

Forgotten Series

Book 1 – Revealing Magic

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Chapter 1

The Old Man in The Park

“But mom! Why does she have to come with me?” Will whined as he looked at his younger sister standing by expectantly waiting for their mom to give her final word on the matter. As if Kayla knew what he was thinking she stuck her tongue out at him. He couldn’t help but return the favor.

Sarah answered, “If you are just going to the park, you can take your sister. She can enjoy the play area with the other kids while you and your friends hang out nearby and keep an eye out for her.”

Will sighed. He knew by the tone in her voice this was her final word on the matter. There was no point in continuing to argue if he was going to meet his friends on time. Turning to his sister, “Fine, try to keep up.” Will took off for the door with Kayla trailing behind him.

“Have fun and be home in time for dinner with your father.” Sarah yelled after them.

Their bikes laid on the grass in the front yard. Will was on his ready to take off when Kayla finally reached hers. He looked back at the house to see their mother looking out the window at them, so he knew he had to wait for Kayla. “Will you hurry up!”

They rode to the end of the long driveway, looked for cars, then took off. Will hung back so Kayla could keep up with him till they were well out of direct sight of their house. Then he hit the gas, and the gap between them steadily grew.

Will raced through the park entrance, hopped off his bike and searched for his friends. Lots of noise and activity came from the large play area just to his left, as he scanned the edge of the woods that bordered most of the park past the large open field and around the lake. Finally, he spotted them, he was the last to arrive. He waved, ready to take off in their direction when Kayla finally caught up.

“Are we going to play hide and seek in the trees?” She asked as she let her bike fall to the ground next to his.

Will had almost forgotten she was there. Sighing heavily, he held up a finger to let his friends know he would be there in a minute. Turning to his sister, “Look, we guys have important stuff to do, and no girls or little sisters allowed. So, do what mom said and go play with the other kids and I’ll come get you later when it is time to go home.”

He watched Kayla look over at the play area, then back at him with a determined look on her face. “I wanna stay with you!”

Will could see her cheeks starting to get red and he knew this was not going to be easy. Kayla was stubborn and could usually outlast him. But not today. He reached down deep to get his best ‘Dad voice’ and said sternly, “You’re gonna go play with your friends and you’re gonna stay in the play area until I come back. Do you understand?”

“Just because you are a teenager now, it doesn’t make you the boss of me!”

Will could see her eyes starting to water, but he knew she was too stubborn to allow a tear to fall. That usually melted his heart but today he would not cave. “Thirteen is still older than nine so do what Mom and Dad told us and respect your elders!”

Kayla stomped off towards the play area. Will watched to make sure she made it safely, but instead she stopped at the nearest bench under a big sugar maple tree and plopped herself down with her arms crossed around her knees and her face scarlet. Will waited for a minute then decided that she would get bored sitting there and eventually head over to play with her friends. He told himself *There are plenty of other parents here and they are always looking out for all the kids so she will be okay.*

Kayla sat on the bench as a single tear slid down her cheek. She quickly wiped it away so no one would see it, especially Will. She watched her brother put their bikes in the bike rack and take off toward his friends. He ran right through the center of the large field darting effortlessly around the ultimate frisbee players without interrupting the game in the slightest. In fact, a couple times he seemed to disappear and reappear further down the field.

When Will reached his friends, Kayla saw him give one final glance in her direction, then disappear into the trees. She thought about trying to follow, but stopped herself, she knew she would never find them with Will in the lead.

Kayla looked over to the play area watching all the other kids laughing and having fun, but with a huff she tightened her arms around her knees, determined to sit right there until Will returned. She was so deep in thought; she didn't notice the old man sit down beside her till he spoke.

"Big brothers can be quite thoughtless sometimes."

Kayla jumped at hearing a voice so close.

“Oh, I apologize, I didn’t mean to startle you.” He said.

“It’s, it’s okay.” She stammered, “I, I just didn’t see you there.”

“If you’d rather be alone, I can go to another bench?” He offered.

Kayla took a long look at her new bench companion. He was very tall and thin with long silvery hair and beard. Lying over his lap was a long dark blue, threadbare duster style coat. He wore a simple cotton shirt with a laced-up front that could have been white at one time but had yellowed with age. His faded black pants were tucked into well-worn leather boots that laced up to his knees. Around his neck, on a braided leather strap, hung a pendant that looked to be half stone and half tree bark.

Kayla smiled, “No, you can stay.”

“How kind of you Maleni.”

“That’s not my name, my name is Kayla.”

The old man let out a chuckle. “Where I come from, Maleni means young one. But it’s nice to meet you, Miss Kayla. I’m known as Endaris.”

She smiled and giggled, “That’s a funny name.” After a short pause, she worried that she had been rude, so she quickly added, “But I like it!”

