

Mystic Past

The castle library door creaked opened and around it peeked a fairy, accompanied by her best friend, an elf named Farin. The two creatures crept silently down the old dilapidated hall. The faded and torn carpet felt strange under the elf's feet, and the wind blowing softly through the arched windows sounded like the whispers of ghosts.

"I don't like the looks of this place," Farin whispered, "It creeps me out. Oh, Bella, how did you persuade me to come?"

"Oh, come on. It's just an old abandoned castle. Besides, the prospect of gold is totally worth coming here for." the fire fairy replied. Of course, she didn't know that there actually *was* any gold here. But the stories she heard about human kings that lived in their castles-not to mention their pockets and wooden chests filled with gold coins-intrigued her. *There must be treasure here*, Bella thought, *it couldn't have just disappeared.*

"Um... Bella?" Farin stood there, impatient, as if he had asked a question and was waiting for an answer.

"Oh. Sorry. What did you say?"

Farin sighed and cursed silently under his breath. "I *said*, do you know which room the treasure would be in?"

"Hmm..." Bella's red dress shimmered in the sliver of light from a hole in the ceiling as she thought. "Maybe the bedroom?"

"Look," Farin said, "I'm going back to the village. I promised Icier that I would get some apples from the orchard."

Bella's pale orange hands curled into fists. *Icier*. Her stupid know-it-all, too-pretty, ice fairy twin who had to ruin *everything*. Bella and Icier had been born two different types of fairies. Fire and ice. The two most incompatible types of fairies imaginable. A one-in-a-million chance. Why did all the bad luck happen to her? Why couldn't she just have a normal, fire fairy sister? Even water fairies were easier to deal with!

"Uh... Bella? Your hands are on fire." Bella looked down. Fire surrounded her fists, like they always did when she was angry. Sighing, she dipped her hands in a puddle on the ground. The water extinguished the flames and stung her hands. The fire fairy stood and looked at Farin. He was lucky. Elves didn't have elemental powers, and they got along with everyone.

"I guess I should come back with you." Bella muttered grudgingly. The two friends exited through a crumpled window and headed towards the village.

"Bella! Where have you been?" Bella's mother cried when her daughter entered the large wooden house. Luna was her name, and she was a moon fairy. Before Bella could answer, Icier entered the room.

"Probably at the old castle up in the hills." she said, giving her sister a smug smile. She knew that telling her mother this information would get Bella *really* angry.

"Bella, you know you're not allowed in there!" Luna said crossly. The orange fairy sat up indignantly. "Why do you always listen to what Icier says?! You never listen to me!" Bella couldn't help herself. Icier had been getting on her nerves for years, and giving away the location of the only place she felt free, just to have reason to give her a smug smile, had blown her way over the edge.

"Where were you then?" Luna asked. Bella stood there, fuming, and did not -could not- answer her mother.

"Go to your room." the deep blue fairy sighed. Bella stomped upstairs to her room and slammed the door.

As soon as the door slammed shut, Bella heard a terrible screech. As if the everyone in the world was screaming, all at once. It was like a million metal spears scraping a chalkboard. Bella's anger disappeared instantly and she wrenched open the door.

Silence. That's what she heard when she opened the door. Instead of the familiar hallway outside her room, there was a lush green forest. The sun's light poured down from a gap in the trees, and more shimmered through the branches. Yellow and orange flowers sprouted all around the forest, and little rocks jutted from the ground.

"What the... ?" a voice said. Bella spun around. Icier stood, baffled, in front of a large rock.

"What are you doing here?" she asked, cautious. Bella backed away from her sister, a fire burning in her eyes. Her shadow flickered across the trees. Then, she tripped on one of the rocks and fell over. And then Bella screamed.

Her shadow hadn't fallen over like Bella. It had leaned over her body, concern on its face. Her shadow was black with white areas on her lips and eyes, one of the only understandable portions on the figure.

"Are you okay?" it asked. It was a voice identical to Bella's, aside from the fact that its voice was more of a shadowy whisper than the normal tone of voice.

"Uh, yes, I think." Bella stuttered. She scrambled up to her feet "What are you?" The shadow answered in what seemed like a voice hiding laughter.

"I am your Shadow. Everyone's Shadow can walk and talk here." As in response Icier's Shadow walked away from Icier, and stood beside the other one.

"We can give you what you want," Icier's Shadow whispered in Bella's ear, "You don't have to have powers."

"Yes, let us help you, make you free," This was Bella's own Shadow now, "We just need your permission." Bella was thrilled. Finally, real freedom!

