

The Girl with The Flying Shuttle

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To all the brilliant girls on our planet and all around our magnificent globe.

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Chapter 1- Oak Estate

This tale took place many orbits ago, where life was quite ordinary, however, magic was lurking everywhere.

Once upon a time... There was a little girl who went by the name Hope, who had just arrived at the famous and mystical little village, Oak Town. As she approached it she noticed a large wooden sign; Oak-Estate. Warm voices bounced and echoed across the tunnel's hefty stone walls to the gate where she stood contemplating. Black squirrels ran underneath ladders and walkways, making ripples in the river as their tails tickled the surface of the water.

With eager steps and decisive strides, she pushed through the gate with her large mare trotting majestically behind her. Looking up as she scanned the strange and wonderful Tree House. She wore a floor-length robe where the left side of its shoulder had a red piece of fabric patched on top of it, because her left shoulder was slightly bigger than the other, she had to expand it. It was an injury from when her horse was a filly and by accident, she had kicked her in the process of getting her tame. The ankle boots were muddy from the travel, and the ties around her knees had gotten loose. Her hair was clear blonde and thick as a horse's mane, gathered in a long perfectly made twisted fishtail. Her tired reddish gaze was now directed towards the big wooden door. She straightened her back and adjusted her shoulders to make herself appear taller. After a couple of deep breaths, she reached up and knocked three times.

A couple of moments passed. Hope's posture slowly sank back to normal as she nudged a pebble back and forth with her foot.

"If you are here to become a witch, look elsewhere and you best be off."

Startled, Hope snapped her body back into posture with her chin up.

At first, she was puzzled, she remembered her father telling her about this particular group of women living alone in an abandoned place in a faraway land and it was called Oak Estate, she just never believed it existed.

"I have traveled tirelessly, I only just stopped to admire the view," she lied.

As a group of women peaked out through the door and windows from floors above, they noticed the tiny little Hope standing with her forehead covered in sweat.

"You can't be old?" someone shouted from one of the windows

"I'm eleven orbits" her limpid voice replied

"You must be hot from the look of it, here, take this!" She heard another voice.

Uncertain she took a few steps backward, grabbed the worn-out cloth that was thrown to her. She snuggled her hand inside her horse's long mane, the kind creature she had named Devo, stood steady by her side. The air was thick and humid and the sun bore down on them. Now she understood why

she got that cloth thrown to her, the women were all wearing those bleached pieces of fabric twirled around parts of their strong figures, some had even made them into hats. Amazing what one could make with a simple piece of fabric. They were not rich, that she was expecting, but the kind of energy and shades of color they oozed out she had never come across before.

A tall and aged woman walked down the two steps in front of the door and reached her hand forward towards Hope as she nervously took her hand. She was warm, certainly all that body hair must have warmed her up. For centuries it had been this way. It was a way to keep warm as well as a way to tell age and credit. This particular woman had six loops, so by the look of her, she must be aged and wise. She was wearing a few pieces of fabric underneath in warm shades of green draped over each other, tangled on her curved body, and knotted over her chest. Her yellow eyes sparkled as Hope's heart was beating nervously. She grabbed Hope's wonky shoulder, that was a girl who had lived and Hope liked that the woman noticed. Hair was swirling around them, tickling them to laugh, and as a rush of air blew stronger upon them the sound of a somber voice was coming from a tiny window above them,

"What are you waiting for? Get in for supper before you get burnt to a crisp!"

"Join us, my name is Awaah by the way," the old lady said

"Hope," She said and nodded politely.

Fidgety, she lifted off the only belongings she owned, a pouch hanging over Devo's back, and tapped her horse as she walked through the door after Awaah. The first thing she noticed when she entered the Estate was the soft carpet bouncing back onto her feet, it was a thick off-white fabric with meter-long tassels hanging to the sides. As she bent down to look closer she noticed the engraved names; Viggo, Kindkua, and Awaah, were a few of the ones she noticed. There was a window to her left, with their feet on each side of it sat two women with a shared bucket of water, scrubbing the dirt off their clothes towards the sharp edge, pulling and pressing to get the stains away.

Right next to them there was a ladder reaching up to the ceiling, and a few meters up sat a woman with an ink brush, painting a large horse with horns interconnected to a muscular human body, something Hope had never seen before. The walls behind the ladder were filled with a range of contrasting ink drawings. She noted weapons, arrows, a group of mysterious female warriors, the paintings seemed mysterious and almost spellbinding. As she walked closer she recognized some memory stones and a tally. A tally was a sort of communication tool that she remembered her father used to carry around to take care of taxes, and a memory stone was something she had been gifted by her great grandmother when she was born, and she had kept it with her ever since.

As she looked up big stone tunnels were hovering in connected circles. On top of it, a woman sat dangling her feet over the edge, teasing another one underneath her with a stick held in between her toes.

While Hope was daydreaming and observing the woman in front of her, she turned her head to the other side of the round space and noticed Awaah was already climbing up a bridge leading to a floor above. She silently jogged over to where the bridge began and pulled herself over a stone taller than herself. Now attempting to focus her gaze down towards Awaah's feet she began to notice it was hard to grasp if they were inside or outside as they stepped onto rocks and grass pebbles.

