



# *Far Far Away*

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Kids

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Once upon a time there lived a tiny green imp who absolutely loved children. He loved children so much, in fact, he would capture them and bring them to his lair. But he wouldn't harm the children, oh heaven's no. They were his companions, his friends, his playthings to do with what he wished. To obey his rules, call him king, and keep him company for ever and ever. The kids that went missing were never seen or heard from again. That was until one day, when the foolish imp kidnapped the wrong one.

Marcus was a small-town kid with big time dreams. He wanted more than anything to be a superstar – Oscar-winning actor, professional ballplayer it didn't matter. Anything to escape his humdrum life as the son of chicken farmer.

Marcus' younger sister Maddie was another story. Maddie was a daddy's girl through and through. She enjoyed helping her father run the farm and hoped daddy would leave it to her one day. The two siblings couldn't be more different. They often argued and bumped heads. In fact, it wasn't until Maddie went missing, that Marcus even realized how much he loved his baby sister.

The day started off like any other. Marcus woke at 5 to feed the chickens, gather the eggs, and clean the coop. After cooking breakfast, Marcus went to find Maddie but to his dismay she wasn't in her room. Marcus searched all over the house, out in the backyard and even in the barn, but there was no sign of Maddie.

With great reluctance, Marcus woke his father and alerted to him to Maddie's disappearance. As his dad pulled the covers back, the smell of alcohol was pungent.

"That's not like her." Was all his dad said.

"Should we call the police?" Marcus asked.

His dad simply shook his head. "She's gotta be around here somewhere. Just keep looking." With that, he rolled over and resumed his coma of intoxication.

Marcus called around some neighbors houses and asked Maddie's friends about her whereabouts but no one had seen her since yesterday.

When Marcus goes back into Maddie's room, something seemed off. Near the window, some of her school books had been shifted around. Upon further inspection, he sees the outline of a footprint on the window seal. Nothing appeared to be missing, no clothes or shoes, and the print looked too big to be Maddie's. Her room was on the second floor, so climbing out the window seemed unlikely. Marcus also noticed an odd-looking gold dust sprinkled on the floor.

"Guess she must have flown." Marcus joked.

Against his father's advisement, Marcus called the authorities. Unfortunately, the police proved to be no help whatsoever. Marcus and his dad were required to fill out a missing person's report and child protective services came out to investigate. It was determined that Maddie must have run away and the police promised to call if they heard anything.

Marcus knew his sister wouldn't have run away. She was out there somewhere waiting for him to find her. And no matter what, Marcus was going to bring her back home.

Marcus waited for his dad to pass out drunk that evening before collecting a sample of the gold dust and snapping a picture of the footprint. He knew there was one person in town he could trust, the master of all things abnormal and unexplained, his best friend, Sam.

While Marcus was the son of the town-drunk, Sam was the son of the local nut job. When his dad was a boy, he

claimed to have witnessed a short man in green kidnap his friend and tried to stop him but couldn't. The police never found any evidence to back up his story so the town labeled him insane. Everyone assumed his friend just ran away

"It's definitely him." Sam insisted after examining the gold dust. "He took your sister. I'm sorry."

Marcus paused for a moment. Then he headed toward the door.

"Where you going, Marcus?"

"I'm going to get my sister back."

"But Marcus was already out the door. He headed into the living room where Sam's dad was watching tv.

"How do I find the green man?" He demanded.

"Are you making fun of me?"

"No, Mr. Dobbs. I swear. I think that monster took my sister and I have to find him."

Sam's father clicked off the tv and turned to Marcus.

"You don't find him, he finds you."

"How?"

"He chooses victims that he thinks are most vulnerable. Once you're under that little green bastard's spell, there's no getting away." Mr. Dobbs warned.

"Is there another way?"

"Well...one thing I remember is the creep dumped some kind of gold glitter on my friend Tommy right before they flew out the window." Mr. Dobbs explained.

"They flew?"

“Yeah. Far far away. It was like they disappeared into the night sky, passed right through the North Star.”

“Mr. Dobbs. Is this the gold glitter you saw?” Marcus held up the bag of gold dust he collected from Maddie’s room.

“Yeah that looks pretty similar.” Mr. Dobbs said upon inspection of the dust.

Marcus knew what he needed to do. He returned home. His dad was passed out in the living room with a bottle of whiskey still on his hand. Marcus tip-toed past his father and up the stairs to Maddie’s room. Marcus sprinkled a little bit of dust on himself but nothing happened. So he tossed on a little bit more. Suddenly, Marcus felt his entire body start to tingle. He began to levitate, he was floating in the air like a feather in the wind.

“Awesome!” Marcus exclaimed. “Here I come, Maddie!” With that, he was gone. He burst out of the window and into the sky. Marcus flew towards the North Star and to his surprise he passed right through it like a portal.

On the other side of the gateway were dark ominous clouds. The land down below stretched miles of deserted wastelands next to a black sea. There were piles of rubble floating in the water from wrecked ships. In the distance was a tiny house surrounded by dead trees, rocks, and prickly plants.

Marcus landed in front of the house. He wasn’t waiting for an invite, he let himself inside.

