that was before the arrival of the Dark Enchantress, Zatanica. She is a very powerful witch, who was exiled to Yllek by a group of witch Elders called the Eitrix or witches council. She lives in a huge castle, deep in the heart of the *Nachtlicher Wald*, (nocturnal forest) where the light of day never shines. Even though, Zatanica and her lackeys are bound to the forest,

the denizens of Yllek are cautious of her, and they never dare enter the *Nachtlicher Wald*.

Ruprecht Knecht, is one of those two lackeys. He is currently inside the castle, in Zatanica's spell room. He is a tall, hook nosed man, with crooked teeth. His skin is grey, and almost scale like in texture. His dark hair is long, stringy, and kind of greasy looking. He is dressed all in a black, with a black and gold cape adorning his shoulders. He is hunched over a large bubbling vat. Red smoke billows up from its rim.

“After many months it is done, she will be pleased.” he says with a flourish of his hands. Zatanica, then enters the dark, almost cave like room, and walks over to Ruprecht.

“I hope you have good news for me.” she says firmly. Zatanica, is absolutely beautiful, dressed in a black

bodice, a long flowing black skirt. Her long raven colored hair is piled up high on her head with a diamond encrusted half crown. A high collared purple cape is draped over her soft shoulders. Around her neck, is a jeweled necklace, in its center, is set the Blegosi amulet. The Blegosi amulet, is an ancient stone capable of rendering any witch's powers tenfold. No one knows where it originated, but once she was banished to Yllek, its powers were gone. Now her power is a fraction of what it once was. The mad alchemist, Ruprecht greets her,

“Good news indeed Dear Heart! It is finished!”

Zatanica leans forward, and gazes into the vat. The smoke is swirling about.

“Excellent Ruprecht.” A smile forms upon her ruby lips. Ruprecht produces a long pin from his shirt cuff.

“Just one more precious ingredient is left to add, and you will be able to view all the worlds that exist outside of Yllek.”

“I’m only interested in one world, mine!”

Ruprecht takes the pin in one hand, and then takes hold of Zatanica’s hand in the other. Zatanica slaps his face. He turns away, ashamed of his forwardness.

“I will do it!” she commands. Zatanica proceeds to prick her finger with the pin and holds her finger over the bubbling vat. A single drop of her blood drips into the vat. The red smoke bubbles harder until it explodes into a mushroom like cloud, rising up to the ceiling before settling down. Zatanica waves her hands over the vat clearing the red smoke away. She and Ruprecht look deep into the swirling smoke which starts to reveal an image to them. It is of Greta sleeping in her bed!

“Is that the one you seek your Greatness?”

“Yes,” snarls Zatanica, “she is the spitting image of her parents and her treacherous grandmother, Frieda!”

“Frieda, your sister?” asks Ruprecht. Zatanica waves her hand once more sending Ruprecht flying across the room. He crashes into a table with many bottles of potions on top of it. He quickly rises back to his feet, clicking his heels together, with his arms at straight at his side, and bows his head downward.

“Forgive my inquisitiveness, Zatanica.” says Ruprecht apologetically. Zatanica walks around the vat over to Ruprecht.

“What kind of a sister betrays her own flesh and blood, by ratting her out to the Eitrix, and banishes her to this unknown world!” she demands.

“A world which you’ve conquered, Dear Heart.”

says Ruprecht trying to compliment her.

“Conquering this world is something any fool could do, why even you could do it. I want to get back to mine!”

She walks back over to the vat, and gazes at Greta’s image in the bright red smoke. “You will be my ticket out of here young one. Sleep well, your time is short, and so is Frieda’s!

Chapter VI

The Secret is Out

The next morning, Greta wakes up, and gets ready for school a little earlier so she can walk there. She skips breakfast, preferring to get something to eat at school with her new friends. She takes a slight detour through the main part of town. The town is like any other town, with some small shops, a police station, a fire department, and a medical building. She sees Ollie's, the hangout her friends like to frequent. She peaks into the window of a clothing store, and spies a pair of girl's jeans that catches her eye. While admiring them she sees the reflection of a beautiful woman standing behind her on the street. She turns around to say something to her about the jeans, but sees no one there. Puzzled, she turns back to the window, and sees the woman behind her again! Greta starts to run in the direction

of her school, and sees the woman's reflection in all the windows she passes by staring back at her. She sees her in the pharmacy window, the deli window, the book store, she is everywhere watching, and Greta can't seem to shake her. It is Zatanica. Well, more of an astral projection of her, that she is sending through her cauldron vat thanks to Ruprecht's spell. She arrives at school, and does not see the strange woman anywhere. She joins her friends at their usual table in the cafeteria. She places her backpack on the floor and tells them,

“Something very strange just happened to me.”

“How could you tell?” asks Madison coyly. The others look briefly at Madison then turn back to Greta.

“What do you mean?” asks Lucas.

Greta relays the story of the beautiful woman to them. They think for a moment, then quickly try to reassure

her, telling her it is a sunny day, and maybe the sun was shining into the store window, playing tricks with her eyes. Comfortable with their explanation, she relaxes and calms down again. She pulls a clementine from her backpack and starts to peel it. Amy is sitting across from her eating an ice cream sandwich when Mackenzie and her group pass by. Rico and Lucas try not to laugh at the bandage on Chase's nose. Mackenzie is carrying a tray with a bagel, and a glass of milk on it. She fakes a sneeze, causing her glass to tip over, spilling onto Amy's head, drenching her in milk. Amy quickly stands up.

“Hey!! she cries.

“Oh! I'm sorry Amy, I'm so clumsy!” says

Mackenzie unconvincingly.

“She did that on purpose!” says Rico. The other kids hand Amy some napkins so she can attempt to dry herself off.

A scowl forms on Greta’s face. She raises her hand, casually up to her chin, as Mackenzie and the others continue walking, and laughing at Amy. Madison notices Greta growing angry, and watches her intently. Greta quickly jerks her right index and middle finger upward. Mackenzie slips on a dry floor bumping into Chase who was standing behind her. She flies up and lands on the floor with a THUD! Chase loses control of his tray having been bumped, and spills the entire tray’s contents onto Mackenzie’s head, a bowl of cereal, and a glass of orange juice. Mackenzie is soaked with milk and juice, and covered with bits of cereal. The nearby tables burst out with laughter at the girl’s expense. Her two clones try to help her up, but they slip on the spilled milk and juice, and

fall on top of Mackenzie as all the other kids continue to laugh. She manages to get up, and pushes Chase away who is trying to apologize.

“Look what you did to my clothes!” She pushes Chase a second time, and storms off with her clones behind her.

Greta, meantime turns her head downward, and continues peeling her clementine, looking very innocent. Madison, seeing Greta do something seemingly magical, turns back to her own food. A little smile forms in the corners of her mouth, thinking how foolish Mackenzie looked. The bell rings a few minutes later, and the kids all head for their homerooms. As all the kids exit, Greta stops into one of the girl’s bathrooms followed by Madison. Greta goes to the mirror, and begins combing her hair. Madison quickly checks all the stalls to make sure no

one is in any of them. She then goes over to Greta, and gently turns her around from the mirror, her hands on Greta's shoulders.

“Ok Luv, what's your deal? The dodge ball, the kitten, and now Mackenzie slipping on a dry floor. I like you Greta, I really do, but there's something a little off about you. How did you do all that?”

“You...you saw all that?” asks Greta nervously. Madison nods her head. Greta groans. “Oh, Oma is going to kill me.”

“Greta, please, I'm your friend, you can trust me.” Madison removes her hands from Greta, and she explains to Madison about what her, her father, and Oma are. Madison listens wide eyed. When Greta finishes she pleads to Madison;

“Please don't think me weird.”

“Weird?” Madison hugs Greta, “Why Greta, I think you’re positively wicked!”

“Wicked?” replies Greta, “Oh no, we’re all good witches, Light witches.”

Madison laughs and hugs Greta again.

“No, wicked is good, it means I think you’re amazing! Oh, wait until the others find out.”

“No!” Greta cries. “Oma said I shouldn’t tell anyone. You found out on your own, but I don’t know if the others should find out.”

“Listen Luv, that’s up to you. I will say this though, three years ago, I was the new kid in town, and I couldn’t imagine finding better friends than our little group. We’re all kind of outsiders in our own way. You can trust them, that’s all I’m gonna say on the matter.”

The two leave the bathroom, and head for
homeroom before they get tardy slips, unaware of the
reflection appearing in the mirror they were just in front of,
Zatanica's reflection.

Chapter VII

Zatanica, the Dark Enchantress

One of the best things about Keaton Middle School is the after school swimming program. It is one of the few schools to offer such a program. After learning to swim, the students can advance on to swimming laps, and diving. Greta, a proficient swimmer, has joined her friends at the indoor pool to try the diving class. Each student waits on the sideline to climb the ladder up to the board, and dive into the water several feet below. Even Rico can participate, not in the diving, but with the aid of a mechanical device he can be placed into the pool to enjoy the water like the others. While on the sideline, Eli and Lucas, in their swimsuits are engaged in a debate over who is stronger, Hulk or Thor. Amy and Madison having heard this debate before look at each other rolling their eyes.

“Thor is a God, Eli! That makes him stronger!”
shouts Lucas.

“But he’s only a God part of the time, when he’s Donald Blake, he’s human, whereas the angrier the Hulk gets, the stronger he gets!” counters Eli.

“If you’re gonna use that kind of logic, he’s human when he’s Bruce Banner!” Finally Amy and Madison growing tired of listening to them, can’t take it anymore.

“Will you two please shut up!” cries Amy.

“Yes, please,” pleads Madison, “you two argue about this all the time, only last time Lucas you said Hulk was stronger and Eli said Thor was!”

Eli and Lucas look at each other confused, “Alright,” said Lucas, “who do you two think is stronger?”

Amy and Madison look at each other, then turn to Lucas and Eli, and smiling at both of them, simultaneously say,

“Wonder Woman!”

Lucas looks at Eli, throws up his hands, and cries out;

“If you two aren’t going to take this conversation seriously, then I can’t talk to either of you!” Greta bites her bottom lip to keep from laughing as Lucas slowly moves closer to her.

“So...do you like to swim Greta?” he asks shyly.

“Oh yes, but in Quedlinburg, we swam in a lake, we didn’t have a nice pool like this.”

Madison is just now climbing up the ladder with Amy following behind. She does a nice back dive into the pool and climbs out. Then, Amy bounces on the board

several times, and does a perfect forward twisting dive with a somersault clean into the pool. She pokes her head out of the water as Greta and the others clap.

“That was amazing Amy!” says Greta.

“Yeah,” she replies climbing out, and shaking the water off herself. “This is when a background in gymnastics comes in handy. Your turn Greta!”

Greta starts up the ladder with Lucas following. She walks over to the edge of the board and takes a deep breath. She feels the room growing darker, but no one else seems to notice. She looks down at the water. She sees Zatanica’s reflection in the pool! Her head is huge. Greta stumbles a bit losing her balance as Zatanica’s mouth opens like a python unhinging its jaws. Greta falls off the board, and lets out a scream as she falls into the pool. She is thrashing

about, choking on some of the water she swallowed went she went under.

“Greta!” cries Lucas. He jumps sloppily into the water to her aid. Grabbing her, he puts her arm around his shoulders. He slowly paddles back to the pool edge, where Amy and Madison help pull Greta out of the water.

“Are you ok?” they both ask. Greta nods, still choking, and trying to catch her breath. Lucas climbs out, and stands by Greta.

“What happened up there Greta?” he asks.

Greta looks around and notices the room is bright again. Mrs. Ogden who was teaching a lap class at the other end of the pool runs over.

“Everybody ok?” she asks. Greta nods, and replies;

“Yes, I guess I just lost my balance for a second.”

“You really sank Greta.” says Eli.

Mrs. Ogden putting a towel around Greta, tries to diffuse the situation with a little humor and says,

“Well, you didn’t float, so at least we know you’re not a witch!” she jokes.

Some of the others who’ve gathered around laugh. Greta looks at Mrs. Ogden wide-eyed and thinks to herself
“What did she mean by that?”

“I think you’ve had enough excitement for one day. You go change Greta. Amy, Madison, you two go with her and make sure she’s ok. Then take her to the nurse, and have her checked out.”

Amy, Madison, and Greta head for the girls locker room. Madison pulls Greta away and asks what really happened up there. Greta whispers she saw the woman

from that morning in the pool. Madison asks if she's a witch too. Greta tells her she must be, but she never saw her before, and wonders why she would want to harm her. Amy returns dressed from her locker. Greta and Madison finish dressing too. The three exit the locker room. There are just the three of them, but they cast four shadows on the wall. The last one, much bigger than theirs.

They head down school hall toward the nurse's office. Amy, still unaware that Greta is a witch tells her not to worry about falling off the board, that it happens to everyone. Greta appreciates the good thoughts, but then Amy, remembering Lucas' feelings about Greta begins to needle her a bit;

“It was a good thing your knight in shining armor was there to come to your rescue.” she chides.

“Yes,” said Madison, joining in the fun. “Lucas the Brave coming to the aid of his princess.”

Amy and Madison begin to giggle as Greta turns red faced.

“Shut up!” she says embarrassed.

After a clean bill of health from the nurse, Greta arrives home later on. She calls out to Sir John and Nobu that she is home, and goes to her room. Alice, seeing Greta jumps off the bed and circles through her legs. Greta picks her up, and sits down on the edge of her bed.

“Something is wrong Alice, at first I thought it was the sun playing tricks with my eyes, but someone is definitely trying to get me.” Alice looks up intently at Greta, while she continues. “Oma and I are not the only witches in town, and this one is a dark witch for sure. I will tell her when she gets home from work.”

Suddenly, the French doors of her bedroom leading out to the balcony blow open so hard they hit the wall, shattering the glass panes. A strong wind blows in tipping over some furniture, Greta hugs Alice to her chest as the wind blows through her hair. All she can hear is her own scream and the whirling sound of the wind invading her room.

Slowly, a spectral form walks in, it is Zatanica again. But as earlier, it is not the real Zatanica, she is still imprisoned in Yllek. This is merely another holographic image she is projecting through to Greta's realm. None the less, Greta is very frightened. Frightened like she's never been before.

“Greta Hexe! I am coming for you! You are going to free me from my prison!” bellows the image.

“Never!” cries Greta. “I don’t know who you are, but I will never help you!”

The door to Greta’s room bursts open, and Sir John and Nobu enter brandishing their swords. Nobu swings at Zatanica’s image causing it to dissolve. The winds subside, and her room is normal once more. Sir John takes Greta in his arms, and carries out of her room, and downstairs. Greta is still clutching Alice.

Oma Frieda, returning from work at that very moment, enters through the garage door, and sees Sir John with Greta.

“What happened!” she cries.

Sir John puts Greta down, and she runs to Oma Frieda. She hugs Greta to her body and looks at Sir John.

