

Magic

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just a magic story

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Magic

Since I was small, I've been able to see creatures that you would only be able to find in storybooks. Faeries, dragons, trolls, mermaids... They're everywhere. They're at home, at school, at the park, and even at the grocery store. I can see them, talk to them, touch them, and listen to them. I can even smell them. The sweet, rosy scent that wafts in the air as a pixie flies past my face is always a nice aroma. The goblins and trolls, however, smell of sweaty socks and decaying food. But I digress...

I've seen these faerie tale beings all my life. My parents were quite frightened by my so-called "hallucinations." When they were worried, I was worried, so I learned to stop talking about to the mystical creatures. However, I did not stop talking to them. They could not talk back, but most of them did listen. I was never scared to interact with them either, mostly because they had always been there, like pets.

My early years in school were the hardest. I did not make friends, because I already had friends: my magical pets. My mother and father encouraged me all the same. I tried, but the children I attempted to make friends with were always put off whenever I would "talk to myself." More and more of my classmates began to notice, and soon they isolated me and called me names. I thought the mocking and exclusion would stop if I once again ceased to talk to my pets around certain people, but it did not. Even the few children who were willing to speak to me were stopped by worried parents and forced to stay away from me.

It was a lonely feeling knowing that the only friends I may ever have would be the ones that no one else could see.

And so it continued from kindergarten and eventually into junior high. By the time I was in second grade, I had already given up on trying to befriend others. It did no good anyway. Teachers who hadn't known me before sent me to the school counselor numerous times. Each time, I was asked the same questions.

"Do you feel lonely?"

"I guess so."

"Why don't you try to socialize with your classmates?"

"Because they don't see my pets, and that scares them."

He eventually stopped trying to understand what I meant and dismissed my case so long as I didn't do anything rash such as doing drugs or thinking about suicide. How ridiculous. I was forlorn, but I wasn't stupid.

Years passed and it was time for students to start applying for high schools. My mother kept going on and on about how this would be a brand new opportunity for me; I would have a clean slate and I could start making friends.

As if.

I did not try to make friends when I started high school. The students returned the favor. No one tried to talk to me unless in need of a pencil. No one sat with me at lunch unless dared by a friend. No one cared. I guess I did a good job in picking the high school with the most severe clique system.

My mother was driven to tears one night when she got a call one night from one of the school counselors. The counselor told her that I was not making the slightest effort in trying to become acquainted with my classmates. She yelled at me with watery eyes after she slammed the phone back onto the receiver.

“Why, Alison? Why do you make things difficult for yourself?”

“Because they won’t accept me! They never have and they never will!”

“Why are you saying such things? You’re a brilliant girl and if you just -”

“You don’t understand! The only people who do understand are my pets!”

“They don’t exist, Alison! They don’t!”

“Of course you’d say that! You’re not the one who can see the elf that’s standing right behind you!”

For a small second, it looked like she would try and turn around to see if she could see the now-frightened little elf that was beginning to back away from her heels, but she quickly changed her mind.

“Alison, stop talking about such nonsense! It’s ridiculous!”

“It may be ridiculous, but it’s real!”

And with that I left her to cry at the kitchen counter and stormed up to my room. I didn’t cry. There was no point in doing so. Instead I called forth the baby dragon that had hatched under my desk a few days before. I picked it up and put it on my lap where it looked up at me with eyes that resembled large amethysts. I stroked its tough, leathery spine and explained what had happened. An eavesdropping faerie waited until I was done with my story, and offered me a grape from my own lunch bag. I took the grape from her tiny hands and took a minute to caress her sparkling wings and observe the dust it left on my fingers.

How could they not see them? They were all so real.

The summer after my freshman year, I spent most of my time in the park where I usually went to talk to my pets in privacy. It’s how I spent all my summers for the most part. I had seen families of elves and

dragons live in that park and became very familiar with them over time. It was like my second home; a place where I could be myself without fear of what people would say.

One day in early July, I saw a griffin.

It wasn't like it was unusual to see a griffin. This griffin, however, was unlike any other I had seen before. Every single plume on its body was shimmering with the same gold tone that made that partly-cloudy summer day seem like the brightest and hottest day of the year.

I cupped one of my hands over my eyes and walked towards it slowly. It turned to look at me suspiciously. It stared at me for a few seconds and then took off from the ground. It hovered about ten feet above the earth's surface, but waited until I was standing directly in its shadow to jet off towards the park lake. It was all I could do to not collapse from exhaustion as I sprinted after it. Joggers and bicyclists yelled at me for so recklessly running towards them, but I paid no heed. My eyes were directed to the griffin that now seemed to be slowing down a bit in order for me to catch up. It wasn't until the mermaids began to pick their heads out of the lake to see me that the griffin stopped. I stood there, gasping for air while my knees shook with fatigue. It landed in front of me and stared at me for an even longer amount of time. Finally, it bowed its head and hit my chest with the top of its skull.

It hurt, but not enough for me to cry out in pain. It was enough to make me fall onto my back and hit the cement. That made me cry out in pain. I grumbled and sat up on the ground. The griffin was already soaring over the treetops, far away from me and the park itself.

What the heck just happened? I thought.

