

Early morning light woke Mark from a dream in which he seemed to be searching for something just out of sight. For a moment he tried to remember, before giving it up and turning his attention back to his guest.

A quick check showed the fairy still asleep on her mossy bed. The morning light gave him his first real look at her. She was enchanting. She had very delicate features, as soft looking as rose petals, gracing her tall, slender form that bulged here and there with the full attributes of womanhood. Mark had never before noticed such things (he wasn't old enough to know, supposedly) but these he found remarkably interesting, and wondered why he hadn't noticed them before. Her long honey-brown hair lay undone in any sort of braid or ponytail; instead it fanned out from her back in a halo, obscuring her thin translucent wings. Mark could not remember seeing a more beautiful creature.

A muffled cry of pain amidst a sharp clatter jerked him from his study. Pushing the bowl back hurriedly into its corner to hide it, he went out to see what'd happened.

In the kitchen, his mother held her hands under the faucet, washing them thoroughly. A knife glinted on the floor. On the counter nearby sat a badly mauled piece of lettuce, the green speckled with a darker liquid that ran down the leaves in black streaks.

"Mom, are you okay?" Mark moved towards her in alarm.

"I'm fine sweetie." She smiled at him, her dark eyes flashing in pain as she pulled her hands from the faucet. Though she quickly placed her hands in a towel Mark spotted the large cut on her finger. "Just didn't pay enough attention to the paring knife. (Mark looked at the one on the ground, it was as large as a cleaver and pointed like a steak knife, with tiny serrations) when I made the salad. I'll have to make some more." She changed the subject. "Are you ready for school tomorrow?"

Mark struggled not to roll his eyes. He could pass all of his classes with his eyes shut. Only his age held him back. "I just have to pack my notebook and a couple of pencils. The classes are really easy." He answered. *It's the people who aren't* he added silently.

"Well, study hard." She smiled at him. "You know your father and I are proud of you."

"I know mom." He said quietly.

“Well, that’s good. Why don’t you see if Mary is hungry, and take her this.” She passed him a plate of salad (clean of course) set with a small bowl of soup and some crackers.

Mark dutifully carried the plate into his sister’s room and set it on the dresser next to the bed. Reaching over, he shook her lightly on the shoulder.

“What Mark? I’m sleeping” she managed to groan.

“Breakfast!” Mark announced sunnily. He grabbed the plate and brout it over.

“Not hungry.” Mary moaned firmly. She rolled over..

“Come on Mary. Please?” Mark needled. “It’ll be good, I promise.”

“I’m sure. Why don’t you leave it and I’ll eat it later?” she rolled onto her back smiled up at him.

“You should eat it while it’s hot. It’ll taste better.”

It took forever, with Mark cajoling every reluctant bite out of her, but at last the spoon clinked in an empty bowl presiding over a similarly empty plate. Mark swept the dishes away while Mary, after thanking him, turned over and fell into a deep sleep. Mark paused to look back, letting the worry he felt show on his face. Mary seemed so thin, her bones were starting to show through her skin. How much time did he have left?

Returning the dishes to the kitchen, Mark shut himself in his room to watch the fairy. Pulling the globe back to the center of his floor away from the door, he sat next to his bed to wait for her to wake. The clock continued to tick away the time.

Mark’s vigil lasted barely half an hour before the sleeping form stirred. The fairy stretched and sat up smiling from some pleasant dream. The smile turned into a puzzled frown as she realized she wasn’t where she remembered being. Then she saw him.

Puzzlement turned to terror in a flash. Her wings buzzed to life as she jumped into the air. She rocketed up only for the space of an eyeblink before her head hit the unforgiving plastic at the top. She fell onto the mouse with a thump. Mark leaped to his feet and hurried to check on the fairy eyeing her carefully through the glass. She rubbed her head, wincing in pain before trying to stand. Wobbling on

her feet she fell to the ground. Pulling her knees up to her chest she sat there with silvery tears streaming down her face, awaiting her fate.