“It was Zatanica.” says Sir John. “Well, a holographic image of her, but she is definitely up to no good.” Nobu descends the stairs and stands next to Sir John. He simply nods to confirm what Sir John has said.

Oma Frieda hugs Greta tighter. She recalls that awful day years ago when Zatanica was first brought before the Eitrix, the council of Elders for Light Witches. Zatanica was brought before them, bound in chains, and iron mask covering her mouth to prevent her from saying any incantations or spells. The Head Elder spoke;

“Zatanica, you have committed horrific acts of dark magic for your own gain. You are hereby sentenced to death!”

Zatanica stood motionless, yet showing no fear at the fate that has been designated to her. Oma Frieda stood

up, and voiced her disapproval at the harshness of Zatanica's death sentence.

“Surely there must be another way to spare her life.” she pleaded.

The council talked among themselves for a minute or so. Some nodded, some shook their heads no. Finally, they all nodded in agreement, and turned to Oma Frieda,

“We have reconsidered Frieda, Zatanica will not die this day. Instead she will be banished to another dimension and stripped of all but her simplest powers.”

Frieda breathes a sigh of relief, but only for a second, when the Elders continued.

“It is decided that you Frieda, will be the one to perform the banishment and power stripping spell.”

Frieda is shocked, and asked why, but was told by the Elders she should not question their decision. The choice is banishment, or death. With only those two choices, Frieda relented to do the banishment spell if only to spare Zatanica's life.

"It is done, the sentence is to be carried out now." said the Elders.

One of the Elders stepped down from their bench and opened a large, dust covered book of ancient spells. She held it open to a page chosen for Frieda to perform. Frieda looked sympathetically at Zatanica who glared back at Frieda with sheer hatred in her eyes. Frieda read the spell aloud. A cloud formed by Zatanica's feet, and began to rise. A bright light appeared. It grew brighter and brighter as the cloud engulfed Zatanica completely. Even though the iron mask was covering her mouth, she tried to scream out, but

couldn't. There was a bright flash and the cloud suddenly disappeared. The light quickly followed, leaving an empty spot where Zatanica once stood. Frieda's eyes welled with tears. The Elders all stood exclaiming,

“It is done, what is done shall not be undone.” The Elders filed out of the courtroom leaving Oma Frieda standing alone, and crying.

Chapter VIII

Ruprecht Knecht

A few moments later Sir John, Nobu, Greta, and Oma Frieda are all seated at the kitchen table. A teapot floats by pouring tea into the cups in front of each of them.

“Don’t worry Greta, I won’t let anything happen to you.” Oma Frieda says trying to comfort her. Sir John and Nobu nod in agreement.

“What did she mean I’m going to help free her.”

“I wouldn’t worry about that, she can’t get out of where she is, that’s why she only sent a holograph of herself.” says Oma Frieda.

“Where is she?” asks Greta.

“Someplace where she can’t hurt you!”

“Who is she Oma?”

Frieda pauses, trying to find the right words.

“Her name is Zatanica, and she is..... my sister, your grand Aunt. Our family disowned her years ago for choosing the wrong path. She chose to practice Dark magic, and only wanted power at any cost.”

“What does she want with me?”

“I don’t know, but she’s trapped where she is.”

Greta says good night, and goes back upstairs to her room with Alice. Once there, she waves her hand repairing the broken glass panes, and closes the French doors. She climbs back into bed and tries to go to sleep. Alice curls up on the pillow next to Greta’s head.

Downstairs Greta and Sir John are still talking.

“How was she able to project her image here?”

Frieda asks out loud.

“Could she have made any allies in Yllek, who could have helped her?” asks Sir John.

“I know nothing about Yllek, I only know the Eitrix forced me to banish her there. It was the only way to spare her life. I suppose it’s possible she may have help, she is cunning and manipulative. But why now?”

“Could it be she wants revenge on you, for your part in her banishment.”

“I pleaded with the Eitrix for leniency on her behalf! Banishment was the only way to save her life.”

“I guess she sees it differently. The question is what do we do now?”

“I wish I knew Sir John, for the time being, I’ll put a protection spell on Greta, then after I do that, I’ll go to the Eitrix, and tell them Zatanica is up to something. I just

hope they don't decide to execute her, she is still, my sister.”

Two sisters, two witches, two different paths.

Believe it or not there was a time when Frieda and Zatanica Hexe were quite close. They were inseparable as children living with their parents, both witches in Germany. They were loved, and gave love freely. Zatanica followed her older sister Frieda everywhere, and both took their witch craft teachings very seriously. But as time went by, when they were teenagers, Zatanica felt Frieda was the favorite child and grew to resent her. She took things from her, clothes, makeup etc. She even stole a couple of Frieda's old boyfriends. Zatanica grew to feel that the only way for her to get noticed, and out of her sister's shadow was to amass power. Unfortunately, that meant switching from light magic to dark magic. She studied her new lessons in darkness in secret. It did not take long for her to master it

quickly, and proficiently. She left home at nineteen and never looked back. Her sister and family were now dead to her. Power was all she craved. When she desired something, it was hers for the taking. Even love. She married a Typical from England, but she eventually grew bored and left him. He died years later. Many believed Zatanica was responsible for his untimely death, but it was never proven. Zatanica continued her dark magic way of life before she was ultimately brought forth to the Eitrix. Now even in exile, she is up to no good.

Oma Frieda heads for the attic where her spell room is hidden. Sir John exits, and takes his place on his pedestal with Nobu beside him. Oma Frieda reaches the attic, which looks like any other attic, filled with boxes, holiday decorations, and old clothes hanging on racks. However, she pushes a false panel in the wall which leads to a secret room, hidden to everyone else in the house. It is dark, filled

with many book cases, stacked with many old spell books, and small jars of different powders and liquids. In the middle of the room is a large table for mixing various ingredients to cast spells. A large black cauldron sits atop an old stovepipe stove in the corner of the room. She lights several candles, and perusing the different books, she picks one out. She places it on the table, and begins turning the pages searching for the spell she is looking for.

Greta wakes up the next morning, still tired from the excitement of last night's activities. Sir John and Nobu are seated in the room with her.

“Miss Greta, Lady Frieda would like to see you before you leave for school. She is in the attic.” informs Sir John.

“The attic?” she says with a tone of surprise. Oma told me never to go up there.”

“I believe this is a special one-time invitation.”

Greta throws off her blanket and heads for the attic, with Alice in tow. She slowly begins to ascend the stairs, and walks inside, unsure of what she’ll find. She spies the candle light shining through the opening leading into the secret room.

“Oma, are you in here?” she asks hesitantly.

“Come in Greta.”

Greta enters, and sees Oma Frieda mixing some ingredients in a mortar. Greta walks over, and stands in front of Oma Frieda. She pours the contents of the mortar into a small jar. The liquid is bright green, and swirls about

in the jar. She shakes the jar and the liquid changes into a green cloud. She holds the jar a few inches from Greta,

“Close your eyes Greta,”

She gently blows the green cloud emitting from the small jar into Greta’s face, while reciting the magic words;

“Defendat Hac Madchen Von Allem Nocere.”

(Protect this girl from all harm.)

The cloud is absorbed into Greta’s whole body.

Greta opens her eyes, “What was that Oma? And what is this room?”

“My spell room. I cast a protection spell over you so Zatanica can do you no harm. You’ll be perfectly safe now.”

She places a cork in the jar and sets it on her table while Greta walks around looking at all the books and spell jars.

“This is so cool Oma.” she says impressed.

“Yes, I suppose it is. Now hear me, loud and clear, you are never to come in this room without me present Greta, you don’t know what these spells can do. It could be very dangerous.”

Greta nods, still looking at all the old books.

“Now Greta, I have to leave for a day or two. While I’m gone, you are safe, and have nothing to fear. If you want, invite your new friends over. It’ll take your mind off of what happened last night.”

“Yes Oma,” she says still eyeing the many books and jars on the shelves. Some of the titles include,

Cloaking potions, spells to open portals, and transfiguration. The jars are filled with powders, and liquids of every color.

Oma Frieda grabs Greta by the hand, and pulls her out of the room. She moves the fake panel back into place, while Greta peers around her still looking into the room.. They head down to the kitchen. Before Oma Frieda can whip up breakfast, the doorbell RINGS. Greta runs to answer it, cautiously looking through the curtains first to see who it is. She smiles, and opens the door to see Lucas standing there with his bike, a blue mountain bike with several scratches and dents.

“Hi Lucas!”

“Hey Greta, I thought if you want, we could ride to school together.”

Oma Frieda appears in the doorway.

“Who is this?” she inquires.

“Oma, this is Lucas, one of my new friends. Lucas this is my Oma.”

“Oma?” he says not familiar with the term.

“Yes, she’s my grandmother.”

“She’s your grandmother?” he says shocked by her youthful appearance. Oma Frieda smiles.

“I would love to ride to school with you. Is that ok Oma?”

“Sure. Have a good day, I’ll see you when I get back, and remember what I told you Greta.” she says firmly.

“I remember.” Greta walks out, and they go to the garage where she keeps her bike. She lowers the door behind her, and the two ride off together side by side.

“Your Oma sure is pretty, I would have thought she was your mother.” says Lucas.

Greta smiles, “Yeah, she moisturizes a lot.” chuckling at her little joke to herself.

They arrive at school a few minutes later, and join the others at their usual table in the cafeteria. Greta puts her backpack down and goes to get a bagel from the food line. Lucas puts down his pack next to Greta’s and sits down, he smiles at Amy and Madison and says,

“Good morning guys! Amy, Madison, Lucas thinks you both look very nice today.” he says.

The two girls look at each other confused by Lucas’ speech pattern.

“Why are you talking like that?” Madison asks him.

“It’s something new I thought I’d try, referring to myself in the third person. Cool huh?”

“You sound like an idiot.” says Amy.

“A big one!” adds Madison, while Eli nods in agreement. Lucas holds his hand up,

“Whoa, Lucas doesn’t like this!”

Rico pats Lucas on the shoulder and says;

“Consider it a noble experiment that failed. I noticed you and Greta came in together.”

Lucas smiled and replied, “Yeah we biked to school together this morning.”

“Nice! replies Rico.

Amy and Madison both squeal in unison;

“Oooohhh!

Lucas glowers at them. Greta returns with her bagel, and cream cheese, and sits down. She tells them how Lucas met her Grandmother, and how she came to live with her in America now, since her parents are dead. They all express remorse at the sad news about her parents and they then tell her about their own home lives. Amy, Rico, and Eli all have two parents and siblings. Lucas, is an only child with a mother, and no father, and Madison, two parents, no siblings. Greta then tells them that they are all invited to hang out with her on Sunday in her new fancy rec room. They are all excited for the invitation and look forward to it.

Later that day in the hall, Greta pulls Madison aside, and into one of the girl's bathrooms. She checks to make sure they are alone and tells her that she thought about what she said, and has decided to tell her new friends that she is a witch on Sunday when they all come over. Madison hugs

her and tells her she won't regret that decision. Greta thinks about it and realizes it's the right thing to do, you can't build a friendship with deceit and lies, you need to build trust. As they leave, Ruprecht Knecht's astral projection appears in the mirror over the sinks. He watches them leave, rubbing his thin, gnarled hands together, and smiles an evil little smile.

Ruprecht Knecht, also known as the mad alchemist, lived in another world before his banishment to Yllek. He once was a mortal, and a physician. But things took a dramatic turn when his wife and children were killed while he was with a patient. He went through a very dark period. He abandoned medicine for alchemy. He spent years trying to bring his family back to life but to no avail. He left his village, and wandered through the forests and mountains of

his land. It was in one of those mountain ranges where he lost his footing and fell into a deep dark ravine to his death. An evil spirit who dwelled there found his broken body and restored it with life. For years he was the spirit's indentured servant committing terrible acts of violence against his own people. In return for his services, the spirit bestowed on him great powers of alchemy and dark magic. One day, convinced he had mastered his craft, Ruprecht killed the spirit. But before taking his final breath, the spirit cursed Ruprecht to the horrible countenance he wears to this day. Ruprecht continued his evil ways until he was eventually captured and sentenced to banishment to Yllek. He too, was stripped of his powers but over time managed to gain most of them back through alchemy. It was in Yllek, where he eventually met Zatanica, and fell in love with her. The love was unrequited, for Zatanica found him hideous. Hideous, but useful, together they worked on restoring Zatanica's

powers. Over time, they were able to restore a portion of her powers, but not the Blegosi amulet which would have increased her powers tenfold. Ruprecht made a vow to never stop trying to reinstate all of Zatanica's powers, for the woman he loved, yet, who treated him like a lackey.

Chapter IX

Murder at the Mall

Saturday morning arrives, it is a beautiful crisp, Autumn morning, and Greta is sleeping in bed, with Alice by her head. The door to her closet opens, and a large metal box floats out, decorated with balloons painted all around it. Its hand crank is slowly turning, playing “Pop Goes the Weasel” softly. Greta sits up, and walks over to the box as the music continues to play. Greta carefully unlatches the lid, and raises it up. Just as the music was getting to the ‘Pop Goes the Weasel’ part of the song, the music stops abruptly. Greta apprehensively peeks inside. Suddenly, a clown leaps up from inside the box, and the music starts again just as the clown hits Greta in the face with a pie. The clown and box quickly disappear into thin air. Greta is standing there, with cream, and fruit running

down her face. She wipes away two large pieces away from her eyes and sighs, some more pieces of pie drip out of her mouth, and fall to the floor. Greta stands there a little annoyed.

“Oma!” she says frustrated, then calming back down. “Oh well, I was going to take a shower anyway.” She heads for the bathroom, closing the door behind her.

She dresses quickly anxious to meet her friends, where they are going to spend the entire day at a mall in the next town over. The doorbell RINGS, Greta answers it, and everyone is there but Rico. Rico was being driven to the mall by his father in the minivan that holds his chair, and Amy’s mother was driving everyone else in her Lincoln Navigator. They all get pile in the Navigator, Lucas and Eli are seated in the second row of the SUV’s three rows, and Amy, Madison, and Greta sitting in the last row. They are

all excited for their trip. The mall is somewhat small compared to other malls. Its only two stories tall, but it does have a food court, a movie theatre, and lots of special interest stores. Amy's Mother pulls up in front of the mall entrance and lets everyone out. Rico is already out front waiting in his chair, having just been dropped off. Amy's mother tells them she'll pick them up at 5:00 o'clock and drives off.

"I can't wait to take Greta to Eclectic's, they have a fab collection of vintage clothes." says Madison.

"She took me there Greta, now I'm hooked on the place." replies Amy.

"O.K., I'm game." says Greta.

"Me and the guys are going to the comic book store, and the video game store. What time do you want to meet for lunch." asks Eli.

“We should meet at 1:00 because “Orion Galaxy Wars II” starts at 2:00.” says Lucas.

