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The Whimsical Transmographist – Little Talks

The house looked the same as the two had left it, years ago. The blue exterior showed its wear, peeling in places. The porch was still missing a few rungs from its surrounding fence, and the porch swing still hung at an angle from the time Navi jumped on it too hard.

Rain lightly fell as Wyn and Navi stood silent, taking it all in. They were the portrait of family, if the matching green hair didn't give it away. Wyn stood but an inch taller than his younger sister, even with her top hat.

The house of their childhood, a place that once brought so much joy and pain, standing there again was surreal for them. Neither of them expected to be standing there again, not after it burned down.

"Magic insurance sure is something, eh Navs?" Wyn said, still staring at the house. "A press of a button and boom, it's all back, just like that." He paused. "Well, almost all of it."

"I don't want to do this." Navi's voice shook as she fiddled with her sleeves. Wyn looked at his sister and gave her a reassuring smile.

"It might help. You never got to see much of the place before you left." He led her around the side of the house, towards the kitchen's entrance. "I promise, this'll be our

only time here. We'll tell them we got what we needed and they can let this place return to ashes. Use the insurance money to buy a better place."

Navi nodded, and Wyn approached the door. With a twist of its old knob and a forceful push, the door opened, and the two entered. Wyn smiled, walking around the dark kitchen. A wood island centered the kitchen in a U shape, the stove, microwave, and toaster sitting on the inside of the U. He ran his hand over the counters, reaching a spot that looked burnt. He laughed. "Hey, it's from that time you tried to toast a marshmallow with your powers and ended up getting a bit more than you wanted"

Navi gave a weak smile. "Mama couldn't decide whether to be proud or angry. I remember her settling on a bit of both."

Wyn playfully bumped her shoulder. "Best marshmallow I've ever had, counters be damned."

Navi dared to actually take a look around. On the wall hung a painting of four handprints. One was large and bulky, and written underneath it in large letters was "Charles". One was mildly sized with long, slender fingers, and underneath was written "Fedora". One was a small hand with a broad palm that in underneath in blocky letters was written "Wyn". And finally, the smallest hand of all, had a name that was vehemently crossed out and beneath was written, in surprisingly nice cursive, "Navi".

Wyn then walked over to the breakfast table, situated with 4 chairs of varied use. Two looked well worn, the wood faded. One looked fairly used, and one sat nearly untouched. He rubbed the new looking one. "Dad could never bring himself to move

either of your chairs. Said he had hope you'd be back any day, 'cured and perfect.'" He said the last few words sarcastically.

Navi winced, pulling her arms in. "He never got what he wanted, and I hope he never does."

Wyn swore under his breath, regretting adding that last part. He tried changing the subject. "Some nights we'd sit here and try our best to be like things were, just pops and I. I'd work on homework and he'd work on his business papers. Sometimes we'd make hot chocolate or tea, but eventually we just settled on coffee."

Navi stared out the window, the rain coming down heavier now. Her words were bitter, cold. "I would have loved to be there for that. Perfect family, perfect life."

Wyn walked over to her. "Navs, you know he just wanted what he thought was be-"

She whipped around, pointing a finger at him. "He did NOT want what was best for me. If he wanted what was best for me he wouldn't have sent me to a dang nut house where they guilt you into never using magic again, where they try and gaslight you into believing you turned your own mother into a top hat! I was alone, I was scared, and I was 9. 9, Wyn. I should have been out there playing with you and Mia and Vael, but instead I was stuck in a white box for 10 hours a day questioning if I did lose my mind and turn mom into a hat." Navi breathed slowly, trying to calm herself. When she spoke again, it was softer. "I just wanted to make him happy, Wyn. Nothing I ever did was good enough. When I finally showed him my magic, hoping that would break through his cold, broken exterior he just threw me away. Like it was my fault I inherited

mom's elemental traits. Like they were the work of evil. Like I, his tiny little daughter, was evil." She looked out the window again. Tears began streaming down her face.

Wyn put his hand on her back. "I can't even begin to imagine how hard that must have been. I never forgave him for taking you away from us. Trust me, the few years after you left were some of the worst. I know it can't compare to what you went through."

Navi looked up at the grey Astralian sky. "What if they were right, Wyn. I still ask myself that question to this day. What if it was me, what if it is all my fault?" She began to cry. "I can only remember so much, everything is hazy and I can't tell what's real and what they want me to think, and what Gwen wants me to think. Some days I don't know if I'm wrong or right. I don't know, Wyn. I feel like I don't know anything."