Mark felt his own heart wither at the sight of her tears and he turned away in loathing at his callousness. He felt like a monster. He would not release her however, not just yet. Not until he exacted her promise to stay with his sister until she felt better. To do that however, he had to talk to her.

“Um, hello.” Mark began awkwardly. The fairy looked up at him, her expression unchanged. Not sure of what to say, Mark decided to introduce himself.

“I’m Mark. I guess you’re wondering why I brought you here.” He started uncomfortably.

The sound much like a violin being played far away and behind a closed door reached him. Mark blinked.

“Was that you?” He asked the fairy. The sound came again, a shorter note this time, he saw the fairy’s lips move.

“Oh! This is great!” He exclaimed. “Now you’ll be able to talk to my sister! Yes!”

The fairy watched his capering with wide eyes. Mark realized she had no clue what he was saying. She must have been responding simply to his voice. Disappointment crushed him.

“The language!” He groaned. The realization grounded him. “How can I tell you what I want if you can’t understand me?” A thought hit him then. “The book.”

Hurriedly he went to the bed and pulled the tome from his hiding place. Opening the book the afflicted page of how to capture, he commenced skimming in the hope of finding any answer to this new riddle. He never noticed the phase equally intense scrutiny of him.

Sky watched the human dive into the flat plants bound together in his lap like Him’bo the elder studying leaves to divine the future. Could he be human wise men as well? The thought made her shiver. Wisemen of any sort could use powerful magics to control the world around them. It that were

the case, what would this creature do to her? Everyone knew how cruel and vicious humans were. No doubt he was plotting her death in ways that would be terrible and strange.

Visions of being squashed into goo fill her with dread. She'd bitterly cursed herself for falling for such an obvious trap. The fact that she had already had some fermented nectar earlier that night celebration of the moon to not enter her mind. She never lost control of herself before, but the moment the mixture hit her nostrils, she knew she had to have some. After finding the source, she was immediately overcome by way of hunger so great she had to have it all.

*Now I am going to pay for my lack of caution.* Hot tears of fear and frustration slid down her cheeks as she thought of her friends still in the Glen that she would never see again and hoped they would fall into the same trap she did. The boy she decided, must be a part of the Dark One's circle.

A chortle of glee distracted her from her gloomy thoughts. The human dropped the flat plants the scrambled to his dresser for yellow stick and... More flat plants? Sky watched in confusion, trying to understand what anyone would need so many dead plants. Want to live one's better? And now he was scratching the new plants with the yellow stick. Sky shook her head, humans were very strange.

He bounded out the door, moving with great excitement. Sky stared at where he disappeared, a new feeling of hope buoying her thoughts. She waited only a handful of moments to make sure he would come back before putting the desperate beginnings of her plan into action.

Spinning to the plants behind her, she asked them to grow. Immediately vibrant green began to shine from the dull leaves of the plant's. The leaves grew broader, the stems grew thicker, stronger and taller. Soon the uppermost leaves reach the top of the bowl, spreading and pushing against the roof of her prison. The plant strained and twisted, but the glue Mark had used earlier had fully cured and would not be easily dislodged.

Minutes ticked by slowly, still nothing happened. Sky felt the crushing weight of despair fill her. She'd run out of time, already a trembling in the ground beneath her feet warned that the boy was approaching. Quickly she stayed plants to return to their former selves.

And not a moment too soon! The boy can trapping in holding a tall cylinder (cup) with smoke floated off the top.

He advanced grimly onto her prison, and she shrank back in fear. Was he going to drown her? Her eyes checked his movement. He went to his dresser first to grab a long black object before coming to stand in front of her. She heard the key turned the lock. In moments he would open the top. She crouched, ready to spring into the air and past him hoping to gain the window. Too late she saw the long black cylinder pointed right at her!

Light, insanely bright, hit her with the force of a hammer which left her blind and disoriented. Her wings fired jerkily, she stumbled aloft only to feel his crushing grip surrounding her. She slumped in defeat.