As they got further and further up the Tree she noticed they had company. A bunch of females was now to her left climbing a rope dangling from a beam attached at the top of the ceiling. The ones already lying on the tunnels powered it like koalas as they pushed their bodies forward, and the rest of them were behind her.

Hope placed her hand for support onto a grass-covered wall, she came across the sweet odor of steamed leaves and the crisped-up smell of mandrake as they entered the oval-shaped room, and she noticed a woman heated water over a fire instead of a stove. It must take hours, a tedious task, Hope thought. But not for them, they seemed as if they enjoyed it. At least that was the impression she got. They liked the slow tempo of things and that they seemed to take good care of their belongings, she could tell from the few things they had.

Birch Town, the place Hope was from, was much taller, colder, and wealthier. The taller the tree, the better, that meant they were further away from potential predators that would come luring in the villages during night-time, at least that's what she was told. Her family had always made sure she was protected and provided with things as fancy as black soup made with lye and olive oil. She had passed many different villages on her way to Oak Town and came across people who were far less well off; most towns she passed had to settle with pure water from the river, making her realize how privileged she had been.

Her new adventure was about to begin at only eleven orbits, even if that particular fact would not matter much anymore, for in Oak Town there was no perspective of time for there was nothing like a clock to keep track. They would follow the Lightstream and by darkness, they knew it was time to sleep, and that was all they needed. From the moment she would enter the Oak Estate though, much more than lies would occur but many things she never would have guessed in her wildest dreams. Once she had sat her foot in that tree, her life, and all the other lives in Oak Town would because of Hope, change forever.

Chapter 2- New encounters

It had gotten dark by that time. As Awaah and Hope had now reached the cookery, six other women were already seated around a big glowing fire in the middle of the round space. It was an inviting atmosphere, the noise from the clicking fire and the friendly voices were loud, and the pleasant burnt smell was soothing and relaxing. The ever-changing flame kept shifting its shape and color, and as the light lit up their faces their shadows crossed over each other's bodies.

They were snacking on some garlic butter and heated mandrake that was placed on wooden plates around the fire. Awaah sat down and encouraged Hope to do the same. Awaah was leaning towards a wall with her legs crossed and when she opened her mouth almost done chewing, the room got silent and they all looked towards her, curiously and attentive.

“Most women who make it to our Oak didn't fit into the place where they originally came from, at least the rumors like to say we are misfits, bohemians, oddballs, eccentrics, or mavericks. What brings you here?”

Hope was not sure what to say, she nodded frantically as she was trying hard to stuff her mouth with some more mandrake, but there was no escaping it, by this point, they were all staring at her. She remembered the tales about these women. Supposedly they had been taking over the land many decades earlier, and since then women had traveled there from all over the continent to escape for various reasons. Some tales said they had been hurt, abused, and looked to the Estate for shelter. While some of the stories told they have been grown-up completely alone without the comfort of even a family, and the most gruesome tale she had heard of was where the older women would sacrifice themselves for food so the newborns would not starve.

“Well... I’m from Birch Town, had a rough upbringing, and therefore fled here in the night,” She lied, again.

The truth was she did not have as grim an upbringing as the rumors told about many of the women in The Estate. Hope used to play games with her siblings all the time. Horse racing, gambling with dice, wrestling tournaments, checkers, and the occasional hammer-throwing. But she was a dreamer and was constantly losing herself daydreaming about the things she hadn't done. She loved being on the road, learning about different villages, seeking treasures, and getting acquainted with new kinds of creatures. When she turned eleven orbits she decided to get out of Birch Town and seek further than she had ever done to find her voice, for she knew it was there... somewhere, and it was clear to them all, it sure wasn't in Birch Town. Her family didn't see the matter as she did, they agreed of her leaving simply for she was of no use there, and from the moment she had first heard the tale of the females in Oak Town, she had never been able to stop thinking about it since.

Hope suddenly noticed a bulky woman standing quite in the corner of the cookery, leaning towards a bench full of saucepans, wearing a green dress wrapped around her, with a bunch of different knives and spoons fixed into hatches onto the dress. Once the women noticed Hope was not gonna say anything further, she walked toward the fireplace and fondly grabbed the front of her hat as her hair poofed up from under and she turned the hat around and gently placed it over the fire (the hat was a saucepan and not the opposite). She took a good grip around the handle, now engulfed in her hand, she continued to maneuver around the fire, stepping over the long legs in an almost theatrical and slightly performative way.

The woman took a big step towards a hole placed inside the wall behind where Hope was seated, showed her fists inside the wall as bees were flying in and around, and stirred the liquid with her bare hands, hurrying the buzzy bees to make honey. She scooped up some goo in her palms, poured it into the saucepan, and took a step backward towards the basil from the green wall of herbs, and while assembling it all, the woman began to tell Hope,

“I’m Groryh and I’m a good hash slinger,” she said with a smirk on her face.

Nothing too grand, but our garden, our plants, and our animals make a great assemblage. Found a way to channel my burning love for progress into nourishment” upon saying she grabbed a cutting board from the wall above the tool bench, placed it onto Awaah’s lap, and chopped the last piece of basil that would go as a garnish. She went back to the corner of the cookery, grabbed the boiling red sauce in one hand and the long stalk of already prepared steamy leaf wrapped in the other.