"Are you alright?"

I turned my head to find a boy around my age standing next to me, obviously panting from running towards me. His hair was a dark brown with bangs that hung over his left eye. He had a few freckles spread over the bridge of his nose and his eyes were a light green. Atop his head sat a small forest nymph that looked like a wooden statue carved to look like a petite little girl. Of course, I was more comfortable with the nymph's appearance than the boy's, but I did not bother to say anything about it.

I nodded without saying a word. He held out his hand with intentions for me to grab it, I'm sure. I refused at first, but tripped at my attempt to stand up. This time he took hold of my arm and pulled me up without my consent. I pulled my arm away and turned around after grunting a quick, "Thanks." I began to walk off, but I soon felt something hard kick me in the heel.

"Ow!"

I looked down and saw that the forest nymph had hopped down from her perch to give me the pleasure of a second injury.

"You okay?" I heard the boy ask.

"I'm fine," I said sternly.

“My name is Jack.”

I turned around. What was he getting at? I didn't say anything at first. I just looked at him with strong dismay until he cleared his throat.

“Umm, this is the part where you tell me who you are.”

“Why would you want to know?” I replied coldly.

“Well, I just moved here last week, and I figured it would be nice to actually get to know the people here,” he said with a shrug. “Silly, I know, but I heard it's an oddly popular thing to do when settling into a new town.”

“Haha,” I said. “Well, if you're new here, then I guess I should tell you that I'm not exactly someone people look forward to knowing.”

“Oh, really? And why is that?”

“Just the fact that I'm a freak who's been talking to herself since she was in preschool. Something like that I guess.”

“Why do you talk to yourself?”

What the hell kind of approach was he trying here? No one had ever really asked me that question before. I suppose they were all too scared to ask me in the first place.

“Well, I don't talk to myself necessarily... Look, it's none of your business, so just leave me alone.”

I started walking away but his footsteps caught up to me.

“It's too late,” he said. “You've gotten me way too interested to just turn around now.”

“Is that so?” I said, averting my gaze so he wouldn't be able to see my confusion.

“So if you don't talk to yourself, then who do you talk to?”

I scoffed. “Faerie tale creatures, what else?”

“Really? You mean like dragons and giants and stuff like that?”

“Well, I've never seen a giant before, but besides that, yes.”

“Really? That's so awesome!”

I stopped dead in my tracks. I turned to look at him again.

“What did you say?” I asked.

He ignored my question and asked his own. "Can you see them and touch them and stuff like that?"

I nodded with my mouth agape.

"Cool! What can you see now?"

I pointed to the lake. "Ten mermaids live in that lake. They all have murky-green hair and really soft skin."

He quickly turned towards the lake and stared at it for what seemed like an eternity. He turned back to me.

"Are you lying?" he asked.

"No, but... Are you saying that you don't think I'm weird?"

"Why would I? It's not creepy, it's really amazing."

"Tell that to my parents," I said with a sigh.

The smile he had been wearing for the past few minutes slumped into a small frown.

"They don't like that you can see them?" he asked.

I shook my head. After a pause of silence between the both of us, I finally asked, "Why do you believe me? You don't even know me."

"Who are you?"

I hesitated at first. "I'm Alison."

"I like that name," he said with a grin.

I felt heat rush to my face. At the same time, though, I felt a strong flow of happiness pulse through every vein in my body. Was this what it felt like to be accepted?

After that, he led me to a park bench that was shaded underneath a large oak tree. There we talked. I had never spoken to someone so much in my entire life. I talked about my pets, how I grew up with them, my problems at home and at school... And every time I would say something I thought for sure would make him feel uncomfortable, he would simply smile and nod. He actually enjoyed the things that caused my isolation.

It was getting dark by the time we decided to stop and head home. We didn't get up after a while though. We just sat there, looking at the things around us, not wanting to leave. To him, he just saw a playground and some grassy hills. I saw some elf children chasing each other up and down the sidewalk and a few faeries fluttering in and out of the branches of the oak.

"I'm glad I got to meet you, Alison," Jack said finally.

"You're the first," I said.

"You wanna meet here again tomorrow, same time as earlier?" he asked.

I nodded. "That'd be nice."

"Well, in that case, I'll see you tomorrow," he said getting up.

"Wait, I want to show you something," I said, standing up as well.

I called to a lavender-skinned faerie that was flying above our heads. It fluttered towards me and sat in the palm of my hand as indicated. I rubbed my fingers on her wings, let her go, and walked towards Jack. I took his hand and wiped the faerie dust onto his palm.

He gaped at the silvery substance with such awe and amazement that it looked as if I had just given him a dragon egg. He looked up at me and gave me a small grin.

"You should never be ashamed of the magic you were gifted with, you know?" he said.

"That's one way to put it," I said, feeling myself blush again.

He leaned and put his lips to my cheek. The feeling was sweeter than a pixie's powder being sprinkled upon my face. He ran away quickly out of embarrassment though. I didn't mind. I let him go and sat back down on the bench.

A unicorn with a silvery mane and a gray coat trotted up from behind me and nudged my arm. I pet her lovingly and smiled so widely, it felt like Jack's smile rather than mine.

"Magic, huh?"