The light turned off, leaving giant spots in her vision. She heard a harsh metallic sound behind her, near her neck and gasped. But already she was placed with surprising tenderness on the soft moss her prison. A moment later the lock clicked on her cell door again the sky wept openly at the loss of her only chance to escape.

By now her vision was clear, she could see him dropping hair (obviously her own) into the smoking cylinder. Reaching for her neck was troubling hands, she felt the last few inches. Now the boy was tracing the strange symbol on the cup with the yellow stick. When the last line had been drawn, the entire affair began to glow. Both fairy and human stared at the red lines gleaming in the dim light of the room. Slowly shaking his head as if having second thoughts, and grabbed a drink and after taking a deep breath chugged to the whole thing down. Sky watched his face scrunch in agony, his body shaking with revulsion of the vile drink. When he finished, he gasped for air and, could it be, pain? For now the red light suffusing through his eyes, behind his cheeks, down through his arms and ending dimly at his fingertips before vanishing into the darkness. She shrank back from the site, but felt, more than heard his next word with absolute clarity:

“Sky’shat’ska’novakra.”

Agony. Her gut was on fire, sweat beaded her brow. Great wrenching feeling, pulling towards the human swept through her. Sky felt more than heard herself screening the new awareness filled her mind. Bare moments before the darkness carried her away she knew. The boy had learned her True Name.

She woke a little later. She had no clue where she was other than the fact that she was swaying like a leaf when a gentle breeze brushed it. Hesitantly, she opened her eyes. There, high above her like the sun in the sky, the concerned face of her master peered down at her.

“Oh.” She muttered. “It wasn’t a dream.”

“Thank God you’re all right.” The boy cried in relief. “I was so worried.”

Sky realized she could feel his concern for her, much like an echo in the back of her mind. She became confused. Concern? Why would he be concerned for her? That did not make sense. The poor wretches the dark ones enslaved told of no compassion for their plight, or mercy from their captors.

“Why?” She asked, her voice sounding rough and broken to her ears. Defeated. “Why have you done this to me?” Maybe she could find an answer, though at this point it wasn’t really important.

“What?” He sounded surprised. “It’s just a way for us to understand one another, right? That’s what it said in the book.”

He truly didn’t know? Despair withdrew slightly as she marveled at his ignorance. She sensed a new possibility to escape and stayed quiet, trying to get her thoughts into order.

His eyes narrowed. “Tell me, please.” As if he sensed she was going to hold back on him.

His tone was pleading, but with the spell it was as good as a command. Sky found herself answering fully unable to hold anything back.

“You learned my True Name, master. (He jumped slightly at this, rocking her perch). That gives you absolute power over me. Whatever you wish me to do, command me, or ask me, I must do no matter the cost.”

“You mean...?” He asked. Growing horror dawned.

“Yes Master.” Sky answered bitterly. “I am your slave.”

When Mark heard the words he felt hollow. That couldn't have been right, could it? The spell he thought should have just given him the power to understand that, right? Now that he had cast the spell however he found he could not exactly remember what the spell was supposed to do. He needed to find out to determine what wrong he had done.

Still holding the fairy, he looked at the book open at the base of his knees, still on the passage that has caused such excitement earlier. The chapter heading read right. HOW TO UNDERSTAND FEY SPEECH AND DIALECT. That did not tell anything about learning True Names. How could it have gone so wrong? Looking closer however began to notice how much different the content was from the title and the rest of the book in general. Dr. Driscoll wrote the rest of the book with a firm hand in neat block letters. This spell, despite having the same block lettering was thinner, less firm. The A's and D's were completely different in style, this new lettering tending to have a deeper flourish at the end. In short, Mark realized, it had been written by somebody else. But who, and why? What was the point? And when do they do it? Was it has the book was being written? Mark doubted this, but still he had no answer.

Unable to figure out what to do, he looked sheepishly down at the tiny woman in his arms. An apology sprang to his lips, but died there. After all, he reasoned, there could be no apology for this, especially since he didn't intend to free her right away. He hated it, but he couldn't give up now. Instead, he tried to explain.