They split into two groups, boys and girls, each group going their own way. Lucas, Eli and Rico go into Comic World, their favorite store with thousands of comic books, graphic novels, and other things of interest. They proceed to peruse the new issue section.

“How much money did you bring Lucas?” asks Rico.

“Only thirty bucks, enough for lunch, the movie and a few comics. Oh cool, the new Spiderman.” he says picking the book up off the rack.

“I got forty, lunch, movie and the new Battalion II video game, so I’m trying to avoid looking at all the books.”

“Guys check this out.” says Eli.

They go over to Eli whose standing in front of the Collector’s Figurine case. “Whoa!” They all say in unison.

The large case contains about two dozen beautifully sculpted, hand painted, limited edition figurines of various superheroes ranging from a foot to eighteen inches tall. They spend about two minutes ogling them in all their intrinsic glory.

“Check out the Flash.” says Rico

“I like the Doctor Doom.” says Lucas. “\$300.00!!” he exclaims. “Man, I’ll never be able to afford that!” he says sadly.

“Let’s go and pay for what we got, this is depressing.” says Eli.

They pay for their purchases and head for the video store so Rico can get his game. They pass various stores, clothing mostly, but they all take time to stop in front of the pet store to look at the puppies and kittens frolicking in the window.

Meanwhile, Madison and Amy have taken Greta to Eclectic's, the clothing store populated by most girls around their age. They are holding up various items in front of Greta. Music from the 1980's plays on the store's stereo system. Amy puts a flat topped grey felt hat with a black band on Greta and tilts it to one side.

"You look adorable in that Greta." says Madison. Amy is going thru various tops on hangers on a nearby rack of tops Greta's size.

"No, No, No, Maybe." she puts the maybe at the front of the rack and continues. "No, No, Yes!" She holds

the top up. Madison nods approvingly, and Amy holds it in front of Greta, telling her to go and try it on. Madison quickly hands her a mini skirt she believes goes with the top.

“Here, try this on too.”

Greta emerges from the dressing room a moment later and models the outfit. She coyly poses from side to side as Madison and Amy shout their approval. Greta gives in and agrees to buy the outfit.

“Wait till Lucas sees you in that.” says Amy kidding.

“He’ll love it!” Madison replies.

“Guys, stop that!” pleads an embarrassed Greta.

Greta decides she wants to wear her new outfit, and puts her old clothes in a bag after paying. They check out a

few more places on their way to meet the boys for lunch. Soon, everyone meets at the food court. Much like their lunches at school, they all get their favorites, burgers, pizza, tacos, even Amy gets herself some ice cream from a nearby Baskin Robbins. Mall food courts, the United Nations of restaurants. Lucas sees Greta in her new outfit and his jaw drops causing the piece of pizza he just put in his mouth to fall on his plate.

“Whoa, look at Greta.” he says softly.

“She’s definitely a looker Luc.” replies Rico.

“Did you guys get a lot of stuff?” asks Madison.

They boys hold up their small bags.

“Greta got a new outfit, hat, top, and skirt.” she says.

“What do you think Lucas?” asks Amy.

Lucas fumbles about for a second, then trying to act cool, he casually replies,

“Nice.”

The girls all look at one another and smile.

“Did you get the tickets Eli.” asks Amy.

“Yep, you all owe me five dollars.”

They all hand over a five dollar bill to Eli. After they finish lunch, they gather their trays, slide the remaining contents into the trash can, and place their trays on top of the receptacle. Then they start to make their way to the movie theatre. Chatting among each other, they pass several more stores and lots of shoppers.

“This movie is going to be awesome!” says Lucas.

“I’ll bet its better than Orion Galaxy War I.”

“No, way!” says Eli, “Sequels are never as good as the first movie!”

They enter the theatre, give the usher their tickets and go inside. They file into the tenth row, not too far, not too close from the screen. Rico, waits for his friends to sit before positioning his chair on the aisle beside them. Madison enters first, Greta second, Eli starts to go in after Greta but is pulled back by Amy so Lucas can enter and sit next to Greta.

“Go get us some popcorn Eli, I’ll save you a seat!” she says firmly.

Once they are seated, Lucas realizes he’s next to Greta, who smiles at him. He shyly looks down at the floor before smiling back.

Two hours later, the final credits roll on the screen and the crowd applauds. They all get up to leave, but is

stopped by Rico who refuses to leave in case there is a teaser epilogue. When he's confident the movie is over, they all head up the aisle to the exit. Amy looks at her phone to see the time and says,

“We have another hour till we have to meet my mom, what do you guys want to do?”

“The arcade?” asks Lucas. They all shrug, and agree to hit the arcade. Walking down the main aisle, coming towards them, they spot Ms. Jordan approaching them.

“Hey guys, doing a little shopping?” she asks,

“Yes, Ms. Jordan.” replies Greta showing off her new outfit.

“Very nice.” she says impressed.

“We just saw Orion Galaxy Wars II.” says Rico.
“Did you see it yet?”

“Not yet, but it’s definitely on my list.”

They say goodbye to Ms. Jordan and continue on their way. As they walk down the mall surrounded by stores on both sides, they stop, and pause for a moment.

“Did the lights just flicker?” asks Eli.

“Yeah, I hope it’s not another power outage.” replies Lucas.

“Well, if it is, at least we got to see the movie first.” says Rico stopping his chair. The lights begin to flicker again. This time several more people notice, and stop walking and look around. Towards the top of the building is a huge skylight, and the outside grows dark as clouds fill the sky. Suddenly, there are two flashes of light. Zatanica and Ruprecht appear in clouds of colorful smoke. They slowly float down to the ground not too far from Greta and her friends.

“Did you see that?” cries Lucas, “Where did they come from?”

“I don’t know.” replies Amy, “But that guy is ugly!” referencing Ruprecht.

“Oh no!” says Greta to herself, “Zatanica! How did she get here? Oma said she was trapped.”

Shoppers quickly run away, Greta and her friends gather behind an exhibit of a car which is first prize in a contest the mall is holding. Madison whispers to Greta,

“Is that the woman you saw in the windows and in the pool?”

Greta nods. Zatanica and Ruprecht start moving about while shoppers continue to run. Zatanica holds up two balls of mystic energy in her hands and hurls them at a

fountain destroying it, and sending water flooding down the main aisle. She calls out for Greta to reveal herself.

“What does she want with you Greta?” asks Lucas who is crouched beside her and the others behind the expensive sports car.

“I don’t know Lucas, but we have to get out of here fast.”

Eli pokes his head up fast, and ducks back down.

“I think there is an exit over by the music store. If we can get over there without being seen, we can make it outside.”

Ruprecht starts assaulting some of the shoppers, grabbing them and asking;

“Do you know where Greta is?”

When they reply no, he effortlessly tosses them aside several feet, and grabs another,

“Do YOU know where Greta is Dear Heart?” The response is the same, and he again tosses them aside.

Zatanica conjures up two balls of fire in her hands, and starts throwing them about the mall setting several store fronts on fire. The fire alarms go off, and the sprinklers turn on soaking the shoppers trying to get away. Greta and the Misfits are also getting soaked behind the car.

“All we have to do is get to the sunglass hut, then the “make your own mug” stand, and go down the aisle next to the music store, and we’re out.” says Rico. They nod in agreement and run to the sunglass hut by twos. Zatanica is still throwing fireballs and screaming for Greta. They all make it to the sunglass hut unseen by Zatanica and Ruprecht. The next point to get to is the make your own

mug stand. Again they move in twos to avoid being seen.

Ruprecht moves toward Zatanica,

“She doesn’t seem to be here your Enchantress.”

“She’s here, I know it! I can smell her!”

Zatanica starts to float up again as Greta and her friends quickly move from the make your own mug stand to the aisle next to the music store, and the exit. Rico is the first to the fire exit door followed by Eli, and Amy. They rush outside, with Eli holding the door open for the others.

Zatanica hurls more fireballs, setting half the mall aflame.

“Greta Hexe! If you don’t surrender to me, I will burn this mall to the ground killing everyone in it!!” To prove her point she throws some fireballs at several

shoppers setting them ablaze. They scream out in pain, but their screams are brief as they fall to the ground dead.

Madison, Lucas, and Greta make their way to the fire door when Greta stops in her tracks. She can't be responsible for the deaths of so many innocent people. She tells Madison and Lucas to go on without her. She starts to walk back out to the main aisle with Lucas and Madison following behind her. They take cover by the edge of the wall as Greta starts running toward Zatanica. Lucas and Madison call out to Greta to turn back and leave with them, but she ignores their pleas.

Zatanica spots Greta, and floats downward again. She and Greta are standing just a few feet apart.

“So, do you agree to come with me?”

Greta nods, “Yes, I will go with you, just don't hurt anymore people.”

Zatanica smiles and says,

“A wise decision. Ruprecht bring her to me!”

Ruprecht grabs Greta by her shirt collar and pulls her towards Zatanica. She waves her hand. A cloud of smoke appears at Greta’s and Ruprecht’s feet. It slowly begins to rise covering them in a red cloud.

“Remember! You said you wouldn’t hurt anyone else if I go with you.” Greta commands.

Zatanica looks sternly at Greta, a cruel smile plays upon her lips.

“I won’t.” she says looking around. She spies Ms. Jordan hiding in the entrance way to a sporting goods store. She is cowering beside her two shopping bags. Zatanica smiles and says;

“Well, maybe just one more, and she hurls an energy bolt toward Ms. Jordan, It strikes her in the chest, causing her whole body to be surrounded by a bright white light. The light quickly vanishes, and Ms. Jordan is turned to a grey ash, crumbling down to the ground in a pile of charred soot! Greta seeing her new teacher die, lets out a heartbroken scream;

“Ms. Jordan NOOOO!!!!”

Greta opens her eyes, still screaming, and bolts up from her bed. Alice leaps off. She is breathing very hard and is drenched with sweat. She calms down, and breathes a sigh of relief. It was all a dream as she looks at her clock and sees it is still Saturday morning.

Oma Frieda is getting ready for her trip to Eitrix, she is in her bedroom. She puts a few things into her bag,

slings it over her shoulder, and conjures a portal to Eitrix. The room quickly grows dark, and a spiral begins forming just a couple of yards from her. Frieda twirls her hand and arm in a circular motion. The spiral grows larger and opens into a black hole surrounded by bright colorful lights. The room almost seems to shake at the massive magical energy emanating from the opening. Frieda steps inside the black hole. She and the spiral quickly vanish leaving the room as it was before. Scant seconds later, in another dimension, the spiral reopens, and Frieda steps out. Again, the spiral vanishes from behind her.

Frieda is in large room, it is dark. Along one of the walls are several high back chairs. At the top of the chairs are perches. Frieda sits down on one of the empty chairs, and calmly waits, looking at her phone. On the opposite wall, a sliding door opens. A man steps out, the door closing behind him. He is tall, with white hair, and clean

shaven. He is dressed in a tweed jacket and woolen slacks. He walks past Frieda, stops, turns, and looks at her a second time.

“Frieda? Freida Hexe?”

Frieda looks up, and smiles at the man. She stands up, and the two embrace.

“Frieda Hexe, why, it’s been years!”

“Augustus! Augustus Wolfinger, it has been years. What are you doing here?”

Augustus Wolfinger, is a sorcerer, and an old friend of the Hexe family.

“I popped in to see the Elders, we’ve had a little demon trouble in Edinburgh. A trio of Pontianaks.

“Aren’t they a form of Succubi?”

“Yes, half the men in Edinburgh are scared to death.
But, what brings you here to the Eitrix?”

“My sister. She’s been projecting her image to my
granddaughter Greta from Yllek.”

“I thought she was powerless in Yllek.”

“So did I, but she may have someone, or someones,
there helping her. I wanted to pick the Elders brains.”

A few minutes later, Augustus Wolfinger bids her
goodbye, and Frieda sits back down and waits.

At home Greta has had her breakfast, and feeds
Alice hers. She picks up the cordless phone in the kitchen,
and calls Madison.

“Hey Greta, what’s up Luv?”

“Nothing, my Oma has gone away for a few days.

“Does that mean we’re not going to hang at your place tomorrow?”

“Oh no, that’s still on. What are your plans for the day?”

“I don’t know, Amy and I were thinking of going to the mall, want to come?”

“No!!” shouts Greta recalling her dream. “Why don’t we do something else instead.”

“We could go to Ollie’s.” suggests Madison.

“That sounds better.”

“I was going to sleep at Amy’s place tonight. Since your Oma is away, why don’t you join us? We could have a slumber party.”

“That sounds *wunderbar*, I would love too!”

Greta and Madison agree to meet at Ollie’s in a couple of hours. Madison says the boys will probably be there too, including Lucas. Greta turns red again with embarrassment, as she tells Madison to stop teasing her.

Later that day, the group are bowling at Ollie’s. It’s the boys against the girls. Rico positions his chair by the foul line and rolls the ball from his side. Lucas has just picked up a spare.

“You’re very good Lucas,” says Greta, “have you been bowling long?”

“Since I was about 7. How bout you?”

“I don’t bowl very often, I think my best game was an 88.”

Eli comes over with a tray of snacks and sodas. They all grab at them. Next to bowl is Greta's. She walks just behind the foul line and throws her ball. It goes about 3 feet and lands in the gutter. She stomps her foot, and walks back to the ball return. Lucas tells her to keep her wrist straighter. She rolls her second shot and knocks down 9 pins. She jumps in the air, happy that the advice worked. She walks back and sits next to Lucas. He offers her some French fries, she tilts her head back, opening her mouth, and Lucas drops a couple of fries into her mouth. She smiles and tells him they are nice and salty the way she likes. He smiles back. Madison points out a little boy about three or four in the next alley who has rolled gutter ball after gutter ball between his legs. She whispers to Greta,

“Can you help that little guy out with a little...you know.” Greta smiles and looks around. When it's the boy's turn again, she looks at the boy's bowling ball and motions

her head toward the alley. The little boy once again rolls the ball between his legs, it goes slowly about three feet heading toward the left gutter. Then suddenly, it veers right to the middle, and heads for the center pin picking up speed as it travels down the lane. It hits the first pin knocking it over, then all of the rest of the pins come crashing down for a strike. He turns around smiling, as his father jumps up and down, proud of his little boy. Greta turns to Madison, and they both smile.

“Fab Greta, Fab!” she says softly. Greta takes another French fry from Lucas’ plate and chuckles. When the game is over, the boys have won by a score of 365 to 224. They inform Greta they will be at her place tomorrow around three o’clock. They gather their things and leave. Greta, Madison, and Amy head for Amy’s house for dinner and their slumber party. The boys go to their own houses to eat and will meet later for their sleepover at Rico’s.