“Why thank you. I like your name too.” Endaris said with another chuckle.

Kayla liked his laugh; it was pleasant and almost musical. It made her feel happy all over. At that moment she had almost forgotten about Will. She took another look at Endaris and blurted, “You’re dressed kinda funny, like a pirate or robin hood or maybe a wizard. Are you a wizard?”

“No, I am not a wizard.”

“Oh.” Kayla sighed, disappointed.

Then Endaris Added, “But I have been known to do a little magic now and then.”

“Really!” Kayla was getting excited again.

“Yes, really.”

“Is it real magic or just tricks? Because my brother says there is no such thing as real magic, that it is all just tricks to make us think it’s magic.”

Endaris cocked an eye, “Sadly, I’ve heard that before... But, let me ask you something? If magic never existed... How do we know about it? How can we believe in something that isn’t there at least in some form or another?”

“I don’t know. I, I guess it can’t.”

“Exactly, so magic must be real.”

“Makes sense.” Kayla paused, then asked “What’s that around your neck?”

“Oh this? It caught your eye, did it?”

“Yes, I have never seen anyone where a broken piece of rock and wood glued together as a necklace before?”

“This is no ordinary rock and no ordinary piece of wood. They are very rare and special.”

“What makes them so special?”

Well, this piece of broken rock as you call it, is a very rare and precious elven moonstone, and this piece of tree bark comes from a very special tree named Elashta and they are not glued together, they are bonded by magic.”

“What do you mean bonded? Like melted?”

“Not quite like that. If it was glued or melted together you could not separate the two. But see you can pull them apart.” With a slight tug, Endaris pulled the stone from the wood and held it out to Kayla.

She took the stone piece and turned it over in her hand. It felt soft, almost like fur, and cool to the touch. It seemed to be vibrating and she thought she could hear it humming ever so slightly. She held the stone up to her ear to make sure she wasn't imagining it.

“It feels alive, and it looks like it is glowing,” Kayla said in awe.

“Yes, it is alive and hums and glows with magic, but only those with the ability to do magic can see, hear and feel it.”

“Does that mean I can do magic?!”

“I've never known a moonstone to be wrong.”

“Wow!” Kayla's mind was going a mile a minute with all the possibilities. Just then the stone flew out of her hand and with a glittery sparkle it was back attached to the wooden half of the pendant.

“How did it do that?”

“Well like I said they are fused by magic so when they get separated, they always find their way back together.”

“Really?”

“Yes. Really.”

“That's neat. Then you can never lose it?”

“That's true. No matter how far they are separated the stone will always find its way back to the wood. Together they are stronger. Together they are whole.”

“Can you show me some magic!?”

“Hmmm...” Endaris scratched his chin, “I can try, but I must warn you, if you do not truly believe in magic then you will not be able to see it.”

“Why not?”

“Because magic has to be seen with your heart, not just your eyes. The young can see magic because they are born believing, but as they grow, that belief starts to die if they don’t keep it alive in their hearts.”

“If the belief dies, can you ever get it back again?” Kayla asked.

“Yes, but it is much harder to get it back than it is to never lose it in the first place.”

“I believe in my heart and my eyes.”

“Well then, let’s see what we can do.” Endaris looked around and then pointed.

“Do you see that branch hanging down on that tree?”

“That one there?” Kayla asked.

“Yes. Now do you see that single leaf on the very end of that branch?”

“Yeah, I see it.”

“Okay I am going to make the leaf snap off and do loop-de-loops all the way to the ground.”

“That’s not magic. Leaves always do loop-de-loops when they fall.”

“Yes, that is what someone who doesn’t believe in their heart would say.”

“Oh.” Kayla said disappointed that she had given the wrong answer.

“Let’s look at it a different way, a way with magic in our hearts.”

“Okay!” Kayla was happy that Endaris had not given up on her so easily.

“What happens when a leaf falls to the ground?”

“It turns brown and dies.”

“Or, does it?”

Kayla thought for a moment. “No, it regrows on the tree when spring comes!”

“Yes! Now you're starting to see with your heart. Now let's look a little deeper into our hearts for the real magic that is happening.”

“Okay.” Kayla said with growing excitement.

“What I see is a leaf that falls off and does loop-de-loops till it hits the ground. But when the time is right it has reattached itself to the branch again.”

Kayla thought about that for a moment. Then finally said, “Do you mean the leaves and the tree are like the rock and wood on your necklace and the leaves fly back to the tree when they have been separated?”

“Now you are catching on.” Endaris winked with a smile.

“So, if I were to look at the trees in the spring, I'd see the leaves flying back to the trees?”

“Anything's possible when you believe in magic with your heart.”