"Yes!" she said, "Yes, yes, yes! Thank you so much!" The Shadows smiled. But the smile was... wrong in some way. Bella saw something strange in those pale eyes... Oh well. It must be the what the Shadows looked like. Nothing sinister.

"We will cast a spell and your powers will slowly fade away," Bella's Shadow said, "And then we can send you to see all the others who live without powers here." The two Shadows began mumbling an incantation, and when they finished, all went dark.

Bella woke up inside a large stone room with a window in the roof to see five sad faces looking down at her. Two were a pale green, one, a greenish blue, the forth was pink, and that last, the youngest who looked barely ten years old, was...grey. No fairy's face should be grey. It would mean that the girl had...

"No powers!" Bella cried. She shot up and started pacing. The other fairies stayed silent, but watched all the same.

"How could I be so *stupid*! No powers, shadowy figures!" Bella ranted. And then the grey fairy spoke. Her voice had a sweet, almost childish tone.

"We all fell for the Shadow's tricks."

Bella looked down at her. "What did she do to you?" she asked. She sat down to hear the story.

"We are all homeless, except Sapphire. I am Alice, and I was the first to be captured. The Shadow promised me a normal life, one without powers. One with a home. This is what I got. Some home, eh? I was foolish to believe her. Every day, I tried to escape but my powers faltered and weakened after each day. I turned grey; without my element, I am nothing."

Bella stood up. She would not hear of this treachery anymore. She walked around the room, finding long pieces of rope, string, wood and metal. Sapphire, the blue fairy and Jazz, one of the green fairies, helped and after eight days of work, the contraption was complete. It was sort of like a miniature airplane. Jazz, the oldest fairy, and the only male, had a degree in engineering.

"Bella," he said, "I think you should drive the airplane. You remember where to go. And it was your idea."

"Thank you. I will drive you all to safety." Bella said. She sat in the little seat, and the other four people grabbed onto the rope. Pulling a wooden lever, the aircraft took off into the pale blue sky above.

Leaves brushed Jazz and his companion, Kiki, and their beautiful leaf-green colour returned. Sapphire grazed a blue pool and her skin deepened to the colour that was her name. Janice soaked up the sun and her pale pink skin blended into red, then orange and finally, and bright sunny yellow. Alice turned purple after the smell of flowers touched her sensitive nose. Bella was so happy for her friends. She picked up speed, winding through the maple trees. When she found the little cave and hopped out of the aircraft, Bella stopped cold. Icier was lying down on a rock, unconscious.

"No!" Bella cried, "Icier!" She had forgotten all about Icier.

"Who is this?" asked Kiki, "It's no one we know."

"She's my sister!" Bella said, "Bring her to the cave!" All of six fairies entered the cave. Jazz held Icier. When they entered the cave, darkness surrounded them.

The screaming filled her ears again. Alice groaned, and Sapphire just looked annoyed. Finally, they returned to Bella's house. Luna came upstairs when Bella called.

"Where have you been!?" she looked down, "And what happened to Icier?" She paced the room, looking at each fairy in turn; Bella, Alice, Jazz, Icier, Kiki, Sapphire and Janice.

"I don't exactly know..." Bella trailed off. Then Jazz spoke up.

"We found her unconscious. She was trapped by a Shadow, like the rest of us, and Icier was alone and..." He went on about how Bella saved them. Bella's mother listened with wide eyes.

"So the stories are true..." Luna murmured.

"What? What are you talking about?" Bella asked, shocked.

"My half-sister from India used to live here," her mother said, "She had a daughter who disappeared. She claimed that she, Sapphire, was stolen by a 'Shadow'. I never met her, but-" She was cut off by Sapphire.

"My parents were here?" she asked, "Bella is my like my cousin?" Bella was just as shocked as Sapphire.

"Yes. I guess you're my niece then! How wonderful!" Luna said, " But I have bad news... your mother disappeared two months ago. You'll have to stay with me."

Sapphire look shocked and sad, but she did not cry. "Can Jazz stay?" Sapphire asked, "And Kiki and Alice and Janice too?" They don't have any homes..."

"Of course! But you'll have to share rooms. I only have one spare, plus Bella's room. Is that OK?"

"Yes! They all said. Then Icier woke up. She sat up and looked at all the fairies in the room.

"It's a long story," Bella laughed. She told the story to her sister, who almost fainted again. She seemed happy to have more siblings. Needless to say, the enlarged happy family lived happily ever after.