A few hours later the girls have finished eating dinner and have changed into their pajamas. They are in Amy's room listening to music, laughing, and dancing. They are listening to some 1980's music and trying to teach Greta some dance moves, like the Cabbage Patch, the Moon Walk, and the Electric Slide.

Greta notices a keyboard and asks Amy if she can play. She says yes. She explains her, her brother, and sister all took lessons when they were younger before she got into gymnastics. Madison tells her to play something. Amy turns the keyboard on, places her fingers on the keys, and plays a short version of Moonlight Sonata by Beethoven. Greta is amazed at her talents. Amy says she's nowhere near as good as her older sister. Madison pulls Greta aside and suggest she tell Amy about her secret. Greta gives it a thought, and decides it would be good practice for when she tells the boys tomorrow. Madison tells Amy to listen to

what Greta has to say. Amy looks at Greta and listens intently.

“I wanted to tell you something about me, Madison found out on her own, but I’m going to tell you. Aside from the boys, you must promise not to tell a soul what I’m going to say.”

Amy crosses her heart, telling Greta she promises. Greta takes a deep breath and tells her rather bluntly,

“Amy....I’m a witch.”

Amy smiles and looks at Madison who nods to her. Amy rolls her eyes and says,

“Yeah, right.”

“No, it’s true Amy, I saw her do things myself, she really does have powers, I’ve seen it.”

Amy shakes her head, stands up and asks Greta,

“O.K. if you’re really a witch do something magical.”

Puzzled, Greta asks her, what does she want her to do? Amy thinks for a moment and says,

“O.K. you just heard me play a piece of classical music on my keyboard. I happen to know for a fact Madison can’t play a note. If you can make her play, I’ll believe you.” She hands the keyboard over to Madison, who places her fingers on it. Greta shrugs, and waves her hand. Madison instantly starts playing Swan Lake, never having even heard it before, flawlessly. When she’s done, she smiles and laughs. Amy stands there, her eyes wide, and her mouth open.

“Oh my God, you’re a witch!” says Amy.

“Do something else.” says Madison.

“Alright. I’ve been working on this.”

Greta holds her arms outstretched at her side, and begins to float up in the air. She moves around the room and then lands where she took off. Amy and Madison are laughing and squealing uncontrollably.

“You’re not frightened of me?”

“Why should I be?” says Amy. The three of them hug. Madison turns up the music and the three girls start to sing “Girls just wanna have fun.”

Zatanica watches Greta and her new girlfriends frolicking together and shakes her head.

“Unbelievable!” she shouts. “Trusting ‘Typicals’ by revealing her powers to them, such a childish mistake. Doesn’t she know they can’t be trusted!” She clears the

smoke away from her vat and summons Ruprecht. He appears in a cloud of blue smoke, and she tells him to watch Greta's other friends, the boys for a while. He takes over, as Zatanica exits the room.

In Rico's bedroom, the boys are sitting around reading comic books. It is a nice, large room, with a bed that has another bed in a pull out drawer. Lucas usually sleeps there when he stays over, and Eli brought an old sleeping bag from camping trips with his parents. As soon as one finishes a book they pass it on to the next person and so on and so on, until each has read the same book. Then, they start another round of three new books.

“Wouldn't it be great to do this every day?” asks Lucas. “Just read comics and play video games.”

“You mean like we do every day during the whole Summer?” asks Rico sarcastically.

“Yeah, but it’d be nice to do it the other three seasons too.”

Rico shakes his head.

“We sure crushed the girls in bowling today.” states Eli.

“Yeah, next time we should make it interesting and bet something. Losers buy the winners smoothies or something.” suggests Rico.

“I’d be up for that.” says Lucas.

They finish their reading, and move onto video games. While playing, Eli moves off the bed down to the floor, beside where Lucas is playing. He asks how things are going with Greta. Lucas, embarrassed, quickly tries to

change the subject but is also goaded into answering the question by Rico. He tells them things are o.k., and that he likes her. He asks them both if they think she likes him as well. They reassure him, by both saying yes.

“You gave her some bowling tips, she seemed to appreciate that.”

“Yeah, but if we bet smoothies with them, don’t give her any more tips.” replies Rico. The three of them laugh. After playing games, they go to raid the refrigerator for a snack before going to sleep. Eli helps Rico into his bed, and Lucas snuggles under the blanket on the slide out bed. He thinks about what they said about Greta liking him, and smiles. Closing his eyes, he goes to sleep. They will all be in for a surprise tomorrow when Greta tells them the secret she told Amy earlier.

A few hours later, Lucas awakens in the middle of the night to use the bathroom. When he returns, he goes to get back into bed. He pulls away the blanket, and finds a bunch of snakes intertwined, slithering about in his bed. He screams out, waking Eli and Rico. When they ask him what's wrong, he points to the bed. Eli pulls the blankets away a second time and all that he sees are Lucas' socks that he took off earlier to go to sleep.

“This is what made you scream like a girl?” he asks holding up the socks to Lucas.

“No! I saw snakes, a bunch of them! Crawling all around in my bed.” Rico shakes his head and assures Lucas he must have been dreaming, but Lucas protests.

“How could I get up to use the bathroom if I was dreaming? I saw snakes, real snakes!” Eli and Rico look at each other unsure what to think.

“Maybe you saw your socks in the dark and thought they were snakes. Whatever it was, they are gone now.”

Lucas reluctantly gets back into bed, as do the others, and they all go back to sleep. Outside the window, is an astral projection of Ruprecht looking in. He is rubbing his hands together, and laughing at the boys. His image slowly begins to fade away.

The next morning, Oma Frieda is still away at the Eitrix, so Greta has had to awaken on her own again, as Oma only uses magical alarm clocks on school days. She gets her own breakfast, showers, and gets dressed. Just simple black jeans and a t-shirt today. She goes down to the basement to get ready for her friends arrivals. Greta’s rec room is a wonderful room with everything a kid could want in it. The ceilings are high, the floors hardwood. There is a

separate kitchen, and a pool table. There is also a large screen TV, with video games to play. The room features a state of the art sound system, and along one wall are vintage arcade games, and a pinball machine. There's also a ping pong table, and a basketball throw machine. Oma Frieda spared no expense furnishing it so Greta could entertain herself when she had to work late at her office. Greta looks around, and whips up a few extra items she thinks the others will like. She waves her hand and says,

“*Comici Bucher!*” Boxes of comic books appear in the corner. She looks at a long bare table in the kitchen area and says, “*Jedermanns Ventus!*”

The table is quickly adorned with all of the gang's favorite snacks, and foods; burgers, pizza, chili burgers, lasagna, tacos, and even ice cream for Amy! The front door bell rings, and Greta nods confidently that everything is

perfect. She runs up the stairs to let her friends in. When she opens the door she notices they all have their backpacks and inquires why they have them, telling them that back in Germany, kids only use them for school.

“Here, we always carry them around Greta. You can fit a lot in them, and it doesn’t ruin your clothes with everything bulging out of your pockets.” replies Madison.

“Yeah, take me for instance.” says Rico, “I like to be prepared. I have my phone, water bottle, a book, scissors, tape, an apple, pens, pencils, some peanuts, my phone charger, money, and my tablet.”

“We’re not quite as prepared.” says Amy, referencing her and Madison. We have our phones, water bottles, tissues, a mirror, hairbrush, a little make-up, money, and some orange slices.” She glances at Lucas and

says, “Lucas tell Greta what you have in your backpack.”

She and the others smile.

“No, that’s ok.” Lucas says nonchalantly.

“It’s ok,” says Greta smiling at him. “Tell me what you have.”

Lucas unzips the top of his backpack and looks inside. “I’ve got my phone, a soda and Twinkies.”

“Twinkies are good. We have them in Germany too!” she says, trying to reassure him.

They all walk into the foyer, and are impressed by Greta’s home.

“Wow, this place is awesome.” says Lucas. He spies Nobu and Sir John standing by the stairs. “Eli, check this out.” The two stand between the two pedestals. Eli taps Nobu’s armor who remains motionless. Lucas climbs up a

couple of steps and lifts Sir John's visor. He sees nothing inside. "This is like something out of King Arthur."

Madison and Rico are standing by a large sarcophagus leaning against the wall.

"Is this real?" asks Rico.

"Yes," says Greta, "my Oma got it when she was in Egypt."

"Is there a mummy inside it?" asks Eli joining them.

"See for yourself!" says Greta, who goes over to join Amy and Madison, who are now looking at some artwork on the wall. Eli and Rico look at each other, then Eli, slowly opens the door of the sarcophagus.

"Ahh, Its empty!" says a disappointed Rico.

"Oh, he's probably around somewhere." Greta says calmly. The two boys look at each other again. Just then,

Alice decides to make an appearance. She brushes up against Madison and Amy, and purrs.

“Who do we have here?” asks Madison as she bends down, and picks up Alice. Amy starts tickling her under her chin.

“That’s Alice, my fam..my cat!” says Greta quickly correcting herself.

“She’s a real little snuggler.” says Madison before putting her back down.

Amy grabs Madison and gestures to a long hall off to the right with doorways to other rooms on both sides.

“There’s something weird about this place Madison, the rooms look so much bigger inside than they do from the outside.” Madison nods agreeing. “Greta, why does this house seem so much bigger on the inside than the outside?”

“Doesn’t it make sense to have a house with big rooms on the inside, if that’s where you spend most of your time?” Madison and Amy look at each other and smile.

“Yeah, I guess that makes sense.” says Amy.

Back in the waiting room of the Elders, the sliding door once again opens, and a black crow flies out of the other room, and lands on the perch above Frieda’s chair, and CAWS! Frieda knowing the procedure, stands up, knowing that she is next to speak with the Elders. She enters through the sliding door which closes behind her. It is a large dark room, with a bright light shining from above, down over the room’s center. In that center, is a large semicircular bench much like a judge’s bench in a courtroom. Seated there, are seven figures, the Elders of Eitrix! They are all old women, similarly, dressed in dark

hooded robes, obscuring their faces. At the end of their sleeves are long, old, bony wrists, and hands that extend outward. Frieda stands in front of them and bows.

“Why have you come to us Frieda Hexe?” asks the first figure. But, the question is not heard aloud, but inside Frieda’s own head, each word almost echoing in her mind.

“I fear my sister Zatanica is getting some of her powers back.”

The hooded figures turn to each other, the third asking,

“What makes you think this? She was stripped of her powers when you did the banishment spell we provided you.”

“She has been making herself known to my granddaughter, appearing to her astrally.”

The seven figures quietly confer among themselves for a moment or so. They then turn back to Frieda.

“Zatanica is not alone in the *Nachtlicher Wald*, there are others who were banished there in Yllek as well.

Among them, Ruprecht Knecht.”

“I never heard of him.” says Frieda.”

“He is a maniacal creature, an Alchemist by trade. If he could procure the right ingredients, it’s possible he could have restored a small portion of Zatanica’s powers. If, she could persuade him to.”

Frieda nods, knowing just how manipulative her sister can be. She asks them how she can stop Zatanica from getting to Greta. The Elders confess they need some time, but will come up with a solution as soon as possible. They tell her to wait outside. Frieda, feeling a little dejected goes back out to the waiting room.

Chapter X

To Quedlinberg?

Back at Greta's home, she and the others go down to the rec room. They are all stunned. 'WOWs' and 'OMG's' fill the air.

Greta picks a remote and pushes a button, and the 1980's band "THE B52's" Love Shack song starts to play through the surround sound system. Amy and Madison immediately start dancing with Greta on the lighted dance floor area. Lucas, Rico, and Eli head for the arcade games. Lucas and Eli start playing, with Rico states he's got winners.

After a couple of hours of fun, they take a seat at the table, and begin stuffing their faces with all the goodies Greta provided. Greta looks at Madison and Amy, then stands up in front of the others.

“I have something I would like to tell you guys, something about me, and my Oma.”

“Guys! Stop eating and pay attention, this is important.” demands Madison. “Go ahead Luv”

Greta takes a deep breath, and calmly tells her friends.

“My Oma and I are.....are...witches.”

She glances downward and away from their eyes, as they all look at one another. Madison nods her head.

“It’s true guys! I saw her.”

“So did I” chimes in Amy.

“What do you mean you saw her?” asks Rico.

Madison continues,

“The soccer ball in the gym, Makenzie tripping over nothing. And I saw her make a cat float out of a tree into her arms.”

“Do you mean you and your Grandma, are like Wiccans?” asks Lucas. Greta shakes her head no.

“Guys, magic, spells, they have powers!” Madison protests. The others all look at one another, then Rico speaks up.

“Show us something Greta!”

Greta looks at Madison unsure of what to do. Madison whispers in her ear and Greta smiles.

“Rico, wheel yourself as close to that wall as you can get your chair.” she says to him. Rico obliges, and pushes the button starting his chair. He gets his chair as close to the wall as possible. Greta waves her hand, and

Rico's chair tilts back, and proceeds to move up the side of the wall! It tilts a second time, and wheels Rico across the ceiling. Rico is laughing, amazed by what is happening, as are the others. Greta continues wheeling Rico's chair back down the opposite wall until he is safely to the floor again.

"That was awesome!" shouts Rico.

"Can you do something else?" asks Eli.

"Guys, she's not a trained dog!" chides Madison.

"But she was quite hesitant about telling you this, so you have to promise not to tell anyone. She trusts us, and we shouldn't break that trust." continues Madison. "Promise?"

They all promise, and then continue playing in Greta's rec room. Greta takes Madison by the hand, and they go upstairs. They proceed to head for Frieda's attic.

"I thought of something else I can do."

“What?” asks Madison.

“I’m going to take everyone to Quedlinberg, the village I grew up in.” says Greta excitedly.

Watching, and listening to this from Yllek, is Ruprecht. He is gazing at Greta, and Madison, and tapping his long slender fingers together.

“So, Dear Heart you are planning to take your friends on a little trip eh?” He glances to his right and continues, “I think the Dark Enchantress would be most interested in this bit of information.” He exits to find Zatanica.

Greta and Madison go into the attic, and Greta opens the sliding panel to Frieda's spell room. She points out the bookcase with all the spell books to Madison.

“The third shelf, the fifth book, could you bring that book to me, it says Portals on it.”

“Why can't you get it?”

“I promised Oma I wouldn't go into that room when she wasn't here.” She smiles at Madison. Madison smiles back, and nods.

“Ah, a little loophole. I love it!”

She walks inside, and heads for the bookcase. She plucks the right book from the shelf, and exits. Greta replaces the sliding panel, and the two head back downstairs.

Back in Yllek, Ruprecht has notified Zatanica of what he saw, and she is once again watching from her cauldron vat alongside Ruprecht.

“Quedlinberg, eh Greta? I think you are about to make a slight detour.”