Then Kayla's heart sank. “But I don't remember ever seeing the leaves fly back up to the trees. They just start regrowing in the spring.” She swallowed hard, afraid to hear the answer, but she knew she had to ask, “Does that mean I don't have magic in my heart anymore?”

“Well, the moonstone seems to think you still have magic in your heart. Maybe you just forgot about it.” Endaris offered.

“Maybe.” Kayla said, not sure she believed his explanation but deep down she hoped he was right.

“How about we give it a little try.”

Not wanting to give up, Kayla said “Okay.”

“So back to our leaf sitting all alone at the end of the branch there. Let’s see if the moonstone is correct. Watch that leaf and let me know what you see...”

Kayla silently willed herself to believe, her eyes glued to the leaf so she wouldn’t miss a thing.

With a small wave of his hand, the leaf popped off the branch and did aerial acrobatics that would make a stunt pilot dizzy before gently touching the ground.

Then right before her eyes the leaf started to turn yellow, then orange, then red and finally brown. Kayla held her breath. After what seemed like forever the leaf started to move again. Right before her eyes it started to rise, swaying back and forth. As it swayed the color of the leaf slowly reversed itself. When it finally rose to the branch it had just left, it did a final loop as it reattached itself with the same glittery sparkle as the pendant that hung from Endaris’ neck. The leaf shuttered in the breeze and was the same vibrant green as it was before it had left.

“Wow! I saw it! It hit the ground and changed colors and then flew back up and reattached itself! I really do believe in magic with my heart!” Kayla paused wondering what to ask next. She finally blurted, “You told me about the moonstone in your necklace but what about the tree with the funny name?”

“Oh yes, Elashta,” Endaris responded with another chuckle, “Well, she is much more than an ordinary tree, she is a very powerful Oracle Dryad who is the very heart of all magic. She is the spirit of a giant Oak tree whose roots reach from the beginning of time, to the present and all the way into the future.”

“Wow!” Kayla paused, taking it all in, “Where is Elashta?”

“Far out to sea there is a set of twin islands...” After a short pause Endaris sidetracked, “I have always wondered why they call them the twin islands as they don’t look anything alike.”

“Really? That’s weird,” Kayla giggled.

Endaris laughed and nodded his head in agreement, “I think so too. But as I was saying Far out to sea there are a set of twin islands that go by many names, but to the inhabitants of those islands they are known as the Gefell Isles. On the southern part of the eastern isle is Revenmar Forest. It is unlike any forest that you have ever seen. It has the greenest trees and the most unusual plants. It is home to all manner of wonderful and magical creatures. Deep in that forest is where you will find Elashta. But only if she wills it.”

“What do you mean? If she wills it?”

“Elashta is protected by a very ancient magic. Magic that has been here before this world even existed. If anyone goes looking for her who wants to do her harm, they could wander around the forest forever and never be able to find her.”

“Wow. What if you just want to meet her?”

“As long as the seekers intentions are pure, she can always be found.”

“I hope I can meet her someday.”

With a sigh Endaris said “I hope you will, someday.” He then got silent.

Kayla didn't like the silence. She wanted to know more. She thought for a moment then changing the subject slightly she asked, "How come I have never heard of these islands? Where are they?"

Endaris closed his eyes and took a deep breath, "They cannot be seen anymore, and no one can visit them."

"Why not?"

"Because of magic," Endaris said solemnly.

Kayla was suddenly sad, like she had just lost something very precious to her, she wanted to know more but Endaris' tone made her think twice about it. She sat there in silence, grinding her shoe into the grass waiting for Endaris to speak again.

Minutes seemed to tick by slowly. Eventually, with a deep breath Endaris finally spoke. "You know you kind of remind me of someone."

"Really? Who?" Kayla said, happy the awkward silence between them had ended.

"A wonderful adventurer named Avalina. She has long red hair and bright green eyes just like yours." Endaris explained with a smile.

"Really?"

"Yes."

"What kinds of adventures did she go on?" Kayla inquired eagerly.

"All kinds of adventures. Would you like to hear about some of them?"

"Yes, please!"

Again, Endaris let out a laugh, "Well..." He paused, scratching his chin, "Avalina's story begins in the southern part of the western island of the Gefell Isles. There is where you will find the forest of Revenmar. During the day it is the most beautiful forest that you can imagine, but at night the whole place seems to come alive with magic. The plants glow in the moonlight. It's almost as if you can see the magical life force of everything that resides there. Deep in that forest is Faye Lake with the clearest blue-green water that you have ever seen. And beside the lake are the gates to the majestic elven city of Thaladore."

As Endaris spoke, his words sounded mystical and seemed to cast a spell over Kayla. The park around them melted away. It was as if she was transported to this wonderful place that he described even though she had not left the hard-wooden bench upon which she sat.