"I guess you'd like to know what this is all about," he began.

"You wanted a slave." The fairy interrupted. There was enough venom in her voice to scorch the air.

"NO" Mark almost shouted in his anger. The fairy shrank into his palm, eyes wide at the sudden outburst. "I never wanted this! I just needed your help." He bit back his frustration. Getting angry wasn't going to help. "Look, uh. Do you you have a name I can call you?"

"You already know my True Name." Sky pointed out.

"Not using that again. Look, how about I call you Sky?" Mark asked

"Whatever pleases you." Sky sighed. "What now?" she asked after the pause got uncomfortable.

“Now, I get you ready to meet my sister. Tomorrow.” Mark replied. He turned his mind to the moment when he revealed sky to her. The look of surprise would be priceless! He wanted it to be perfect, and he eyed the fey’s regalia with a critical eye.

The fey wore a short, knee length pleated skirt the color of leaves and a small bodice of earthen brown, perfect for blending into trees, plants and even the ground. Small sandals were on her feet, and her long brown hair was unkept and wild. Far from the graceful, regal creatures he’d seen in his sister’s book, Sky seemed more like the tomboys at school. It just wouldn’t do, he had to turn her into his sister’s idea of a perfect fairy. But how? His mind raced with plans and ideas.

Sky grew nervous at his silent appraisal of her, beginning to fidget in his hands. The tickling sensation pulled him from his reverie.

“I’m going to have to go shopping for you.” He sighed. “If I can find something nice for you to wear, can you get it ready quickly?”

Sky looked down at herself frowning. “What’s wrong with what I’m wearing? Master.” She added.

“Don’t call me that, and nothing is wrong with it.” Mark said firmly. “It’s simply not how we picture fairies. We have them regal, in dresses and crowns and wands and things.”

Sky stared “That’s silly.” She giggled. “How could I stand on the stem of a rose with a dress? It would get caught on a thorn and pull me off balance.”

Mark thought about that. “Huh. Guess I never thought about it like that before.” He admitted. “But,” he brightened “you won’t need to land on thorn bushes here! Besides, having an extra outfit or two is not going to be a bad thing right? And you need to look your best to meeting my sister right?”

Sky seemed to be about to open her mouth and rebuttal.

“Please, sky?” He pleaded. “You’re my last hope.”

Sky dotted her acceptance slowly. Clearly she was unhappy, Mark grinned broadly and gave her a gentle hug and thanks. She smiled, a little.

“What will you have me do?” Sky asked.

Mark made a plan. It was barely midafternoon, he could go shopping at the local toy store can be back by four. From there, it is addressed to Sky who assured him she could modify any drips with her magic. When he suggested she make a dress suitable with her power, she told him a fairies individual power is very weak. Together they do great things, and then attended to be very great. Each linked fairy cubed her sisters or brothers power, and when enough joined they could direct the seasons, storm or bright sun.

"If you're that powerful, why don't you rule the world?" Mark asked in awe.

"We don't want to." Sky answered. "We care nothing for power, we just want to be left alone to tend to our gardens. Besides, there are few of us left now. Our powers waiting besides that of the Dark One."

"Who is that?" Mark asked.

"Oh please," Sky became very distressed. "Do not ask me that, master. Please! I know little of his evil, but what I do know is too terrible to utter. Please do not ask!"

Her pleading made Mark rescind his question. Only then did Sky relax and Mark realized what a struggle it had been for her to keep from telling him immediately. *What terrible creature could make her suffer so?* Mark began to suspect that he did not want to find out.

While still curious, he didn't want to push Sky too hard. He left her in the fairy globe with strict instructions not to be seen and not to leave her bowl.

Leaving her sitting on the moss, he went to find his mother. Going to the library alone was one thing, the toy shops were clear on the other side of town. His parents would never let him go that far. They worried enough just letting him go to the library which is just a couple of blocks of from the house.

