



# *The Glass City*

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Magic

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The morning was fresh, but the air heavy, full of the noise coming from whizzing motorcycles, cars, and trains.

The pupils were in a rush, running to school. Their laughter and teasing flew in the air and hung strangely between the glass buildings in the modern Glass City.

Drones flew in the atmosphere and landed on roofs. This was how some people of the Glass City went to work in 2025. The air transport is available only for few, and it wasn't known to Nia's family yet.

Nia was first to arrive at school in the early morning and always waited on the roof, where the drones land. One of those manned aerial vehicles in the shape of a big spider belonged to the director of the school, Mr. Popov and the other to the music teacher, Mr. Baron.

“Good morning, Nia.” Getting off his octagonal drone, Mr. Baron smiled. “It’s nice of you to meet me on the roof. We are on time for the first lesson.”

Nia’s gaze turned to the shiny flute and the red velvet cloak in the music teacher’s hands.

The pupils were already in the music classroom and were talking loudly, telling stories to each other. The door opened, and gentle Nia sneaked with quick steps to the first little desk. It became silent, and all pupils were standing peacefully next to their little wooden desks.

“Good morning, class,” said the young music teacher cheerfully.

“Good morning, Mr. Baron,” the children replied enthusiastically, noticing the red velvet cloak and the silver flute on the big wooden desk in front of them.

“Today we are going to retell an old fairy tale with the influence of the music.”

“Which tale? Which tale?” the children shouted all together.

But before the music teacher could answer, Nia quickly said, “Little Red Riding Hood! Yes, it’s why you have brought the red velvet cloak, right?” She turned toward the teacher.

“Yes, it is Little Red Riding Hood. Let the fairy tale begin under the music of the spheres. This music is connected to the planet’s movements, and with the full moon, this is magic music. Nia, you are the storyteller. Victor, you are to play the piano looking at my composition notes, and I will be on the flute,” said Mr. Baron and looked at the class. “You all will be writing your own fairy tale with the influence of the music and Nia’s story.”

The first piano keys were hit and resembled the sound of a flying object, and when the flute started, Nia began narrating.

“In a lovely early morning in the Glass City, cars moved slowly on the wide roads, the modern invented ‘tramrunners’ curved like snakes amongst the glass buildings, and people were running on the pavement in this fast, everyday life. The sky also had passengers, not many, but enough; people on drones travelled to their destinations. On one of the drones was the little witty Alma. The girl succeeded to start the drone and to fly it without the permission of her parents.”

Nia paused for a second, as the music was about to change into a very high note. This made Nia change her voice into a more dramatic tone.

“And the little angelic-looking girl lost control of the big machine. The aerial vehicle dropped between high forest trees. When it landed heavily onto the soil, Alma took her red velvet cloak and jumped off the drone. She walked between the trees in the forest. Her fear grew and filled her heart. The girl snuggled into her red velvet cape.”

Nia took a breath and was unexpectedly taken by the sudden change of the music and continued her story.

“Alma started shouting for help, touching each tree and caressing the leaves, when the black eyes of an animal were in front of her. It was a big grey wolf, sly, cunning, with an unwholesome appetite waiting for its prey.” Nia was breathless and listened to the music, when the flute started a gentle tune, which made everybody sad, and the story continued.

“Alma went close to a tree and hugged it. She bit her lip and watched how the wolf spun its tail. Little Alma put her hand into her cloak pocket and felt a cold, little object. Heart beating wildly in her chest, she took her hand out.”

Nia looked at her classmates, and then her sight was caught by the colourful apple drawings on the glass window, but the eager eyes of her classmates and the music triggered her next part of the story like no one else could.

“Alma was holding a little silver apple that was transmitting strong lights straight to the wolf’s eyes. The wolf’s fur stood on end and he leapt with fright, letting his prey bound away.

“It was a full moon. Then Alma ventured to throw the apple into the wolf’s paws and quietly walked back, step by step looking for the drone. The bloodthirsty wolf circled around the apple, losing his orientation. His roars were heard from afar in the entire woods.

“Alma ran, touched the trees, the leaves, and spoke to them, with the feeling that they have memory. She passed a thick, powerful trunk with palm feathers.

“Thank you, leaves,” she murmured, frightened. And her dearest wish was there—the drone was standing in the forest. She climbed up on the wheels, reached the seat, secured the belt around herself, and looked at the vehicle screen. Her gaze rested on the small monitor that read: ‘Get home, Little Red Riding Hood. Press the small emergency green button and you will hear the takeoff instructions for the airfields of the Glass City.’ Alma’s face glowed. The moon shone brightly, and just as the drone rose, Alma heard the roar of the bloodthirsty wolf.”

The music faded. The piano gradually subsided, and flute was still imitating the roar of the wolf.

First was silence and then happy applause.

“Nia, you’re our magic narrator,” the children cried aloud.

Nia took off the magical red cape and she again was the little, curious, golden-haired girl whose eyes sparked love and wisdom, but there was also the secret of the red riding hood in them.

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