Wyn stood there, surprised to see Navi open up so much. He was so used to her manic state she'd been in since they reunited that he had thought that was her only state. He put his arm around her shoulder and pulled her close. "It's okay, Navs. You didn't turn mom into a top hat, it was someone else. We found her in the woods, there's no way it was you."

"What if everything is a lie, what if we didn't find her in the woods and this is all just me being crazy like everyone thinks I am and you're just going along with it? I don't know what to believe, I can't even trust myself these days." She began to tremble, the sobs intensifying.

Seeing Navi like this made Wyn want to cry, too. He pulled her in for a proper hug as she cried into his shirt. "It's killing me to see you like this, Navs. I'm not just

going along with it. I promise I was there with you when we found her. I'm so sorry Gwen has messed with your mind. It'll get better. I don't know how, but it will."

Navi leaned her face against Wyn's chest, sniffing. "I hope. I really do." She sank to the floor, resting her back against the kitchen wall. Wyn, not sure what to do, joined her.

"Y'know, the old man and I grew pretty distant after you left."

Navi looked over at him. "Really? You two seemed so close, at least from what I can remember."

He nodded, his turn to stare at the ceiling. "It started the day you were taken away. He didn't even tell me, you know. I just got back from playing with Mia and Vael when he sat me down and told me you had shown him your powers a few days prior and he decided it would be in your best interest to send you off to 'have you fixed' or whatever. Naturally I lashed out, how could he just send you away like that? And without telling me? We didn't even get to say goodbye. God that sucked. He just kept saying how magic is inherently evil and how you'd just lose yourself in your element like my first mom did." He sighed. "But you know what sealed it, what really revealed how selfish dad could be?"

"What was it?"

"I told him to give you a chance, to give magic a chance, and he blew it off. He started talking about how accepting he's been of everything in this family. How he let mom have a job in the magical part of town, how he let us 'dye our hair', and..." He began shaking, visibly angry at what he was about to say. "How accepting he was about

'that trans thing your brother decided to go through'. He just kept on about it, how he would have *loved* to have two little boys he could play catch with and teach about manly things, but he was just so giving and understanding that he put all those thoughts aside so you could be who you are. God, he sounded like such a martyr, how he was just such a great dad for enduring that, like he had lost something by letting you be yourself." He looked over at her. "The worst part? He had the audacity to call you Ivan throughout the whole thing."

Navi's heart fell, the lump forming in her throat again. "I... I thought he understood."

"I did too, Navs. Maybe he did and he just wanted something to be mad about. All I know is I stopped respecting him that day. He kept trying to win me back but it only can go so far, y'know? Every time you came up in conversation he kept talking about how everything was going to be great when you came back, healed of your magic affliction. It was always a reminder that he was still the same closed-minded old fool."

The two sat in silence for a moment, the sun having set in the already dark sky. Finally, Navi spoke up, rubbing the floor beneath her. "Do you think he can hear us?"

Wyn looked down. "Dunno. Maybe he's in magical purgatory atoning for his mistakes in life. Maybe he's right here, listening to us talk shit." He then yelled out. "Hey old man! If you're listening, Navi's not crazy and magic isn't the devil! She never got cured because there was nothing wrong in the first place! So suck it!"

Navi laughed a bit and joined in. "I came back twice as pretty as before, too! You never had two sons to begin with! My magical identity is as much a part of me as my gender!"

"Hey old man, watch this!"

Wyn stood up and pressed his palms together and drew forth his magic. He pulled his hands apart, a flowing green energy filling the air around them. Navi gasped, standing too.

"Wow, you can manifest it now? Wyn this is amazing!" Navi marveled at the energy swirling about them. It had been so long since she'd seen him use his magic.

Wyn smiled, letting it bend and weave about, causing it to look like the sky auroras. "It'd be great if I knew what it was, or what more I can do with it. All I can do still is send it flying at someone through a sword, and let it swirl about like this."

Navi snapped her fingers, "I know what your element is! It's the element of mystery!"

"You've been spending too much time with that J3ff guy, he's rubbing off on you." Wyn chuckled before letting his magic disappear.

Wyn offered an arm to Navi, and she took it. "Lets head upstairs, see what else this old memory has in store for us."