“These are primrose leaves filled with onions, sumac, and coriander with red basil sauce,” Groryh said as she sprinkled the last piece of basil from the cutting board on top of the sauce. She gave the pan a final shake and placed it down next to the fire with the red sauce.

Satisfied as one would be, walked back to the cookery, grabbed a bowl from the equipment bench in the bypass, filled it up with water and started by cleaning up her spoons and knives in the background while the group of women continued to dip the leaves in the boiling sauce. Their voices became louder again as they munched and giggled in between each other with great pleasure. Hope was pleased to sit quietly and observe, much to take in as it was.

She Observed how they did not seem to care that red sauce was spilling everywhere, it ran down their chins onto their wrapped dresses, and when it dropped onto their hair, they licked it up. Hope glanced down at her clean robe, and as she noticed how different she looked, she turned her bun around quickly so the sauce would splash onto her robe and drip down onto her knees.

On the opposite side of the fire, Hope noticed a girl who was lying down with her feet up against the pebbly wall, and her sleepy but kind eyes looked at her curiously, as she had noticed what Hope was up to. She smiled, looked almost as young as Hope, but her hair was much thicker. Dark brown hair tucked behind her large ears, with a blonde piece of hair hanging over her face of which relaxed she kept blowing away from her face. She had covered her hair like a blanket covering her bare skin. Once the noise had settled down a bit, the woman leaned forward towards Hope and said,

“I like your robe, seems a bit hot here though”

“Oh yes, it is, but where I'm from it's really cold. Birch Town, Have you heard of it? One of these are essential there”

“Oh, that is far away from here, and brutally cold I've heard. I'm from a place called Pitaya Town, it's also cold, but seemed as you had it worse” The woman smiled and continued,

“My name is Sinoya by the way”

“If you want, I'll teach you how to be idle”

“Idle? ” asked Hope

“Yes, I teach everyone here how to be idle. It is something our ancestors taught us. “After the first course of the day, you must work very efficiently until the second meal, as you will notice the intense duration will make you remarkably efficient so no need to linger. After the second meal, it's then suitable to idle, to daydream, nap, climb around, make some nothing. You'll see” She continued to blow that blonde piece of hair away from her face and continued,

It's a concept we live by here in Oak Estate, but I first learned of it in Pitaya Town, and once I introduced it here, everyone loved it. Right?” She goes as she throws another piece of leaf wrap in her mouth, glanced around the room, and waited for a response.

Hope looked intrigued. Next to Sinoya, another woman raised her dark and somber voice,

“Yes. Life-changing in fact, we have our very own Idling expect” she said and grabbed one of Sinoya’s hands and held it in between hers.

“My turn” The encouraging woman continued,

“I’m Allea, and I traveled from Wisteria Valley, I arrived here many orbits ago”

“My favorite thing about this place is that we help and work as a team here, and we have as much as we need to flourish.” She said and looked around the empty but lively space.

The atmosphere had started to cool down, now they were all part of the same conversation as they went around introducing themselves, and smiled at each other. Allea was resting her chin onto her knee, the light from the fire beamed over her body, and Hope noticed she only had one leg. She tried not to stare and look elsewhere, up towards the ceiling she looked with an awkward smile. She was getting tired, she noticed there were still a few faces left who had not introduced themselves. She heard herself saying to the women sitting on her right side,

“And what is your name? And where are you from? And could you tell me a bit about those?” She said as she nervously pointed towards the paintings in the ceiling.

“I’m Kindkua, and I come from Cacti City. And you, dear friend, do not have to be nervous, you are doing great.”

“And you must be tired after the long journey, keeping up with the lingo”

They laugh, and hope gave out a soothing sigh.

“You see, it’s simple. We teach each other what we know, whatever we know will be new and insightful for someone, since we all come from different places of the continent, so good news, you are already interested to us.”

“Now, you relax, and tomorrow, we will figure out how you can be of service,” she said and gave Hope a big and heartwarming smile.

Kindkua stood up, a lot taller than she appeared sitting. Her ginger hair was slick back. As she stood up she tightened the hair in a loop around her waist, and let the rest hang down behind her. She took a few steps around the circle of women and stopped by the three half-sleeping ones, the only ones who still had not yet introduced themselves. They had been sitting close enough to the fire to where their cheeks had started to look like peaches. She tapped on one of the woman's shoulders, and the one with black and golden hair began,

“I’m Savora, I come from Baobab City. Not much of a talker” she said as she brushed through her thick burgundy hair with her short and stubby little fingers.

“She mostly likes to observe, but you will learn heaps about savoring from her,” the woman with golden-brown hair next to her interrupted and continued,

“And I’m Grattrud, I’m from a little valley called Koa. Mostly I like to spend my days investigating our past and I share insights as much as I can to whoever is amused. Many of those ink drawings you

see around the Estate are illustrations of our findings as well as interpretations of a potential fate.” She said making a tiny headshake towards the third one in their row while giving Hope a warming smile.

“And I’m Viggo, from Ponderosa Pine, I’ll help you turn those twigs for arms into sturdy branches”

Viggo’s hair was noticeably shorter than the other, but just like all the others, it was thick as a horse’s mane.

“Welcome to the Estate” Awaaw cheered loudly and lovingly threw a breadcrumb towards Hope, moments passed, and soon they all fondly joined in.