He found his mother sitting at the kitchen table, her briefcase open and files scattered about. She been bringing work home more and more the longer based on this went on. Now she did almost all of her business in the kitchen, only leaving when his father was home and if the case was extremely important. Mark hoped that the ones she was working on now weren't that importance or his plan would never work.

"Mom?" He made his voice sound determined.

"Yes dear?" She asked, looking up from the papers.

"Can I ask you something?" he continued, going along the script in his head.

"You just did." She smiled at him.

"Come on mom, this is serious." Mark groaned. Inside however, he was celebrating. She was following it exactly.

"All right. What do you want?" She bantered.

"I want to get something for Mary. Something special. I have a little allowance money left, and I thought I could get her a nice doll or maybe a book at Joe's Toy Store." He blurted.

"That's so sweet of you dear." His mom gushed. It was not a pretty sight, usually she was so serious and not given to, what she called, "girlie fits". She glanced at her watch. "I still have to finish the Delmore papers tonight, but I think I can squeeze in an hour. Your father is home, and working in the den so we don't have to worry about Mary being alone.

"Thank goodness." Mark muttered. He suspected his father was home, but having it confirmed made him feel much better about leaving

Mark hurriedly grabbed his coat and wallet while his mother went to the den to inform his dad where they were going. Checking that the globe was well hidden he repeated his admonishment stay out of sight to Sky shut his door.

Out in the car he found himself writing the silence. His mother stared at the road ahead with seeming indifference, and Mark wondered (as he usually did nowadays) if she even saw the road ahead of them. Halfway across town they stopped at the light.

"Your father and I were thinking of pulling you out of school for a little while." She announced.

It took Mark the moment to realize she had spoken and another to process. He couldn't believe his ears.

“What?” He asked stupidly.

“I said your father and I were thinking of pulling you from school so you can spend more time with Mary.” She repeated, stepping on the accelerator as the light turned green.

“Really?” Mark asked. His mind raced to the possibility. One thing it would be easier with Sky if he was home to run interference from his parents.

“Yes” his mom turned left “you’re such a big help to us and will be good for you two to be together... before.” Her voice dropped below whisper, but Mark still caught it.

Mary is not going to die! Mark vowed. Allowed, all he said was “sure mom. I’d like that.”

Joe’s Toy Store covered most of the town block. Inside there were aisles dedicated to toys, dolls, plastic models, rocket (with adult supervision of course), teddy bears, studies. Practically every toy anyone could want.

Several boys he recognized waved at him from the G.I. Joe action figures and R/C helicopters. A couple snickered when he walked into the dolls section. Heat flushed his cheeks and made them tingle sharply, but he met each of their eyes without tremor. The ones that left held his gaze for only a second before dropping their eyes.

Satisfied, Mark turned to his church. Huge dolls lined most of the shelves, most over a foot tall. He kept looking was mom examined several and commented on their outfits or accessories Mark was more concerned with size, the shares only as big as a small hand, which meant that it wasn’t a big at all. Finally, he found smaller goals that could work, but none of them have the right kind of dress or fabric, being chiefly plastic.

“None of these are going to work.” He muttered, crestfallen.

“Oh honey.” His mother placed her hand on his shoulder comfortingly. “Your sister is a little old for playing with dollies, so why don’t we look at the collectibles?”

“Collectibles?” Mark asked in confusion.

"Yes." His mother explained. "Collectibles are toys and things you don't play with."

"Why?" Mark asked. "It's more fun to play with them."

She laughed. "I suppose right now to you that seems the case. However, collectibles are placed on display for enjoyment. Some are far more expensive than the money paid for originally due to their rarity." As she spoke she stared them from the basic dolls to another set of shelves that had similar dolls much more in plastic packaging. Mark's eyes could not tell the difference between them.