Greta and Madison enter the rec room, Greta is carrying the book. She tells everyone they will go outside to the backyard. Greta leads the way. Oma Frieda has a nice, large backyard. Greta places the book on a picnic table near a small bbq, and opens it. She reads the spell’s directions, which call for some candles and salt. After procuring those items from the kitchen, she tells everyone that they are going to Quedlinberg. They protest at first, but when she tells them they will only be gone for a couple of hours, they relent and agree. She pours out the salt into a circle on the ground as per the instructions in. Amy and

Madison light some candles, and place them around the circle. They grab their backpacks and they all step inside the circle. Greta places Alice by her feet.

In Yllek, Zatanica continues to watch, she looks at the book and reads the spell to herself, she waves her hand conjuring a feathered pen. Where the spell's final words in the book read *reach my destination*, she uses the pen to change the words to *Yllek*.

Greta tells everyone to hold hands while she reads the spell. As she reads the words, a large spiral, much like the one Frieda used to get to the Eitrix appears over their heads. The wind blows the leaves on the ground, as well as everyone's hair. The Spiral grows larger, and larger, and begins to descend over Greta and her friends. There's a strong magical burst of energy, and the spiral and everyone

quickly disappear. The only thing left behind, is Frieda's spell book lying on the grass.

Greta and her friends, still holding hands, are flying through a black hole. They are all frightened by the darkness and are screaming loudly. Suddenly, the spiral opens over a field, and they all drop out of it falling to the ground several feet below. They each land with a loud THUD including Alice who lands on top of Greta. They sit up and shake it off. They slowly stand up, and rub their sore bottoms.

"I'm sorry everyone, this was my first time opening a portal. I didn't expect such a bumpy landing."

"That's ok." says Lucas. "I think we're all ok. Right guys?" They all look around at one another and nod.

"That was cool Greta!" says Amy.

“Yeah! Really cool!” replies Eli.

“Uh Guys...a little help please.”

They all look around and in unison shout “Rico!”

Poor Rico, when he landed, his chair tipped over on its back when the portal released him. He stares up at them as they gather around him.

“You look like a turtle on its back Rico.”

jokes Lucas.

“Funny! Get me up!!” he shouts. Eli and Lucas upright Rico in his chair. He shakes it off and asks Greta if this is her village. Greta looks around, the field is quite open, the sky is blue, and a cool crisp breeze blows gently around them. Greta hesitantly replies.

“I don’t remember an open field this big.”

Lucas cries out, and points in the distance.

“What is that?” They all look and see a cluster of trees, and a forest, drenched in complete darkness in the middle of the day!

Suddenly, the ground begins to shake, and just a few feet from everyone, the ground splits in two. It opens up like the doors of an elevator, and a staircase appears. It leads down into the hole. A small figure, about two and a half feet tall walks up the stairs. He approaches the kids as the ground reconnects behind him, looking like it did before. The little man moves closer. He is clad in purple pants and top, a large, purple, floppy hat with a white feather in the headband, and a blue and yellow cape. He has pointy ears, and is clean shaven. He looks quite angry and starts to shout at them. Alice’s ears go back, and she HISSES, unsure of the strange little man.

“What’s with all the loud banging! You’re shaking the dirt from my ceiling, and walls all over my floor! I insist you stop now!”

Greta, and the misfits all stare at him in disbelief, their mouths wide open.

“We are definitely not in Quedlinburg.” says Greta. The little man continues.

“Quedlinburg? Never heard of it! You’re in Yllek.”

“Yllek? Never heard of it.” says Lucas.

The little man glowers at Lucas.

“Well, you’re in it Shorty.” replies the little man. Lucas looks at the others as if to ask whose calling who shorty.

“What is your name Sir? asks Greta.

“I am Gellbenop Berenbir.” he replies, removing his hat, and bowing before her. He then looks up at Greta, and steps closer, looking her in the eye.

“You’re a Witch, aren’t you?”

“Yes, and I’m sorry about your floors, we didn’t mean to land so hard.”

Gellbenop smiles at Greta. He then looks over at the others.

“That’s alright. At least it wasn’t raining.” he says still smiling, “Dirt is easy to brush away, mud is a heck of a lot harder! What brings you to Yllek?”

“We didn’t mean to come here, it sort of just happened. Mr. Berenbir, what exactly are you?”

Gellbenop bows again,

“I am a Gnome.”

“You live underground?” asks Madison.

“All Gnomes live underground. It’s not bad at all, cool in the summer, warm in the winter. Its only annoying when top dwellers make too much noise!”

“Again, we’re sorry about that.” says Greta.

“Forget it! It was worth it, I never met a witch before. You’re a White Witch unless I’m mistaken.”

Greta nods.

“How did you know she was a witch?” asks Rico.

“I don’t know, I just did.” He spies Alice at Greta’s feet. “Is that you’re familiar?”

“Yes, this is Alice.” The little man nods.

Madison notices that Greta’s book is missing.

“Greta, your book, its gone!” Greta looks about and realizes Madison is correct.

“Oh no! You’re right Madison!”

“Don’t we need that book to get back?” asks Amy fearfully.

“It’s alright.” says Rico, I was videoing you when you cast your spell Greta.” He shows a portion of the video on his phone.

“That’s a relief.” says Lucas, “But I’m sure Greta would have remembered it.”

Greta is worried. She does not want to lose her Oma’s book. She thought it would have come through with the rest of them.

“Maybe your book landed over there in the village.” says Gellbenop.

“Or, maybe over there in that dark forest.” Lucas replies a little scared of the idea.

“Let’s try the village first.” insists Gellbenop.

“He’s cute!” gushes Amy to Madison. “I just want to pick him up.” Gellbenop smiles at her. They continue to walk towards the village.

Gellbenop Berenbir, is a Gnome. There are quite a few of them in the land of Yllek. He is quite young by Gnome standards, only about a hundred and seventy five years old, hence the absence of a long white beard like most Gnomes have. He is a gardener, and groundskeeper by trade, like most Gnomes. He lives alone, and likes it that way. He is enchanted, as is the pick axe he carries in his belt. He uses it to fire a mystic charge of energy when he is tunneling underground and comes across a large rock blocking his way.

“Everyone look up there!” shouts Eli.

They all look up in the sky, and spy a flutter of colorful butterflies high above them. Only, these butterflies are the size of eagles. They all marvel at the sight of the giant beautiful creatures. Then, over to their right, they see something really amazing, a blessing of unicorns galloping across the field.

“OMG unicorns!!” squeals Amy and Madison.

Greta and the others also witness them running by.

“I always thought they were folklore.” says Greta.

“They’re *schoen* (*beautiful*)!”

“You don’t have unicorns where you’re from?” asks Gellbenop, “They’re all over the place here.”

A few minutes later they arrive at the village. There is a festival going on, and people, young, and old are

milling about. Some are playing games, some are showing farm animals. Some have tables where they are selling their wares. Greta, Gellbenop, and the Misfits are wandering around. Greta sees some houses all with the same markings above the front door. She recognizes them from Frieda's teachings. They are Apotropaics. Symbols used to ward off evil from a person's home.

“Gellbenop,” she asks, “those symbols, what evil are these people afraid of?” Greta asks. Gellbenop waves her off, assuring her she need not worry about that. Eli sees a farmer with various sheep. They are all brightly colored, red ones, blue ones, yellow, green, etc. He asks Gellbenop why they aren't white or black like the sheep back home. Gellbenop casually informs him they are bred like that to save the time of dyeing their wool when they are shorn. Lucas and Eli shrug thinking makes sense.

Some of the villagers greet Gellbenop, and ask if he's racing today. He says no, but his cousin is. They look at Greta, and her friends, and their odd manner of dress.

"I think we kind of out stick out like a sore thumb." says Madison. Amy nods in agreement.

"You race Gellbenop? What? Cars? Horses?" asks Rico. Gellbenop replies,

"No, my four wheeled friend. I don't even know what any of those things are. We race Dino's, my cousin and I are part time jockeys, just to make a few extra gold crowns. Dino's are a big thing here, they have Dino racing all year round, mostly Gallminimus' and Pachycephalosaurus'."

The boys eyes light up as they look at each other.

“Dinosaurs!” they all shout. “You race Dinosaurs!”

Gellbenop nods, and points over to a racetrack, similar to a horse track. They see several Gnomes dressed as jockeys sitting atop two types of dinosaurs each similar in size, and weight, approximately six to seven feet tall, fifteen to twenty feet long, and around 900 pounds. There is a race in progress, the boys run for a better viewing spot, with Rico following as fast as his chair will go, to see the extinct creatures racing around the track at about thirty five miles an hour. The girls casually stroll over with Alice following behind.

“Aren’t your Gnome friends afraid they’ll be eaten?” inquires Amy as she watches the race.

“Nah,” says Rico, “Those are herbivores right Gellbenop?”

“You are correct Sir.”

Rico guesses the winner in the next two races prompting Lucas to suggest they have Gellbenop make bets for them. Unfortunately, they do not honor dollars in Yllek prompting disappointment in the boys who were hoping for a financial windfall.

After watching the races, Gellbenop brings Greta, and her friends back to the Dino stables where they meet some of the Gnome jockeys. They even get to feed the Dinosaurs some leafy tree branches. Greta watches, and participates in the feeding, but she is still worried that the book is nowhere to be found. She takes Gellbenop aside, and the two start walking to avoid the others overhearing them.

“I haven’t seen my Oma’s book anywhere Gellbenop. It must have landed in that dark forest near where we arrived.”

“Before we venture over there, why don’t we try the Lost and Found office here first.” replies Gellbenop.

“Lost and Found office? Let’s go there right now!”

Gellbenop takes Greta, and the others to the office of the Yllek Lost and Found. It is a small building with a short, wooden front door, and a window on each side.

Gellbenop raps on the door. Seconds later, a frail old man opens the door. They all step inside. Once inside they see hundreds of shelves lining the walls, and reaching upward about a hundred feet. Eli who was the last to enter, quickly steps back out, and sees the building from the outside is only about nine feet tall, and about twelve feet wide. He steps back inside again, and eyes all the shelves filled with various objects people have lost. The little man asks if the item they lost is living, or dead. Greta puzzled by the question, tells him they lost a book. She describes it to the

man, and he climbs up a ladder in front of one of the shelf units. He peers behind some of the tall shelves, and then asks that they slide him over to the right. Eli and Lucas slide the ladder about ten feet to the right and the man continues looking.

“This is going to take forever.” laments Madison.

“Silence!” shouts the little man. He finds a small jar and proceeds to climb back down. The kids, all confused by the little man’s actions look at each other.

“I said I lost a book Sir, about this big.” says Greta gesturing with her hands.

The little man steps off the ladder, and walks behind a counter. He shakes the bottle several times, the orange liquid inside swirling about. He places the jar on the counter, and tells Greta,

“Let me do my job please, do you want to find your book or not?”

He opens the top of the jar and a cloud spills out, it rises and begins pulling all the items off their shelves. They float about in midair, swirling around in a funnel shaped cloud. Then from within the cloud two books fly out and land on the counter. The cloud fades away, and all the items reappear back on their shelves. The little man turns the two books around on the counter so Greta can read their titles.

“Either of these your book?” he asks.

Greta looks at the two books, and sadly shakes her head no.

“Try again tomorrow, maybe it’ll turn up tonight after the festival.”

“Thank you Sir.” says a dejected a Greta.

They walk outside, and head for the festival's exit.

“I guess we have no choice but to try that forest we saw in the field.” says Greta.

“I hope it is not there. That is the Nocturnal forest. It is forbidden to enter because it houses criminals, and evil beings from all dimensions. They are all trapped in there, and the worst of them all is presumed to be their leader. The Dark Enchantress, Zatanica.” says Gellbenop.

Greta stops dead in her tracks. Zatanica! she says to herself. “No, this cannot be!” Picking up Gellbenop, she holds him in front of her face and cries,

“Please tell me you are mistaken.”

“I wish I was Greta, I sense you heard of her? Is she from your world originally?”

Greta nods, realizing what has happened, she begins to fear for her friends lives. Tears fill her eyes, as she surmounts Zatanica somehow tricked her into coming to Yllek. Now, she and her new friends are in great danger.

“Zatanica is my Grand Aunt.” she tells Gellbenop, ashamedly. “I have to get that book back, then my friends, and I can leave here.”

Gellbenop pauses, then tells Greta,

The Nocturnal forest is very dangerous, ten times so, if you don't know it. I will be your guide young Greta, we will find your book, and then get out as if our lives depend on it. Because Greta, they will.”

Chapter XI

The Diabolicals

After walking back to the outskirts of the Nocturnal forest, they stop to go over some strategy, and have a quick snack before endeavoring inside. They remove their snacks from their backpacks, and Greta whips up a saucer of milk for Alice who proceeds to lap it up quickly. Gellbenop holds up his pick axe, and informs the others they will need some kind of protection, weapons to defend themselves.

“I figured I would protect them with magic.” says Greta.

“Yes, but you may not be the only one with magic in there, and what if somehow we get separated? Your friends will be dead ducks.”

“I wish I knew how to make a protection spell like my Oma did for me.” laments Greta. Then an idea comes to

her, she asks her friends to take out their phones. They remove them from their backpacks and hold them out to her. She waves her hand over them reciting the words *Blitzschlag!* five times, once for each phone. She tells them to each take a picture of some rocks lying on the ground about fifteen feet away. They do as she instructs, and when they hit the photo button, a blast of mystical energy shoots across at the rocks, striking them, and reducing them to a pile of pebbles!

“How’s that?” she asks Gellbenop as the others all marvel at what they just did with their phones.

“That should work Greta.” replies Gellbenop proudly. Amy asks Greta how Alice will protect herself. Greta tells Alice,

“Alice, show Amy what you can do.”

Alice hops onto a rock, she arches her back like a scared Halloween cat, and spins her tail three times. Alice suddenly transforms into a huge Black panther, and roars ferociously. Then, she quickly transforms herself back into the cute little black cat she normally is.

“Whoa!” says Amy. “Yeah, I think she’ll be ok.”

Gellbenop sits down next to Lucas as he drinks his soda, and eats his Twinkies. He inquires about the golden crème filled sponge cake, Lucas breaks off a piece, and hands it to him. He opens another pack, and gives Greta a whole one. Gellbenop eats the piece, and remarks that he’s never tasted anything like them before. Lucas gives him another piece.

“Why these are extraordinary! Are these plentiful in your world?” They all nod. “Most extraordinary!” he says continuing to devour the tasty treat.

“Do you have parents Gellbenop?” asks Madison.

“Oh yes, they are retired, and live on the Southern portion of Yllek.

“Do you have any brothers or sisters?” asks Greta.

Gellbenop rolls his eyes and nods.

“Oh yes, I have a hundred and twelve brothers and sisters!” he says.

“A hundred and twelve?” they all shout in response.

“Yes, I’m the last. Now, at my mother’s insistence, my father just flies his kite!”