When Hope had arrived at the Estate, she seemed just as much as a breath of fresh air for them as they did to her. She oozed out a sort of goodness that could not be mistaken. It was undeniable that she was absorbed in aspiring energy that they all wanted to get acquainted with. Besides, she was accomplished, brave, and ambitious enough to make it all the way there, which was an immense achievement in itself. Nevertheless, it was not a given that just because you found your way there, you would be able to stay. The group of women would wait a few days by announcing any serious position, they would start by including and treating any guest as their own, and if the female in question would be kind enough, be trustworthy and contribute to the Estate, most likely she would get the spot.

Hours passed and the fire was almost into ashes and only the occasional flame was now bursting up once in a while. Their bodies had slouched down and their eyes were heavy. Allea tapped Hope’s back and decided to escort her to where she would stay for the night. They walked out quietly to avoid disturbing the ones who were resting. The group of women now looked so peaceful and snug. They grabbed a ladder right outside the cookery that led straight to the top of The Estate to a room that had been empty for a long time, the other eight females had grown too tall to fit through the door without bending their backs, so it was mostly used as a watchtower to enjoy the meadow from the highest viewpoint. The shabby old sign outside the door to the bedroom looked like it hadn’t been touched in orbits, it stated; "knock three times or get lost", a bit aggressive for their taste perhaps, but she liked it.

Allea waved her goodbye and insured her she could always come to talk to her if she had any questions, her room was just a floor down. Hope approached the room, squeezed her hands together, and placed them underneath her resting chin, biting her upper lip as she opened and closed her eyelids a few times, It wasn't a dream. She brushed her robe off and untied her boots, undressed, and made a pile with her belongings right next to the door.

There was not much inside the room. The dark timber covered the walls and a few light streams appeared from the holes carved inside, a burnt down beeswax candle by the one big window. The floor was different, it had a sort of rough texture, curved around the wall edges so if she tilted her head it was hard to grasp where the floor ended and the wall began.

A little ladder up to the sleeping area, tiny and made of ropes. She noticed a folded blanket as she walked up the ladder and a dark purple squirrel resting its chin on top of it. A hook with some colored cloths by the batwing door. In the ceiling, she noticed there were these patterns again, some yellow clouds, a green sun, and a bunch of glowing stars. Carefree, could they just pick up a brush and paint wherever and whatever they wanted, she wondered. It felt refreshing, and it had a heck of a charm.

She sat down by the window for a moment and pushed the white curtain to the side and gazed down towards the green bushy meadow. She reached for the handle and opened the window as the fresh air blew her white braid backward and she noticed the soothing sound of the clicking grasshoppers. She spotted all kinds of strange creatures glowing in the dark, chewing away on the lush meadow, and behind a big bush of grass, she spotted Devo, resting in the dark.

Exhausted, she looked up towards the little dark purple squirrel that was sound asleep in the bed, flat on its tummy with the blanket used as its cushion. Its two feet hanging to the side, and its big eyes were tucked into the cushion, only the long lashes stuck out. She reached for the bunch of scarves hanging on a hook by the door, grabbed a purple one and covered herself, and curled up right next to the window, and with a priceless view, she fell deep asleep.

Chapter 3 - Finders keeper

Up like a kangaroo Hope jumped as she heard the three knocks and the familiar voices of Groryh and Allea outside. She grabbed the purple scarf that she had used as a blanket and quickly tried to figure out how it was supposed to be tied onto her. Groryh bent down and peaked in under the swinging batwing door as Allea peaked above by climbing onto Groryh's back. They noticed Hope struggled and eventually they helped themselves in and each grabbed an end of the fabric and started to illustrate how to twist around her waist and up over her chest, ending with a knot on one shoulder. Hope appreciated their forward approach, she had to wear this now when the sun was warming her up constantly and humid air was sticky on her skin.

It was still early, the sun had not risen yet. Seemed as Groryh and Allea had a lot of energy, Hope jogged as quickly as she could, as usual, distracted by the new smells and constant shifts of pathways. The vissing grasshoppers hiding underneath the stones and grass pebbles was a wonderful sound waking up to. She figured she would easily get lost if she didn't do her best to keep up, so she tried to look towards their feet again. They needed to get down to the cookery, walk through it towards the other side and over a narrow stone bridge that led to their first-morning appointment, Awaah's bedroom.

The sweet scent of wheatgrass washed over them as they walked in and noticed all the other women were already seated. Awaah sat with her legs crossed on one side and the rest of the women were faced towards her from the opposite end with a backdrop of grasshoppers and long strings of grass, as there was no wall behind them to stop the bushes from growing in. As soon as Groryh, Allea, and Hope were seated next to the group of women, Awaah began,

"Let's begin, shall we. Throughout this breathing exercise, first notice the breath as it enters your nose and notice, each time you breathe in, the way the breath feels."

"Feel the breath as it passes through your nasal passages, and down behind your throat."

"Notice how calm and relaxed you are. When you are ready to return, you can reawaken your body and return to the present."

Hope had almost dozed off from the hypnotizing experience when Viggo tapped her back. It was time for the durability exercise. They jumped up and down on Awaah's bed, back and forth over the stone bridge, through the cookery they rolled on the floor as they came out on the other side, grabbed the two ropes hanging from the ceiling, and climbed competitively to the top of the ceiling and back down, exhausted Hope tried to keep up.