"Weird." Mark muttered, trying to comprehend toys you simply looked at and never played with. He had heard the references before, in some of his books, and he found them just as strange. They did look much better than normal dolls, he finally admitted after examining some of them. The fabric was of a much better quality, they were better painted, and all of them looked to be more real than cheap plastic masquerading as real. *Probably ceramic*, he thought

After some looking, he found one about the same size as Sky, with two separate dresses as part of the package and even wings! Mark looked at the title: Mini-Fairy Princess! Of course.

*This seems a little too pat. I wonder what the catch is?* He looked down at the tag and went pop-eyed.

"How can I ever afford this?!" He whispered incredulously.

His mother came over to investigate his outburst. "Oh! A fairy princess doll! Mary would love that." She took a look at the tag and winced. "A hundred is a little spendy though." She agreed.

"It was perfect to." Mark moaned he turned away to see if he could find anything close when he heard a thump. Turning, he found his mother placing the doll into the cart.

"Mom!" He gasped. "What are you doing?"

"Helping you get something special for your sister." She explained. "But I expect a lot of help around the house from you, young man. A lot of help." She repeated.

"Yes mom." Mark could hardly believe his luck. As they paid for the doll, he tried to think of what he could do to repay her when a jeering voice interrupted his thoughts.

“Look guys! Mark’s got himself a doll! Hah Hah! Whatcha going to do, play with it at recess with the other girls?” Mark turned to see his class bully standing in line behind them, a Nerf gun in his hands.

Before Mark could speak, his mother turned around and leveled a steely glare at him that made the bully step back.

“Little Bobby Horner.” She spoke the words slowly, like a dog that gotten a good bone and is expecting to relish every bite.

Bobby grew wild-eyed, beginning to backpedal away but blocked by his gang. Mark almost laughed at seeing his tormentor so easily cowed. His mother continued speaking.

“I believe you owe my son an apology. He’s getting something special for his sister. Have you gotten anything for Hannah?” She eyed the Nerf pistol Bobby gulped at the mention of his younger sister.

“No, Mrs. Miller.” Bobby took a step back.

“Before you run off to get that Polly doll I know she’s been wanting, apologized to my son.”

“Sorry. Mark.” Bobby’s face turned red with humiliation and anger.

Mark knew Bobby would try to find a way to get even, but all he said was: “Thanks, Bobby.”

Bobby vanished into the shelves with his gang, in the direction of the dolls. His mother made them wait until he came back with a Polly doll and a much smaller Nerf gun. Going through the line, he cast a murderous look at Mark, the frightened glance at his mother, then bolted out the door with the others on his heels.

Getting back into the car, they drove home in much better spirits. Despite the greater animosity of Bobby, Mark wasn’t worried. He wouldn’t be in classes for a while, so opportunities for him to get even would be limited. Mark looked at the back of the box, noting the stand that came with the doll. It provided the perfect excuse.

“I wonder how I can set up the stand.” He pretended to think out loud.

“Oh, you don’t want to disturb the packaging dear. It brings down the value.” His mom replied, negotiating a turn.

“What!” Mark asked in surprise “you mean Mary won’t be able to *touch* her new doll?”

She hesitated, clearly unsure of how to respond to that. Mark hated playing the dunce, but for his plan to working needed the dress and, by extension, the doll out of its packaging. Mark could feel the tension of the moment press on him like a vice. He waited.

His mother forced a smile. “I guess you’re right. It is rather silly anyway.”

She must have hoped to sell it again to make some money, or plan to put it up as a keepsake, Mark reasoned. He found it said that his mother seemed to be giving up. He felt a surge of anger at the doctor. It was his diagnosis that made everyone give up on Mary. It was his pessimism that kept everyone from helping! It had to be him that made Mary give up on herself! That loathsome idiot!

Mark realized his hands were shaking. He tried to calm himself, taking deep breaths. It didn’t help. The depths of his anger surprised him, and made him afraid. He knew it wasn’t fair of him to make such judgments, but he couldn’t help it.

Back at home, Mark took the doll to his room, telling his mother he wanted to assemble a stand tall and dress so “it will be perfect.” He got a warm chuckle and a “if you need help, I’m right here in the kitchen.”