After finishing their snacks, they proceed to enter the Nocturnal forest. It is completely black inside. The kids use the flashlights on their phones to see where they are going. Gellbenop lights a torch for himself. Eli asks him if his pick axe is sufficient protection. Gellbenop smiles and points his axe at a dead tree stump. A similar burst of

magical energy flies from one of the points, and obliterates the stump into kindling. A wide eyed Eli exclaims,

“I guess it is!”

The dark forest has many old, twisted trees, and the air is dank. There’s a foul smell that grows stronger the deeper they go into it. The wind whistles eerily through the leaves of some of the living trees’ leaves. Occasionally, the sound of strange animals can be heard crying, howling, or chirping from the blackness surrounding them.

All of a sudden, they hear a loud roar very close by. They gather together, and from behind some bushes a large saber toothed tiger comes charging out. His roar is ferocious sounding. He growls at Greta, and everyone else. He slowly approaches them, his huge front paws clawing at the ground. Lucas and Eli aim their phones at the tiger, but Greta tells them not to hurt it. She steps between the two

boys and the tiger. She waves her hands, then extends them out towards the tiger, while reciting the words,

“Tigris Catulum Redire!” (Tiger back to a cub!)

The savage tiger begins shrinking until it is the size of a baby cub, the ferocious roar replaced by a soft MEOW. The others look on in wonder. Madison and Amy rush over to the cub, and fawn over it. Amy picks it up;

“Oh, he’s so sweet! I want to keep him!”

“You do realize Luv that eventually he’s going to grow up, and look like he did before.”

Amy’s eyes widen, as she gently puts the baby cub back down on the ground, and releases it.

“Bye Bye Kitty, be good.”

As a Light witch Greta is compelled to observe the laws of life and death. She can never kill a living thing. She

can transport them to another world, or dimension, but she must respect nature, and its rules. She can also, never attempt to reanimate the dead. To do so, would be Dark magic.

They continue on, deeper, and deeper into the forest, looking for Greta's book but to no avail.

"I don't think we'll ever find it." says Greta. "We should probably go home. I'll tell Oma the truth about what I've done."

"I think that's wise." says Gellbenop.

"No!" cries Lucas, "It's not so bad here. We have protection. I say we keep going." The others voice their agreement.

"No, I'd feel terrible if any of you got hurt."

In Zatanica's castle, she has been watching Greta ever since they arrived. An angry look appears on her face.

“Oh, no you don't Greta! If you leave, I cannot hold you hostage, and force my sister here to undo her spell on me. Ruprecht!!”

Ruprecht Knecht appears instantly in a cloud of blue smoke.

“Yes, my Enchantress. How may I serve you?”

“Go out into the forest, and bring Greta, and her companions to me. Take your Diabolicals with you.”

“The Diabolicals? You're not fooling around are you? But first, I have a little gift for you.” He hands Zatanica a large Staff with a bejeweled gargoyle sitting atop it.

“I made it especially for you. It is nowhere near as powerful as your Blegosi amulet, but it will work with the amulet to increase your powers quite nicely. Take care though, if you were to lose one or the other your powers would diminish.”

Zatanica gently takes the staff from Ruprecht, and smiles.

“It’s beautiful!” she exclaims. She strikes the base of the staff on the ground. The gargoyle head’s eyes begin to glow as does the Blegosi amulet hanging around her long white neck. A burst of magical energy emits from it, shooting across the room, and blasts a hole in the wall.

“Excellent Ruprecht! Now go!”

Ruprecht exits. Zatanica smiles a cruel smile, and continues watching Greta through the smoke of her cauldron vat.

A moment later, Ruprecht rides out into the courtyard of the castle atop Impala, a horse like creature with antlers like a Stag, and a tail like a Crocodile. The courtyard is large, and open, leading to two huge wooden and steel doors, which lead out to the forest. Each one must weigh a ton. Adjacent to it, are several tall turrets, surrounding the ancient castle. They are made of stone with many small openings resembling windows at the top portion of the turrets. Ruprecht, removes a small bottle of magic powder from his coat and slams it down to the ground, shattering it. A small cloud appears, and grows, causing the doors to open. He then turns his gaze to the many openings in the turret and shouts "*Teuflische kommen nach vorne!!* (Diabolicals come forward!) From every opening in the turret, dark, shadowy like figures fly out by the dozens. They are dressed in tattered, black hooded robes. They are ghost like in the way they fly, very quickly,

but almost as if floating through the dark sky. The sound they make is horrific, an almost wailing cry that grows louder, and louder the closer they get. Ruprecht rides out of the doors, followed by the army of terrors he commands. They go off in the direction of Greta, and the Misfits. The Diabolicals are as old as time itself. Said to be minions of the underworld, they invade the dreams of the living, turning their dreams into nightmares. Some of these nightmares are so severe, the sleeping never awaken, and their souls are taken down to the underworld for all eternity.

Chapter XII

Duel with the Diabolicals

Greta poured another circle of salt on the ground, and the candles are relit. They step inside the circle, and clasp hands. She is going to take them home before any harm comes to them. She begins to recite the spell, when Ruprecht, atop Impala, comes riding into their area.

“Not so fast Dear Heart! The Dark Enchantress has plans for you!”

They unclasp their hands for a moment and look up at Ruprecht. They cannot believe the sight of Ruprecht atop Impala. Greta tells them to quickly hold hands again, so she can finish the spell. Before they can rejoin hands, the air is filled with the mournful wailing of the Diabolicals. The sound gets closer, and closer. They all cover their ears from the loud, shrill sound. Gellbenop, not as bothered by the

sound as much as Greta and her friends, looks up in the sky, and is the first to see the Diabolicals.

“Oh! This is not good! Not good at all!”

The Diabolicals swarm down, and try to grab the kids as Ruprecht shouts instructions.

“Get the slender girl with the long hair, her name is Greta, she is the most powerful!”

Greta’s friends take out their phones, and start firing them at the Diabolicals, Lucas hits one, and it bursts into tatters, and ashes.

“Bullseye! It’s just like a video game!” he shouts triumphantly.

Several of the Diabolicals swoop down, and strike Greta. She falls, striking her head on a rock, and is knocked unconscious. Gellbenop rushes to her side, and blasts away

at the Diabolicals surrounding her with his pick axe. The others continue firing their phones. Alice, mean time, has transformed again into a huge black panther, and is leaping up and down striking Diabolicals with her paws, reducing them into ashes as well. She sees Greta on the ground, and joins her. Gellbenop strikes the handle of his pickaxe on the ground causing the ground to open. Alice, gently grabs Greta by her shirt collar, and drags her into the newly formed hole. Several Diabolicals knock down Madison and Eli. They drop their phones in the assault, and are grabbed by two Diabolicals. They lift them into the air, and fly back towards the castle. Two other Diabolicals grab Rico's chair, and lift him up, carrying him away in the same direction. He begins to his phone aim at them but realizes a fall from this height could kill him. Lucas and Amy, at Gellbenop's direction, run towards the hole in the ground he made. They quickly leap inside for cover. Ruprecht leaps off Impala,

and heads for the hole. With himself, Greta, Amy, Lucas, and Alice safely inside, Gellbenop closes the hole.

Ruprecht falls to his knees, and starts pounding at the sealed hole with his fists.

“Ahhh! They got away! The Enchantress will not be pleased!” he growls.

He slowly stands up, and heads back to Impala. He climbs on top of him, and signals the remaining Diabolicals to head back to the castle.

Down below, underground, Greta is starting to regain consciousness. Gellbenop, Lucas, and Amy kneel beside her. Alice has transformed back to a normal cat. They tell Greta about the Diabolicals carrying off Rico, Madison, and Eli.

“We’ve got to get them back! Gellbenop, where do you think they’ve taken them?” asks Greta.

“Most likely the Dark Enchantress’ castle.”

“Can you get us there from here?”

Gellbenop thinks, and says, “Her castle sits atop an underground lake, I can get us there, but we’ll need something to get us across the lake.”

“I can conjure us a small boat!”

“Good, then we better get going now, every moment delayed is a moment closer to your friends demise!”

They get up, and proceed to travel thru a tunnel Gellbenop creates as they walk along underground. Amy, and Lucas light the way with their phones. After what seems like forever, but was in fact only about a half an hour of walking, they break thru the last wall to the lake. Greta

conjures a small rowboat which they all climb into. The castle is huge, they look up as they slowly row across. The walls seem to go on up for what seems like a 1000 feet. A few torches light the lower portion of the walls. Amy and Lucas turn off their phones, to save the batteries. The air is dank, and smells like rotting fish. They reach the other side, and begin to make the rest of the trek on foot. They see several tall stairways leading to various parts of the castle. They pick the widest stairway, and start walking up. They reach the next level and find themselves in a large room with a circular wall in the middle. They peer over the wall and see more water.

“A lake above another lake?” says Lucas.

“I don’t think it’s another lake, it looks more like a pool.” says Amy.

“Awfully dirty pool, you can’t see the bottom!”

Greta looks halfway out across the dark mass of water, and sees some bubbling at the top of the water.

“Lucas, Amy,” she says hesitantly, “I think there is something alive in there.”

The bubbles start to make their way towards them, slowly at first, but then picking up speed. They all back up from the wall. The water starts to ripple, and the surface breaks! A large reptilian like creature stretches its long neck out of the water, and lets out a terrifying roar. Its mouth reveals dozens of large, jagged, teeth. Greta, Amy, and Lucas scream at the sight of the giant monster. Water gushes down from its mouth, falling about 20 feet down to the top of the pool. The creature moves its massive head from side to side, eyeing everyone like they were the last morsel of food ever. It is blue green in color, with some scales, and what appear to be small wings, too small to

enable flight, on the sides of its great torso. Gellbenop, Amy, and Lucas begin firing their phones and weapons at the creature, but to no avail. Their bursts of energy have no effect on it. The creature dives back under water, and reappears a moment later, a little closer to the them. Greta moves closer, and places her hands over the water as the creature dives under the water again, and shouts out,

“See Gefroren Sein!!” (lake be frozen)

A coating of ice forms, and spreads across the entire pool. The ice grows thicker, and thicker, freezing the pool from top to bottom, trapping the creature under the frozen water. All that can be seen of the monster is its long neck, with both ends underwater. Alice leaps onto the frozen pond and hisses at the creature’s neck.

“Is it dead?” asks Amy.

“No, it’s just frozen, he’ll thaw out in a day or two.”
replies Greta.

“That was good thinking Greta.” says Gellbenop,
sticking his pick axe back in his belt. “Now, to find your
friends.”

“But how?” asks Lucas, “This place is huge, they
could be anywhere.”

“Yeah, its not like we can use our phone’s GPS to
find them.” laments Amy.

“GPS? maybe not regular GPS, but what about
enchanted GPS.” asks Greta smiling. She takes Amy’s
phone, opens the GPS app, and whispers a few words. She
pushes the start button, and gives it back to Amy. The app
begins to calculate its course, and the robotic voice begins.

“Go 100 steps and bear right at the first lit torch. Go thru doorway on left, and proceed 200 feet to next opening.”

“Awesome, let’s get going!” shouts Lucas.

The five start to follow Amy’s GPS, in hope of finding their three friends so they can all go home. They follow along a wide corridor. The air is cool, and skeletal remains line each side, remnants of victims long ago. Each archway they pass through, sticky cobwebs hang down. The app of Amy’s phone says they are just 10 minutes away from their friends location!

“It shouldn’t be long now.” says Amy as they all continue down the dark corridor, with Alice bringing up the rear.

Chapter XIII

Barium Kupter

Eli, Madison, and Rico, in his chair, are led down a dark passage way by another of Zatanica's underlings, Barium Kupter. Barium, believe it or not, was once in law enforcement, but an injury put an end to his career. Bitter, he took a job in a prison as a correction officer. But the elements he had to endure there, changed him. He became very cruel, and tortured the inmates he was hired to guard. He extorted them as well, until he was caught, and tried for his cruelty. He was sentenced by his world's governing body to exile in Yllek. Barium is a large, bald, bulbous eyed man, with crooked teeth, sallow white skin, and long dirty fingernails. Dressed in a long black frock over black pants, he pushes them along the way, urging them to move faster by cracking his long whip. They come to a small room with bars, and a steel door. He unlocks the rusty

padlock on the door, kicks it open and pushes the three kids inside knocking Madison to the ground. He slams the door closed, and walks away grumbling to himself. Madison gets up, and stands by Rico and Eli.

“You mates ok?” she asks.

Rico and Eli nod.

“Me too. How are we going to get out of here and find the others.”

“I’m sure they’re looking for us right now.” says Eli.

“If they are still alive.” bemoans Rico. They look inside their backpacks but find nothing they can use to try and pick the lock on the steel door.

“If only we still had our phones, we could blast our way out.” says Madison beginning to tear up.

“Don’t get upset Madison, I’m sure they are still alive, and looking for us right now. We’ll get out of this. Greta’s a pretty powerful witch.” says Eli trying to comfort her. Rico gestures to Eli,

“Eli, those bars look really old, you’re the strongest of us. Do you think you could bend or break them?”

Eli tries bending, and pulling on the bars, but despite their age, they are too thick for the thirteen year old to budge. He and Madison move over, and sit on the floor by Rico, hoping, and waiting for Greta, and the others to find them.

Chapter XIV

Reunited, and It Does Feel Good

Greta, and the others continue following the GPS on Amy's phone's. They travel down another long corridor, and find themselves in a large room. The air is not as foul smelling as the previous room. They come upon three archways next to each other. According to the GPS, they are to go through the one on the right. They slowly enter, while Gellbenop guards the rear.

Zatanica, and Ruprecht are watching them once again from Ruprecht's chambers. Ruprecht waves his hand sealing off the corridor Greta entered causing a dead end ahead of them. When they come to the dead end, they believe the GPS made a mistake, and retreat back, to try one of the other archways.

Ruprecht smiles at Zatanica, and says,

“Your turn Dear Heart.”

Zatanica waves her hand, and seals off the archway on the left leaving only the middle corridor for Greta, and the Misfits enter. When they exit the middle corridor, they find themselves in another part of the castle. Above them, there are many openings in the walls like the turrets in the court yard.

“Do it Ruprecht, send in the Diabolicals.”

“Yes, my Enchantress.” Ruprecht once again summons his army of spirits. They all fly out of the wall openings, and start their descent on Greta, and her friends. Their wailing sound is deafening, more so now that they are indoors and the shrill noise echoes off the castle walls.. Gellbenop, Amy, and Lucas fire their weapons again. They

manage to blast several of the Diabolicals into dust, but more quickly take their place.

“There’s too many of them Greta! Do something!”
cries Lucas.

Greta conjures a barrier of energy around her friends, protecting them from the onslaught. Taking only a second to think, she gets an idea, and summons a small mystical opening on the floor. It slowly rises, and grows wider. From in it, a funnel appears, and starts to swirl around. It grows, and grows, until it becomes the size of a tornado. It spins around, and around, sucking in the Diabolicals, first one at a time, then by small groups. Soon, all of the Diabolicals have been sucked into the tornado’s eye. Greta smacks her hands together, causing the tornado to retreat back into the mystical ring. Then, the ring,

disappears taking the Diabolicals away, somewhere to a dimension far away.