Starved by this point Groryh luckily offered Hope to join her and help carry vegetables from the meadow to the cookery. They climbed down the ladder from the cookery to the bridge, and down to the big entrance and walked out into the gashing sun. Hope followed her to the backside of the Oaktree, and as she turned the corner she grabbed a bucket hanging on a hook onto the tree and she nodded towards Hope and said,

“Go on, grab as much as you can bare”

There were round blue potatoes, meter-long pink carrots, large ripe onions, golden artichokes, and perfectly plum tomatoes growing in full glory. They harvested until their buckets were full and headed back to the cookery to prepare the first meal of the day. Groryh started by filling up a saucepan with water to boil, she threw in some herbs and three ripe onions. As it was simmering she mashed the potatoes and encouraged Hope to do the same. She walked over to the entrance of the cookery and leaned over towards one of the spiraling tunnels and shouted,

“Potato pancakes and leek soup everyone”

Meanwhile, she reached under the bench and grabbed two of the nigella seed muffins she had baked earlier. She ate them both and looked at Hope with a smirk,

“I'm messing with you, here you go,” she said as she grabbed two more and fed them to Hope

“Quickly” She added

“before the others arrive” and they looked fondly at each other.

Hope stuffed the delicious muffins in her mouth as well as trying to keep up with the lingo. Rightfully so, short moments later the seven other women arrived as their sweat poured down their foreheads, ready to fuel their bodies. The acoustic was suddenly loud as their voices bounced onto the timber walls of the relatively small cookery, considering the number of women that were in there. They tickled and wrestled each other as they stood in patiently waiting for their turn, and one by one grabbed a wood-carved bowl and slurped the soup down, and devoured the pancake in a single bite. The first meal of the day was finished and the sun was just starting to rise as their chores were about to start, and yet it felt as if a whole sunset had passed by.

The nine women headed to do their chores as Hope went back to the space she had slept during the night, she waited for some kind of signal. An idea had popped into her head of how she could be of service. She desperately wanted to stay, so she realized she would have to prove herself to have a chance of sticking around, and she would have to do something different.

Hope reached for her pouch she had brought with her and started by gently unpacking her belongings as she found a place for each object in a straight line in front of the window. Some wood pegs, a

hammer, a hand drill, a pair of cloth shears, a notebook, and her memory stone. She had been fiddling with her gadgets since she got them gifted to her by relatives many orbits back and now she finally saw all the opportunities of how she could use them.

She picked up the hammer, felt it in her hand. Noticeably it made her calm, the object was leading the way like a good dance partner. She grabbed some nails in one hand and took a sturdy grip around the hammer with the other, and began to look around the room. She noticed the curtain from the window was not hanging straight so she went over and maneuvered it into place by loosening the pole and bending it back to a perfect angle, then hammered it into perfection.

Nervous, but buzzing with excitement she barely noticed Awaah had entered the space and placed herself by the window. With a clear determination, Hope continued to walk around the room. Concentrated she walked over to the hook where the scarfs were hanging. She tied the ends of the fabric pieces together and threw the connecting piece up in the air, grabbed one end and tied it around the leg of the bed, threw the other side up again, and tied it to the hook by the sliding door and the third end she tied by the pole holding the curtain in place. It may not sound like much, but suddenly they were covered inside a dazzling dwelling, and none of them had ever seen anything like it. Lastly, she grabbed another one of those scarfs, tied it around her waist, grabbed her tools, and divided them all inside the folded piece hovering around her body. Stunned, a tool belt was created in moments. She sank next to Awaah, both in awe over the little performance that just occurred.

They sat there for a long time, pondering and contemplating, silently. Hope began to feel nervous again, what had she done? Maybe this was strange to Awaah and she blew it, jumping around the room like that, repairing and adjusting, improving and creating a mood, what would that be called? She pondered. Seeing the transformation of the before and after the image had given her immense satisfaction. The unstable being transformed into something permanent, solid, and steady. Doing more than just fiddling with the tools and gadgets but providing them a purpose as well as herself, for it made her feel like she had something important she could contribute.

She knew they didn't need much in Oak Town and the things they owned were mostly things they made themselves or found in junkyards, but Hope wished she could now be of use and contribute by improving things around the Oak and creating more durable systems, by fixing it. She had the personality for it, fearless, a visionary, a real go-getter. Dreaming away she had soon found new places that needed repairing and she was eager to make better systems, newer and smarter inventions, and overall improve things around the Oak by creating more durable structures.

"Marvelous, just marvelous" Awaah bursts out as she stood up and clapped her hands loudly together.

Hope was filled with joy, she had to agree, she too was impressed by her performance. Finally acknowledged, again.

Chapter 4 - A couple of sunsets later

Hope felt established and confident in her role only sunsets later, and cherished everything about it. But... she still was not certain her stay there was no more than temporary.

She had gotten the chance to get to know the women better, for she always had a reason to go around and say hi to everyone, walk by their rooms and ask around if anything needed repairing. The women seemed to love it too. Being helpful made her feel good, and she got to use her wild imagination and come up with new inventive solutions that helped her become more ambitious in her projects, and constantly she got to fiddle with her tools.