There sitting on a throne made of sticks, was the tiny green imp playing a flute. Around him were several children locked in small cages singing along with the flute play. The music stopped when Marcus entered the room and the imp turned to him.

“Who dare interrupt my song?” He demanded.

“Marcus!” Maddie cried. She was in a cage with three other children.

“Maddie!” Marcus exclaimed. He ran to his sister.

“You came for me!”

“Let my sister go, you monster!” Marcus demanded.

“Why on Earth would I do that?” The imp laughed.

“Because if you don’t, I’ll kill you.”

The imp laughed maniacally.

“Now now no need for that, sport. How about we play a game instead. If you win, I let your sister free. But if I win, you both will stay here forever. “

“What’s the game?” Marcus asked.

“Don’t do it, Marcus. It’s a trick.” Maddie warned.

“It’s okay, Maddie. I got this.”

“Your sister is quite right, young man. You won’t win.”

“We’ll see about that.”

“The game is quite simple really. I will give you a riddle. You have three chances to get it right. If you guess wrong after the third time, you belong to me.” The imp threatened.

Marcus hesitated for a moment before reaching his hand out to shake the imp’s.

“Deal!” The imp and Marcus shook hands and the imp laughed fiendishly.

“Riddle me this, young lad. One night, a king and a queen went into a castle. There was nobody in the castle, and no one came out of the castle. In the morning, three people came out of the castle. Who were they?”

“Um...” Marcus scratched his head. “Can you repeat that?”

The imp repeated the riddle.

“Um...the answer would have the be no one, since no one was in the castle.”

“Wrong! You have two more guesses.”

“Is there a person named ‘No one’ who came out of the castle?”

“(makes buzzer sound) wrong again, my friend.”

“Marcus, just give up!” Maddie urged.

“Yes, Marcus, please give up.” The imp taunted.

“Never.”

“Then what is your final guess, my boy?”

“Um...I...well...I guess I’d have to say the three people that came out of the castle are the knight, the queen, and the king.”

“What?” The imp was perplexed.

“The answer is the knight, the queen, and the king. Did I forget to mention that I heard that stupid riddle a hundred times before?” Marcus teased.

“Unbelievable!”

“That’s right, now let my sister go you creep!”

“Oh of course. I’m a man of my word.” The imp unlocked the cage and Maddie ran out. She and Marcus embrace.

“Let’s get out of her, Maddie.”

“Just a second there, boy. You seem to be forgetting something.”

“What’s that? I already solved your dumb riddle.”

“Ah yes. But our deal was that if you solve the riddle, your sister could go free. I said nothing about letting you both go.”

“You dirty little trickster!” Marcus charged after the imp but he was too quick. He jumped over Marcus and kicked him in the back propelling him forward right into an empty cage and locked Marcus inside.

“No! Marcus!” Maddie cried.

The imp roared with laughter.

“Bye bye, little one. I no longer have any use for you.” The imp told Maddie. He sprinkled some gold dust over her head, snapped his fingers, and two creepy shadow figures appeared from nowhere.

“Take her back to where we found her.” The imp said. And in a flash, the shadow figures grabbed Maddie and whisked her off into the sky, back through the North Star.

“Hey! Where are they taking her?” Marcus screamed.

“Fret not, dear boy. I keep my promises. Your sister is back at home with your drunken father as we speak. If I were you I’d be more concerned about what comes next for you.”

“I’m not afraid of you.” Marcus said.

“Ah, yes. You’re very brave. But perhaps you shouldn’t be.”

The imp pulled a sharp knife from his waistband and stuck it in between the bars of the cage, right up to Marcus’ throat.

Suddenly the ceiling came crashing in, and in burst a young girl with dark wavy hair. On her shoulder was a very black bat. She had with her a tall, muscular fellow who walked in and pushed the imp to the ground. The girl grabbed the keys and unlocked all the cages, setting the kids free.

“Who are you?” Marcus asked as she set him free.

“Amelia Hook. I’m one of the good guys.” She said. “And this big brute here is Shilo. He doesn’t talk much. And

my little winged friend here is Gina.” Amelia explained.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Marcus.”

“Hey Marcus, I don’t know what you did to piss the imp off, and I don’t need to know.” Amelia said. She and Shilo were searching through the house, and pocketing the items they liked. ”

“What are you doing?” Marcus asked.

“Collecting what’s ours.” She said. “Come with us, let’s get out of here. My ship is right outside.”

Marcus was hesitant but eventually followed Amelia and her crew to a large ship with long, black sails.

“You’re pirates!?” Marcus exclaimed.

“Technically, yes.” Amelia stated. “But it’s not what you think. This land used to be our home, until that dreadful little green imp, Mr. Peters stole it from us. Him and his shadow monsters have turned Far Far Away into a desolate wasteland. But we are going to be the ones to take it back.”

Marcus sat there for a moment, contemplating all that had happened in the last few hours. Now that his sister was safe and sound, there was no reason for him to stay here. But even still he felt there was no other choice.

“I want to help. That little goblin kidnapped my sister and countless other kids. It’s time he paid for his crimes.”

Together, Marcus and his new found friends sail across the deep black sea, towards the vanishing horizon, completely oblivious to the obstacles that awaited them.

The End.

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