“They’re gone!” says Ruprecht heartbroken. “She killed my Diabolicals!” Ruprecht explodes into a fit of rage. “That little Brat!” Zatanica tells him to pull himself together.

But Ruprecht is unaware the Diabolicals are not dead, Greta merely transported them where they can do no harm.

Greta, and the misfits agree that it was a trap, and that the GPS was right, so they backtrack to go through the first archway.

Once inside, they come upon the dead end created by Ruprecht. Gellbenop uses his pick axe and blasts a hole through the wall. They carefully climb through the hole and resume using the GPS and continue onward.

Madison, Eli, and Rico are hoping that help will arrive soon. After a few more minutes, Eli and Madison stand up, after hearing something approaching.

“I hear footsteps.” whispers Eli.

“I hear them too.” responds Madison.

In a short time, Greta and others round the corner and see their friends. Greta rushes over, and grabs Eli’s, and Madison’s hands through the iron bars of the cell. She asks if they are ok. Gellbenop uses his pick axe to break the padlock open. The door opens, and Greta and the others

rush inside. They all hug each other. Lucas tells them about the sea monster creature Greta dispelled with her magic. They start to make their way out the open cell door, when Barium Kupter appears out of nowhere He slams the door closed trapping all of them inside!

“Zatanica may rule Yllek, but I am in charge of the jail! And no one leaves if I don’t want them to!” he growls.

A small ball of glowing energy appears between Greta’s fingertips. She is about to propel it at Barium when in a flash, he pushes a button on the wall outside their cell. The button causes the entire cell floor to drop down as if on a hinge, and they all fall through!

They find themselves in a dark tunnel, launching them downward, around several twists, and turns. Rico’s chair is on its back, and rolling down as well. Suddenly a panel opens, and they all fall down several feet into another dark,

cave like room. They all land with a THUD! Rico lands upright this time, the wheels of his chair bending slightly from the impact. They all grunt, and groan as they get to their feet.

“Next time my brother soups up my chair, I think I’m going to have him put in shocks!” says Rico.

They look around the room. It is circular, with a large cavern in the middle of it. There are several pillars holding up a large wraparound balcony. Two dilapidated staircases line two sides, remnants from centuries ago. There are also some smaller staircases, no longer useful, or leading anywhere. There are also a few openings along some of the walls leading to who knows where. Some areas are lit by torch sconces. As they get closer to the middle of the room, the darker it becomes.

“Where are we now?” wonders Amy aloud. They all spread out a few feet from one another to survey the room. Lucas, and Eli walk over to the large hole in the center, and carefully stare down into it. It is pitch black, and seems to go on forever. Then, in a split second their eyes open wide, and their mouths drop. They turn, and run away from the hole.

“Holy Crap!” cries Lucas.

“Run!” shouts Eli to the others. The others, all standing close by, turn, and look to see what frightened Lucas and Eli so. From inside the hole, climbing over the top, is a giant tarantula spider. It is the size of a small house, hairy, and getting closer to them. They all scream simultaneously. Alice changes into a black panther again, but only for a second before changing back into a cat, knowing very well she’s no match for such a large creature.

The spider shoots its web at them, covering them partially, in a thick, gooey, sticky covering. The kids and Gellbenop scream again, thinking they are going to be trapped in the spider's web and eaten alive. Greta thinks for a moment, but only for a moment. She raises her arms overhead as the giant spider draws closer.

“Eulen erscheinen und fliegen!” (Owls appear and fly!) she screams. Dozens of owls appear out of thin air, and fly towards the giant spider. Even though they are the size of gnats to the huge spider, owls are mortal enemies of spiders. The spider recoils, and backs away, as the owls fly all about, surrounding him. The spider, frightened beyond belief, breaks away, and retreats. It climbs down into the hole he emerged from, the owls following him down into the dark pit. When the spider is gone from view, everyone begins pulling its webbing off and toss it onto the ground.

“That was quick thinking Greta!” said Rico.

“Absolutely wicked!” gushes Madison.

“Ok, we’re all together. Can we please go home now. Our parents are going to kill us being away this long!” says Amy.

“I think that’s a good idea.” Greta agrees.

Before Greta can perform the spell that would send them all home, they hear the growling sound of a large animal. There, standing in a door way, is Barium Kupter. He is holding a large grizzly bear on a thick steel chain leash. Greta, and the Misfits slowly back away as he walks toward them, with the snarling beast leading the way.

“You may have beaten the spider, but you won’t beat him.” snarls Barium referring to the grizzly he is holding. He releases his grip on the chain, and the large

bear lumbers toward Greta, and the others! Greta once again shouts out a magical spell.

“Schneesturm kommen nach vorne! (Blizzard come forward!)

In the blink of an eye, a huge snow storm appears. The air quickly grows cold, and the Misfits huddle together for warmth. Snow begins rapidly accumulating on the ground. The bear comes to an abrupt stop in his tracks. He shakes some snow from his back, and calmly looks around. He sniffs the cold air, and slowly walks over to a small opening in a nearby wall. He circles around a couple of times, and then lays down inside the opening. He puts down his head, and thinking it is winter, closes his eyes, and begins his hibernation. Barium Kupter is dumbfounded. Once Greta is sure the bear is sound asleep, she stops the snow.

“What are you doing!” Barium shouts at the slumbering bear. “Get up! Attack!”

Greta, and the others begin to chuckle at Barium, who then, removes his whip from his side.

“I don’t need him, I’ll whip you all to death!!”

With that Rico shifts his chair into high gear, and aims it for Barium.

“AARRGGHH!!” he screams as he rolls at full speed towards the Jailer. Rico slams into Barium, knocking him to the ground. He strikes his head, and rolls over. He slowly tries to push himself up, but collapses back down again, unconscious. Greta twirls her finger, causing Barium’s own whip to spin around him several times. It ties itself into a knot, binding him so he can’t do them any harm. The others gather around Rico, and congratulate him for his bravery.

“At-ta boy Rico! You were like Ironman the way you crashed into him!” says Lucas.

“He hurt Madison before, I couldn’t let that go unchallenged.” They all take turns patting him on the back. Madison gives him a kiss on the cheek.

“Quick, before anything else happens let’s get out of here.” pleads Amy.

They all prepare to pick up where they left off before Barium Kupter came in. They remove the last of the salt, and candles, from their backpacks, and once again pour a circle of salt. Using a nearby torch, they light the candles, and gather inside the circle. Greta turns to Gellbenop,

“Are you going to be ok?” she asks.

“I’ll be fine, I’ll get out by going underground. I’ll stay below until I’m on the outskirts of the forest.”

“We’ll miss you Gellbenop.” says Amy. They all nod, confirming Amy’s statement.

“Ahh! Don’t be getting mushy on me!” he says slowly wiping away a tear.

Greta starts to recite the incantation that brought them all there, when there is a large explosion, followed by a smaller one. Two brilliant flashes light up the room. Then two clouds of smoke, a blue one, and a purple one appear, and dissipate, revealing Ruprecht, and Zatanica. They are standing on top of the balcony, looking down on Greta, and her comrades.

“Not so fast Dear Hearts! exclaims Ruprecht.

Zatanica steps forward as the others back away.

“Hello Greta, my little Grandniece. It’s so nice to finally meet you. I would have met you sooner if it weren’t for your traitorous Oma Frieda banishing me here years ago!

“What do you want Zatanica?” demands Greta.

“Grand Aunt Zatanica! And watch your tone! What I want, is to use you, to blackmail my dear sister into freeing me from here. She cast the spell at the Eitrix’s request. Only she, can undo it. If she refuses to do as I say, then I will kill you, and all your little friends. Quite simple really.”

The others whisper amongst themselves. They can’t let Zatanica kill Greta, but the only weapons they have are three magic phones, and Gellbenop’s pick axe. They look at Zatanica, standing quite regally before them, and wonder if Greta’s magic is strong enough to defeat her.

“So, what do you say Greta? I’ll have Ruprecht conjure a spell to contact Frieda informing her that I have you. Then after she releases me, I’ll let you all go free. I assure you Greta I am a woman of my word.”

“Is it alright if I speak with my friends?”

Zatanica nods. Greta walks over, and whispers to her friends in a huddle. She informs them, they are going to have to fight their way out. She instructs them to take their remaining three phones, and inconspicuously conjures two more for the rest of them without Zatanica seeing. She, herself will not need one. She tells them, when she gives the signal, to run, and take cover behind the pillars, and old staircases. They nod. Greta walks back over to Zatanica. She leans forward, and looks down on Greta from the balcony. Ruprecht, slowly floats down to the level where Greta is standing.

“I’ve spoken with my friends.”

“And what is your answer?” asks Zatanica.

Greta screams “No!” and hurls an energy bolt at Zatanica, as the others run for cover, each one firing energy bolts from their phones at Zatanica and Ruprecht. One of Eli’s shots hits Ruprecht, knocking him back a few feet. Zatanica slams her staff on the ground, and waves off the bolts directed at her. She slams her staff on the ground a second time. The Blegosi amulet and staff head glow, sending an energy bolt of her own at Greta. The bolt ricochets off Greta and fizzles out. Zatanica sees the bolt deflect, and surmises,

“A protection spell! No doubt placed upon you by my accursed sister Frieda. Well, I didn’t want you dead anyway. But that doesn’t mean I can’t kill your friends!”

She sees Barium all tied up, and waves her hand, causing his whip to unravel from his body, freeing him. He rises up, and charges at Lucas and Eli, who have taken cover behind some broken stairs. Barium prepares to strike them with his whip, when Lucas fires another shot from his phone. The bolt strikes Barium in the chest sending him crashing into one of the pillars, knocking him out cold. Zatanica slams her staff a third time, a large piece of broken ceiling lying on the floor begins to rise up, and floats over to where Rico, Amy, and Madison have taken cover. The huge rock, which must weigh tons, hovers over them. Zatanica pulls her hand back, and the giant rock begins to fall on the three of them. Looking upward, from a crouched position they all close their eyes, and scream. Waiting for their inevitable deaths. Greta, in a split second, magically changes the giant rock into a bunch of balloons which gently fall onto Amy, Madison, and Rico. They open

their eyes, and see the balloons floating about them, and breathe a sigh of relief. They all giggle at the balloons falling on top of them. Zatanica, however, is not laughing. She is not pleased at all with Greta making her look foolish. Before she can do anything to retaliate, Gellbenop fires a mystic bolt from his pick axe directly at Zatanica. The impact of the bolt's force knocks her down. She is slow to get up, and begins firing energy bolts randomly, missing Greta and the others. She is reacting now on pure adrenaline. Adrenaline, a hormone released through the adrenal glands, has different effects on practitioners of light, and dark magic. For Light witches, it has a positive effect. For Dark witches, the opposite. Their reactions are slower, and their focus is diminished, rendering them disadvantaged in combat. Zatanica thinks for a moment, and summons up a black cloud which emits thunder, and lighting from its core. The lightening is deafening, and

blinding at the same time. Eli and Lucas try to shield their eyes from the bright light, when a bolt of lightning strikes near their feet sending them flying about ten feet. They drop their phones, and quickly stand, and run towards Rico, Amy, and Madison. They all crouch down. Greta, meantime, continues to fire energy bolts at Zatanica. She is hit several times, and stumbles toward the balcony's edge. Gellbenop fires another shot knocking Zatanica off the balcony. She lands with a THUD! Ruprecht runs to her aid, only to be prevented from getting to her by a burst of strong wind Greta hurls at him. He is sent over the edge of the stairs where the others have taken cover. Eli and Lucas begin punching Ruprecht several times, but their punches have no effect on the mad alchemist. He brushes them away like flies, and turns his attention to Rico, Amy, and Madison. He pulls a small vial from the cuff of his jacket.

Lucas and Eli get up, and run toward Greta who creates a clear elemental shield for them to stand behind giving them protection. Zatanica has risen to her feet, and fires mystic bolt after bolt at them.

Rico, Amy, and Madison try to run from Ruprecht, who disappears into a blue cloud. And In a flash, he appears again, right in front of them. Rico quickly stops his chair, and the girls stop dead in their tracks as well.

Holding the vial up, Ruprecht exclaims,

“Now now, Dear Hearts! I have had just about enough of you. This little potion will put you all to sleep for twenty years.” He raises his hand to smash the bottle on the floor when, moving like a bolt of lightning, he is quickly tackled by Alice in her black panther form. The force sends him reeling about fifteen feet to the ground in a heap, breaking the vial of sleeping potion under him. Alice

runs back to the other three. Ruprecht, starts to push himself up from the ground, while the powder changes into a small cloud which rises up to his face. He accidentally breathes in the potion, and has just enough time to scream out,

“Nooo!!” before he crumbles to the ground, in a deep sleep.

Greta, and Zatanica continue to fire bolt after energy bolt at each other, when Lucas notices Zatanica’s staff and necklace glowing. It reminds him of the Green Lantern’s ring in his comic books, and he shouts out to Greta.

“Greta, her stick and necklace, I think they’re the source of her power!”

Greta sees the staff, and necklace glow with every burst Zatanica fires. She concludes Lucas must be right.

This time, Greta fires a ball of mystical fire at Zatanica's staff causing it to catch fire. The flame quickly rises burning Zatanica's hand. She releases her grip, and the staff falls to the ground. Shocked to see her new power source in flames, Zatanica quickly conjures up a rain storm to put out the flames. The entire room is doused in water. Everyone is soaking wet. Lucas shouts to Amy to cause a distraction by using her gymnastics. Amy nods, and starts to run, doing a series of midair somersaults, flips, and twists from her floor routine. Zatanica, thinking Amy is going to attack grabs her staff again. She fires several bolts at Amy, but misses her every time, Amy comes to a stop behind another pillar. Zatanica turns her attention to Greta once again. She begins to hurl a ball of fire at Greta, when suddenly, like Ruprecht before her, she is tackled to the ground by Alice. Alice grabs the Blegosi amulet in her teeth, and pulls it off Zatanica. She runs toward Greta, and Lucas.

“Here Alice!” cries Lucas. Alice transforms back into a cat, and runs toward Lucas who takes the amulet from her. mouth. Zatanica, now with one half of her power source gone, is livid with anger. She summons all her strength, and striking what’s left of her staff on the ground, screams out,

“Novissimus Autem Diebus Vires Omnia Sie!”

(With all my strength, one last time, strike!) A huge bolt builds up inside Zatanica, her body trembles, and begins to glow brightly. Her eyes grow wide, and turn completely yellow in color. Two powerful bursts of energy emit from both her hands toward Greta.