The freedom made her feel like she was liable and important. She divided her days however she wanted, even though idling and the rituals provided were highly recommended. Usually, those hours after the second meal had become her favorite hours, it was when she got her best ideas, right in-between activities. Most days she would sit next to Devo and share carrots she snuck from the backyard as they would quietly admire the meadow together. They would mimic the strange creatures that were lurking around, make funny facial expressions of the small creatures with ears dangling to their sides and with big hairy tails with the tiniest feet, covered in dove colors of hair. They brushed each other's hair, and oh, they would giggle. She was not lazy, not in the least. She got the job done but this was the way things were done around there. The other women did the same thing, but with different tasks and skills.

During the evenings she enjoyed playing with the squirrel that had been hanging around her room ever since she got there. The squirrel was quiet, comforting company, and helped her make cozy cloth dwellings. Just like the one she made a couple of sunsets earlier when she impressed Awaah with her magnificent fixing skills. One evening, in particular, Hope was lying down with the squirrel resting on her tummy, peeking out through the window, admiring the meadow, when she heard a strange tapping noise.

“Tap...Tap...Tap...”

She was a night owl unlike the others, so suspected she must be the only one awake. Rightfully so, she heard no one making a fuss in the usually roaring Oak, now calm as a millpond. She assumed it was a water leak from the top left side coming from one of the tunnels. As she popped her head out of her dwelling, she sure was right.

She pondered, if she did not take care of it at once, it would leak down the whole Oak Tree and the work would take twice as long by sunrise, so she decided to take care of it. There was no material to use lying around for tapping the hole in the Estate, but she was not sure how safe it was to go out during the night. On the other hand, she had gotten this far, so surely she could handle whatever mysteries might occur. If it was important, Awaah would have mentioned it, she convinced herself. If she didn't get out to get some material at once and tap the hole, the leak would wake everyone up, and her chance to stay in her dream place would be out the window. The last thing she wanted was to travel home again, besides, if not proving to everyone she could be of real service, but prove to herself, she could fix it.

Contemplating what way to go, she stood by the window and noticed a ladder leading straight down to the backyard. Feet first she climbed down the meter-long ladder, out jumped the squirrel behind her, and landed in her scarf of tools. Hugging the outside of the Oak as she climbed down the steep ladder, once down she jogged through the bushes and into the meadow. She was afraid of what was out there, and if she would get lost. For a split second, she was thinking of waking Devo up, but then she heard a little voice in her head, "Do it yourself," so she continued alone. The air was humid, coating her bare skin as she slowly jogged through the meadow and in between the empty field scanning thoroughly for scraps to use. She got further and further out of what seemed like Town and suddenly arrived at a crossroads, it got a bit chilly and suddenly by the end of yet another field, she glimpsed a giant mountain of unfamiliar materials. A landfill.

Heaven or hell... She was completely consumed by seeing so many opportunities at once, a huge pile of objects, waiting to be rescued. On the other hand, it was confusing for her soul to tell her otherwise. There was certain darkness that hovered over the landfill. The chills, no sound of grasshoppers, the murky cloud that only covered the area above, and the hauling wind slapping the gadgets against each other. As she stepped on top of the junk she used her feet to push the dirt off the surface. She slowly moved through the pile and there...

A glowing-looking light stream appeared from underneath her feet as she felt a burning tingling vibration from underneath. She took a few steps back, lifted some rustic timber, and gently pulled what appeared to be a sort of wood-like material constructed into a strange object. She pulled a bit harder and by the force of it she fell backward and the heavy square block landed on her tummy.

How she got back was a blur, in awe over what she had found she placed the heavy machine in the middle of her room and hovered around it like a wolf's prey. She decided that it was too captivating of an object to break apart. Just about as she was going to sit down, she remembered the leak. She walked decisively towards the window, grabbed the wood sticks she had brought back in the bypass and she grabbed some nails and cloth by the door hook. still, like a mouse, she was trying to navigate precisely where the sound came from. She followed the sound as her feet led her climbing up her bed and in the left corner of the room, just so she could reach it, she saw the leak. With the fabric too dense the sound, she placed it folded onto the leak and grabbed her hammer from her tool belt, and hammered the nails into place.

Back to the machine. She stared at it, what a weird-looking thing. It was made of golden brown wood sticks, had four corners on the outside, and eight more corners on the inside, and precisely in the middle a sort of spinning wheel was attached. On what appeared to be the top there were two handles, the bottom two paddles. She tried to figure out what on earth it might be used for. Hypnotized she was observing, tinkering, pressing, and deconstructing it, all the ways she could think of. She tossed it up, tried to turn the handles, and push the pedals, as fast as she could, as slow as she could. It felt like it had to have a function. Why else would there be parts made to press on? She frustratedly asked herself.

Just in time for sunrise, as the light hit her sun-kissed freckled back and the now rough fishtail braid had gotten very loose after not remaking it since she got there. From different angles, she noticed symbols that seemed to make a pattern. Numbers and funny shapes, if a triangle was engraved in one of the twelve corners, the same triangle was engraved on the same spot but the opposite side of the machine. She squeezed her eyes and got a bit closer,

“OUCH!” she bursts out.

“I’m stuck” she yielded frustrated, looking at the little squirrel that seemed to have given up a long time ago.

The squirrel stepped over the machine and grabbed her hair that was stuck in the wheel, and the squirrel pulled.

“OUUUUCH! Oh lord, this was a bad idea. She stumbled. Now what?”

Hope looked hopeless towards the squirrel, and suddenly she realized how exhausted she was.