In his room, Mark carefully opened the package and removed all the components. Setting aside the rose pink dress, he removed the elegant white dress with its gold leaf shaped pattern on the sleeves and the golden girdle with forest green jewel in the center of the girdle from the doll. This he passed on to Sky while he placed the red dress on the doll. He also removed the silver plastic diadem before deciding it looked far too fake. He replaced the jewelry back onto the doll

Sky, meanwhile, accepted the dress and took it back a little ways into the globe. As she held the dress up to examine it, she looked at the needles that Mark had smuggled into her room earlier, along with the thread and scissors but she had managed to shrink the fairy size.

She felt drained from her efforts. Shrinking in animate objects took much more energy than asking living things to grow. Living things had their own innate magic and energy which could be used to help

the process and spells to achieve spectacular results. She was glad she had time to recover, before modifying the dress. As usual after casting such a powerful spell, she had needed sleep badly.

*Bee-fuzz gathering! By the Sun Goddess!* She shook her head as she fingered the dress moving over the fine spun gold thread that made the twisting vines on the sleeves. It was much nicer than anything she would or could wear, even on feast days. And it was white! If you accept us know if they could wear white. It's stained far too fast, and rarely stayed pure for long. This was a true luxury.

A sharp grunt broke from her reverie, and she paused to look out and see Mark working to push the pieces of the stand together. He had shown her the doll when it he had brought it in, proud of his discovery. She hadn't the heart to tell him how much work it would be to modify the dress to suit her. The doll was much more generous in its couriers than her natural body, and the wings in the back were actually much smaller than hers. Though that left a smaller hole in the back of the dress, so she could work around it, she needed a strip of fabric to go between her wings to keep her back warm. No such fabric existed, so she would have to use magic to do so.

Snap! The unexpected sound gave her a turn. Mark held up the completed stand proudly. Chuckling and said at his stretching, she turned back to the dress and began planning how she would modify it.

*Let's see, I've got to make enlarge the holes here and here. Bring in the bust slightly, we were pretty close to the same size height wise, add that strip, and that should do it.*

She looked up as Mark placed a plastic table inside the globe for her to work on. A small chair went with it. It was uncomfortable; the back of the chair flattened her wings against her body. She could feel the concern Mark had for her, and appreciated his efforts to make her comfortable. So, she smiled through the pain and set to work.

Over the clack of the scissors, she began humming a song of praise to summertime that her people sang in the village. As the sharp blades slid elegantly through the fabric, she marveled at the simple device. Her kind usually had these grow into the needed shape and then sew them together with string made from bumblebee fuzz. While her people would have little use for them, she could see their handiness for when things weren't quite right.

Her mind wandered slightly as she worked, going down new vistas and possibilities of her future. Unbeknownst to her, her music changed its note becoming deeper, stronger. Despite her efforts to only

make a small strip, she was infusing magic into every aspect of the dress. Magic, she knew, worked in strange and powerful ways. Sometimes, those that use magic had no idea of what would happen when they cast their spells. In this case, the most obvious change was the false jewel in the belt. It became very hard and glowed with an inner light, though just at that moment she did not notice so distracted by her thoughts.

Sky worked late into the night, finishing the dress. When she finally got up from the table (she was learning human words to describe things. The bond apparently worked far differently than either of them had expected) she stared. A large moon smiled at her from the window, illuminating Mark sat on the side of his bed near her bowl. His head had fallen backwards against the bed and his last snores rattled the glass.

Unexpected mirth welled up inside a she giggled. Some fearsome monster, she thought as she eyed her "fierce" jailor. Like this, she doubted he could hurt a fly. Then a cloud covered the moon and he became her captor once more. Shaking her head she laid the dress across a stem of the plant, which took it and set it up high. She muttered a spell that would ask the plant not to foul the dress, using the energy of the plant fuel the power that would keep it clean. Stretching, trying to work the kinks out of her back, she went to her bed of soft moss. Several leaves of the plant swung down to cover her, and she fell asleep in their warm embrace.