Greta fires two blasts of her own from all fingers of both her hands. The two bursts fired from Zatanica, and the two from Greta, meet and connect. They each push, and retract forward, and backward as the two incredible forces

of magic meet head on! Lucas stands behind Greta, and puts the Blegosi amulet around her neck, and fastens the clasp. Greta's head drops down, her arms still extended. Her body begins to tremble and glow. She picks up her head, revealing her eyes too, are now completely yellow! A small smile forms on her lips as she feels the power of the Blegosi amulet's power coursing through her. Lucas slowly backs up unsure of the amulet's power, now that it is around Greta's neck. The others slowly gather behind her, and cheer Greta on. The light grows brighter, and brighter. Then a huge flash envelops the entire room, Greta screams, louder than she's ever screamed before.

“Das Endet Jetzt! Nobis Donet Uns Nach Patria!”

(This ends now! Take us home!)

A loud explosion is heard followed by a bright white light, then all is silent.

Chapter XV

Victory?

At Oma Frieda's home, Sir John is pacing back and forth. He and Nobu have spent several minutes searching the house and the backyard for Greta and her friends. He has Oma Frieda's spell book, the one Greta in his hand.

"I spoke with Lady Frieda, Nobu. She did not sound happy at all when I told her Greta, and her friends are missing!"

Nobu nods affirmatively. A circular portal in the middle of the room appears, and Frieda steps out of it. The portal disappears behind her.

"How long do you think she's been gone?" she asks Sir John.

“Not long, we went outside to see if they were in the backyard when we didn’t find them in the recreation room.”

Oma Frieda takes the book from Nobu, and examines it. She sees the spell Greta used, and reacts in shock.

“No! This isn’t the right spell, it’s been changed. Dear God, they’re in Yllek!”

“Yllek, Oh No! That’s not good at all!

“The Eitrix gave me permission to go there, and find out what Zatanica is up to. Now I know. She’s going to hold Greta, and her friends hostage, till I undo her banishment spell. So typical of my sister!”

“You don’t think she’ll hurt them do you?”

“I don’t know what she is capable of anymore.”

“We’ve got to stop her, now! Nobu, and I will go with you and fight beside you.”

They start to prepare for their journey to rescue Greta, and her friends, when a flash of light outside appears, and disappears in the blink of an eye.

Outside, in the backyard, Greta and her friends are lying on the grass. They begin to wake up, and get to their feet.

“What happened?” asks Eli.

“We’re back home!” says Lucas excitedly.

“Uh, guys, a little help.” They all rush over to Rico who once again has managed to land on his back in his chair. Lucas, and Eli help upright him.

“Greta did it! She defeated Zatanica, and got us all home!” says Amy happily.

“Did you ever doubt my girl?” replies Madison.

Suddenly, they all stop smiling, and see Greta lying still on the grass. They run over to her. Lucas kneels down beside her. They call out her name, but Greta does not move. Amy, and Madison’s eyes begin to tear up.

“Oh No! What went wrong?” wonders Madison.
Lucas leans forward, and whispers to Greta.

“Please Greta, wake up! Please!” She still remains motionless.

“Is she... dead?” asks Amy.

“I can’t tell.” replies Lucas.

Alice meows a soft, whimpering meow, and lies next to Greta, her head resting on Greta’s chest.

“This was all so weird, witches, monsters, another world, it’s all been like a fairy tale story.” says Rico.

“What do you mean?” asks Lucas tearing up himself.

“Well, Greta is like the heroine, a princess, maybe she’s just asleep, and to wake her up, a prince has to kiss her. That might be you Luc.”

“You mean I should kiss her? How is that gonna help?”

“Couldn’t hurt.” replies Rico.

“Go on Lucas, kiss her. You, and Greta, obviously have something going on between you two, maybe Rico is right, and you really are her prince.” says Madison.

Lucas stares ahead for a moment, then he looks down at Greta, still lying still. He asks them if a kiss on the cheek is ok. They tell him to try it, if it doesn’t work, then kiss her on the lips. Lucas gently turns Greta’s head to one

side. He then tells the others to look away. They grumble, but turn away anyway. He takes a deep breath, puckers his lips, closes his eyes and leans forward to kiss her on the cheek. Suddenly, Greta's eyes open, and feeling someone hovering over her body, automatically swings her right arm around, and punches Lucas in the face. Lucas screams out, and falls over to one side. The others all turn back, and laugh, relieved Greta is ok.

“Oh *Meine Gute!* (Oh my goodness!) Lucas I'm so sorry! I didn't realize it was you. I felt someone over to me, and I just reacted!”

“You punched me in the face!” he cries.

“Sorry.” says Greta apologetically.

“I hate to think what you would have done if I tried to kiss you on the lips.” They all laugh. Just then Frieda,

Nobu, and Sir John come rushing over. Lucas helps Greta up.

“Greta! What did I tell you?” Turning to the others, she asks if everyone is ok. They tell her they are fine. “I’m glad you all are ok, but I think it’s time you all go home.”

“What time is it?” asks Rico.

“7:00 o’clock.” replies Frieda.

“And what day?” he asks.

“Sunday.” Frieda replies, surprised at the question.

“You mean we went through all that in just a couple of hours!” exclaims Amy.

“You were in another dimension,” says Frieda, “time is different in every dimension. Minutes can take years, years can take minutes.”

The kids all pick up their backpacks, and start to leave. Amy swings her backpack over her shoulder, and groans,

“Man! I’m so tired this thing feels like it weighs a ton!”

They all leave, and Oma Frieda glares downward at Greta. “Get inside Greta, we are going to have a long talk about following rules.”

“Well technically, I didn’t take your book.” she begins to explain.

“Get inside!” says Frieda more firmly.

The four of them start walking towards the house with Alice following.

Chapter XVI

All is Well

The next morning, Amy awakens in her room. She had skipped dinner and gone straight to bed, exhausted from her adventure. She sits up in her bed, and looks around. She stretches, and gets up. She goes over to her dresser, and picks up a brush. She starts to comb her long black hair in the mirror. As she brushes she notices her backpack in the mirror, slump to one side. She turns around, and slowly walks over toward it. It moves again on its own. Startled, Amy looks around her room, and grabs a broom. She raises it up over her head, and is about to bring it crashing down, when it opens. Gellbenop sticks his head out. She quickly stops, as he yells,

“Whoa, it’s me!”

“Gellbenop! No wonder my pack was so heavy.
How did you get here?”

“I stowed away. When I saw what happened to
Greta after Lucas put that amulet around her neck, I knew
something big was going to happen, so I hid.”

“I’m glad you’re alive, but won’t you miss your
land?”

“Nah, I got no ties there really, and well... you kids
kind of grow on a Gnome. I figure I’ll go stay at Greta’s
place. A witches’ home should be a good place for a Gnome
to live”

Amy laughs, and helps Gellbenop out of her
backpack.

“You have any of those tasty Twinkie things here?”
he asks.

In Greta's room, she is talking to Lucas on her tablet.

“Was your Oma really mad at you Greta?”

“Not too much.” she says, “I'm not allowed to do magic for a month. And, I had to give her that amulet that you put on me. To be honest, I didn't want it. It made me feel strange, too powerful. That's not for me.”

“Yeah, I understand. What do you think happened to Zatanica?”

“I have no idea, I really don't remember what happened in the last few minutes we were there. See you in school tomorrow?” she asks.

“You bet!” replies Lucas signing off on his tablet.

In Oma Frieda's bedroom, she has hung up the Blegosi amulet inside a hidden wall safe.

“No witch should have this much power, and as long as I'm alive, no witch ever will.” She closes the safe door, locking it.

From inside the safe, we see the amulet, we look closer, and closer until we can see inside the amulet itself. We draw closer, and closer, zooming down into the very heart of the amulet. Suddenly, we hear a noise, a couple of noises actually. They proceed to get louder the closer we get inside the amulet. In the distance, we see three shapes, they are blurry. They become clearer the closer we get. The noises we hear, are now more distinguishable. They are voices. Closer and closer we get until we can finally make

out the shapes, and the voices. Someone is pounding on the inside of the amulet. Pounding and screaming.

“Let us out! Let us out!!”

We see the three shapes are Zatanica, Barium Kupter, and beside them lying on the floor is a sleeping, snoring, Ruprecht Knecht. Zatanica continues pounding on the inside of the amulet,

“Let us out! Let us out!! cries Zatanica. “Let us out!!”

The next day, school comes and goes, and everyone is once again hanging out in Greta’s rec room. Everyone is there, but Amy. The boys are playing video games, Madison and Greta, are preparing snacks for everyone. They pass out bowls of potato chips to the boys, and cups of soda. Madison sits down with the boys, and grabs a handful of chips Lucas has beside him. Greta is about to sit

down beside Lucas too, when the front doorbell RINGS. Greta runs upstairs to answer. Amy is standing there with her backpack. The two go downstairs. Amy tells everyone to stop playing for a minute because she has something to show them. They do as she asks.

“What’s up Amy? I was just about to destroy these guys.” boasts Lucas.

“In your dreams.” replies Rico.

“I have a surprise.” Amy shouts.

She opens her backpack, and dumps the contents on the floor. They all look at her with surprise.

“You wanted us all to see the junk in your bag?” asks Eli.

Amy looks puzzled, and scratches her head.

“I don’t understand it...Where is he?”

“Where’s who?” asks Greta.

“I...I...Could I have imagined it all?” Amy sits down on a chair, and immediately jumps up.

“Hey, I’m sitting here!” shouts a voice from nowhere. Then, from the chair Amy tried to sit in, a figure appears. It is Gellbenop! They all call out his name simultaneously, and are surprised to see their friend from Yllek.

“Neat trick huh? Sorry to make you feel like you were going crazy Amy, but I couldn’t pass up a joke like this. Apparently for some reason, I don’t know why, but here in your world I can make myself invisible!”

He goes around shaking the boys hands, and kisses Madison, Amy, and Greta on their cheeks. He takes Greta aside;

“Greta, if it’s not too much trouble would it be alright if I stayed here?”

“Of course, you can stay here. It won’t be too much trouble to conjure up another room for you.”

“Don’t go to any trouble, I’ll just fix a place for myself under your garden.”

“I’m glad we’re all together again.” says Rico, as Gellbenop sits on the floor, and starts petting Alice. They spend the rest of the afternoon reminiscing about their adventure in Yllek. Madison hands a cup of soda to Gellbenop.

“How about a toast?” she asks. “Rico, would you like to do the honors?”

Rico holds up his cup, and everyone does the same. He pauses for a moment, and says,

“To our new friend Greta, and the wonderful adventure she gave us.” He pauses, and continues, “Even if it was by mistake.”

They all chuckle, and continue to hold up their cups and say,

“To Greta!”

They touch their cups together.

“And the Misfits.” adds Lucas.

They touch their cups again, and all say in unison,

“To Greta and the Misfits!”

Epilogue

Upstate New York, at the Steelhouse Sanatorium, in the early evening. In the office of Doctor Stanley Abbott, criminal psychologist, the good doctor is sitting behind his desk. He is in his early seventies, and a world renowned expert in the field of treating the criminally insane. He is white haired, with a goatee style beard. He is peering over his rectangular shaped glasses at a chart he is holding in his right hand. The door opens, and two security men enter, they are escorting a young woman into the office. She walks over to the chair in front of the doctor's desk, and sits down. She is a very attractive young woman, about 19 years of age. She has black hair, porcelain skin, and beautiful green eyes. As is the custom of this particular institution, the residents can dress as they please, so long as there aren't any sharp objects on their clothes that can do

harm to another resident. She is dressed in black leggings, under a black mini skirt, and a lacy black top under a soft black leather jacket with fringe hanging from the bottom, and the sleeves. She stares at Dr. Abbott waiting for him to speak. She has been at Steelhouse for four years now, since she was fifteen. Her mother disappeared when she was 14, and her father was murdered under strange circumstances a year later. She started committing criminal activities soon after. Assault, shoplifting, drug dealing, and breaking, and entering were some of the charges brought upon her. But, because of her age they resulted in little jail time for her. However, when she was convicted for murder, she was sentenced to five years in Steelhouse. Dr. Abbott has been her physician for her entire stay. He puts down the chart, and smiles at the young woman.

“Well Zenaida, you seem to be doing very well. There hasn’t been any incident with you in almost a year.”

“Thank you Doctor Abbott, I’ve been trying really hard.” she says proudly.

“And it shows! You are doing well in your studies, you’ve been very lucid, you seem to have your temper under control. Very well indeed Zenaida. I’m very proud of you.”

“Thank you Doctor, it hasn’t always been easy, but I want to be able to be out in society again, and lead a productive life.”

“And you will Zenaida, soon.”

The smile fades from Zenaida’s face.

“Soon? I’m not going to be released now?”

“No, you’re making wonderful strides, but due to the severity of your crime, I’m afraid you will have to carry out your full sentence, and be with us for another year.”

Zenaida slams her hand on the top of her leg in frustration, and looks up at the ceiling. She then stands up, and leans over Dr. Abbott's desk. He rolls his desk chair back a little in fear.

“Another year here?” she says in anger, and disbelief. “No, no that is not going to happen!” She walks around the desk to Dr. Abbott's side. He stands up, and holds out his hands, his palms facing Zenaida.

“Zenaida, calm down!” he says to her.

Zenaida pushes the doctor who falls back onto the sofa near his desk.

“Do you know why I've been such a model resident here? It's because something happened to me, something I didn't understand. But, I was patient, and nurtured my newfound talents!”

Doctor Abbott looks confused at what Zenaida is saying. He gets back to his feet, and tries to calm Zenaida, but it is pointless, she is acting uncontrollably like she did when she first came to Steelhouse.

“If you are not going to release me then you leave me no choice.” The doctor moves closer to her, and points his finger at Zenaida.

“Zenaida, if you don’t calm yourself down you’ll leave me no option but to call security!”

Zenaida looks sternly at the doctor, and exclaims,

“You’re not calling anyone Doctor Abbott!”

She grabs the finger he is pointing at her, and he feels an intense burning sensation. It quickly travels up his arm and throughout his entire body. Flames begin to come out of his pores as he turns black. He screams out. The

flames consume him instantly, turning him into a pile of darkened ash. Then, all is quiet. Zenaida looks downward at the ashes that were once Doctor Abbott, and smiles.

“I know what I am now Doctor Abbott, and no one, no one is ever going to tell me what to do again!” She waves her arm, and a burst of mystic energy blasts a huge hole in the wall. The alarms go off, as she steps outside and starts to run. She gets to the main wall and quickly climbs over it. She is free. We see Doctor Abbott’s ashes inside his office again. On his desk, the chart he was reviewing is Zenaida’s chart. It reads,

Patient Name: Zenaida Hexe

Birthplace: New York City, New York

Age: 19 years, 3 months

Father's Name: Louis Lloyd, deceased.

Mother's Name: Zatanica Hexe, whereabouts
unknown.