“I’m just gonna close my eyes for a moment, alright.” She mumbled and leaned onto the machine.

Chapter 5 - Possessed

“I must have dozed off...” Hope mumbled to herself.

“Hey there little fella,” she heard a smooth little voice. *“Over here, by The Flying Shuttle, you spawned me yesterday, I’m Desire, if I may...”*

The little piece of fabric said proudly as she reached up towards Hope with one of her dangly strings in an attempt to shake her hand.

“Knock knock knock”

“Shoot” stumbled Hope as she grabbed the blanket from her bed and threw it over the machine. The sliding door pushed open and Allea walked in as she wondered what all that noise was about.

“What on the earth is going on here?” Allea bursts out as she spotted the moving piece of fabric.

“Hi yourself, and yes, I speak, for I to have a mouth like you. I can listen, for I have ears just like you, and I can see, for I have a vision, just like you. Now, let me introduce myself. Desire, pleasure is mine.”

As they stood completely inactive unable to formulate a single sentence, now with the company of Groryh, Viggo, Sinoya, Grattrud, Kindkua, and Savora, who had gone to see where that strange voice came from. They circled the talking piece of fabric who claimed to go by the name Desire.

“Let me present to you, the legendary, the mighty, The flying Shuttle,” she said as her tassel gently brushed the sides of the machine.

“But... How did it go? But... just yesterday, I only... What on earth happened here?” Hope stumbled onto her words.

"Here is what happened," said Desire.

"You got stuck inside the wheel yesterday, and when you were in there long enough. Let's say... You woke up the beast!" She said as she was laughing outrageously.

"You created something almost looking like a spiderweb, there is something magical with your hair, In fact, all of you, stop with those grumpy faces. This is the best news you will ever have" She said walking around the machine on her two tassels.

The little piece of fabric was overjoyed jumping around the room, not much bigger than a foot. Oval and slim, with two short tassels used as her hands, and two as her feet. She too was golden like the object, only with slightly lighter nuances. She had thin red lips, a tiny button nose, a large round eye, and a set of long dangly ears hanging to her sides.

"You see..." She just never stopped talking.

This Shuttle can do more than a man can foresee, you have been blessed, someone has been lucky, and now my friends, the universe lies in your hands. What you want, you simply only need to request, and your wish is your demand. But..." She said, *"the only one able to spin is the one who brought it back to life."*

"So, It can give me more things?" Hope replied as the other dared to come a bit closer.

Their facial expressions slowly shifted and Hope's worries slowly disappeared as she began thinking about what else she could make.

"In that case, I would like a better shovel" Groryh began, unaware of the dangerous statement she had just made.

"Well then I wish for a bigger swing" Savora continued

"I wish for a bigger bed" Sinoya added

"Heavier ropes!" Viggo continued...

Desire immediately started to illustrate how to treat The Flying Shuttle, and soon, faster and faster Hope pulled the handle towards her chest, pressing the pedal down slightly down towards the floor with her foot. As close to magic as she had ever been, outcomes the first wish, a glistening silver shovel was flying towards her at a slow and magnetic speed as it positioned itself gently by slowing down and placed itself right in front of her.

The women were in complete awe, patiently witnessing the act. Groryh took a few steps forward and grabbed the silver shovel, perfectly made with a long handle that fitted perfectly in her hands.

From that moment on the wishes kept coming, and magical objects were created in a flash. Hope soon got more comfortable, and the others almost synchronized started cutting their long hair off from all parts of their bodies whilst eagerly placing it around the Shuttle, hoping for more things to be made. Rightfully so, all Hope had to do was declare what they wished, press her hands onto the handles and

her feet onto the paddle and her limbs would move synchronized together with The Shuttle. It wiggled, made loud bumping noises, and only a brief moment later another object was made.

Awaah arrived much later because no one had shown up for the morning ritual, so she had begun searching for them. She followed the loud noise and the bubbling voices, once she arrived, it was just too late to stop what had begun. Hope had already been cast under a spell, and what was done could not be undone. Awaah had heard about The Flying Shuttle and recalled it had dangerous spellbinding effects. It was capable of creating dangerous things if not being handled responsibly. She wanted no part of it and knew it was too late to stop Hope, nor try to convince any of them, it would simply only risk them pushing her away. So she waited, hoping it would pass, and simply went into her bedroom far on the other side of the Oak Tree where she stayed for an enduring and sufferable amount of time.

At first, the women asked for objects that had been broken. As Goryh needed a better shovel, her old one the handle had gotten loose. Viggo needed more ropes to climb, so during her durability sessions, the women would not have to share. Kindkua had asked for a new notebook, as she realized she could ask for many more. Soon they realized how simple it seemed to get even better objects, as the spiral continued.

Hope continued to create more and more objects. Piles and piles of wishes were on demand. Goryh would provide Hope with blueberry jam and butter toast, Savora came to sing folk songs as Viggo would massage her arms and legs. Hope spent most of that day working on fulfilling the wishes, so thankful for the relations, and grateful for the gifts she could provide. If it was noisy before, suddenly it was as if a whole orchestra had moved into Oak Estate. Some of the objects could speak, some walk, and the rest of the objects simply took over by the size of it. Wooden bowls were suddenly running around wrestling, sliding down the tunnels. Large beeswax candles strolling the hallways, making the grass walls turn into flames and scaring all those peaceful grasshoppers away. Along with their fast-growing vanity, mirrors were created, taking up large areas to the point it had gotten difficult to simply walk onto the floor, as they were placed upon it.

They did enjoy their things, but since they needed to sacrifice a big amount of their hair once they asked for a new object, soon they had started to get colder. The first night was cold, the temperature was low and the hair that was usually there to warm them up by covering themselves with it was now much too little. The next morning, their looks had already started to change, that long hair draping down onto their bodies, was rougher and much shorter.

Awaah had not been out of her room since she left the previous day, which meant there was an irregular balance. The Flying Shuttle and its assemblage of objects were now placed all around the Oak, making it hard for the women to meet. The rapid change of things in the only sunset of time was astonishing. Soon, the women had started to compare who had the most and as their loud voices started to turn into yelling instead of laughing, it was clear, only one sunset had passed, but the dynamic had vastly started to change.

Hope started to get really busy, as she was trying to please them all by making more and better versions of the things they already had. Once Sinoya received a bed but soon realized she could ask for a higher one, or even one who could talk like Viggo's Swing, she demanded to be fairly treated.

Hope only did as they asked, she never knew what really would come out of The Shuttle. Sometimes she did not even know what they asked for. She started to sacrifice idling and training, hoping that the

extra time she would put into making better tools and equipment for the women might satisfy them, but nothing satisfied them now. They came to visit less frequently and she had started to notice them fighting over objects. Suddenly they only came by when they wanted to ask for more, and left into their rooms again.

During the night, Hope stayed up to make her dreams. She wanted to make a comfortable saddle for Devo and a wagon she could connect behind it. Soon she realized she could dream bigger, she thought of bigger transportation to travel on. During the night, Hope started hearing the women crying from their rooms, for the winds during the night were stronger and colder, which they too had not understood the reason for why, yet.

The second sunset passed, they started to sacrifice their bedrooms and even the cookery was no longer empty for preparing food, the fire was blocked with objects now transformed into a storage space. They only ate raw onions that they individually went to harvest in the backyard, as to no other vegetable was growing, which was too nothing they understood the reason for why, yet. The atmosphere had drastically changed, so very fast. Mirrors were crashed as the splitters were marks onto the stones and now the muddy floor. Their tree was not nourished and so all of their vegetables had started to rot, and the color of the tree had turned from the light and glorious brown to a dark and mystical black.

Hope had not stopped working since the moment she pressed her hands onto that machine, almost as if her hands had become part of The Shuttle. Hypnotized, she couldn't and wouldn't stop working and there was suddenly so little time for so many things that they now believed they desperately needed. No one seemed to question much of their state of mind any longer, they were so caught up they hadn't even noticed Awaah had not gotten out of her room since it all began. She was now alone, all the women cared, for now, was getting more things. So many chairs, desks, closets, books, and other equipment had now been created they had to make space for new things. Piles of piles of stuff started to get thrown out the window covering their view. Only glimpses of light would shine through.

The Flying Shuttle, together with Hope and the seven other women had instantly transformed the Estate into a place where their earth, their vegetables, and living did not matter much anymore. Only objects, greed, control, and ownership were all they could think of. Hope had not even cared to think about where her purple squirrel friend had gone, or that she had not eaten in two sunsets, or if Devo was all right outside in the now much muddy meadow. They had not understood the reason for it yet, but the sun had stopped shining over the Estate, and by night the wind had become even louder and more gruesome.

Awaah realized this had gone too far, too fast. She had to try to do something. Out she went with decisive steps. Over the bridge, through the cookery and the overcrowded space filled with stacked notebooks, broken beds, and broken mirrors. As she continued through the space to grab the ladder, it had been damaged. Reaching towards the rope hanging next to it in fear she would fall, she was older and not as strong any longer since her stomach was empty and her muscles were fading. Her psyche was tired, but she kept forcing herself upwards, pushing herself up through the dark Estate as tears mixed with sweat running down her chin. Now she stood outside, afraid and angry for how this madness would stop, but once she pushed the door to Hopes room open and climbed through the piles of swings, chairs, beds, mirror, books, desks, and notice the even skinnier little Hope, the tears kept coming,

“Might not seem harmful, only a bunch of stuff, you might say” She said as she sat down in the opposite direction of Hope, leaning towards one of the stacks of closets that stood leaning onto the wall. Her hands streaked onto a silver shovel, the first one the machine had made for Groryh.

“Don’t you see? look around, is this how you want to live? please, dear friend, open your eyes”

“I have heard about This Shuttle, tales have told horrible things I could not even dare to say out loud. You have no idea what it is capable of” She continued...

“I plead here. I brought you into my house, I beg of you, see what that Shuttle is doing to us”

But it was hopeless, and Awaah was aware of it. Hope and the women were not themselves, for they were under a greedy, controlling, and dangerous spell.

“Hopeless...” Awaah whispered and vanished once again.

Hope’s appearance had started to change even more. She started to look skinnier than she already was losing muscle and her ice blond hair and her reddish eyes looked even bigger as her face was now bare naked and boney, completely overworked. Her immune system was crashing because of the lack of sleep, training, living, idling, and lack of sunlight. She remembered a moment before all of this, how she used to transform her room into whatever she wanted, igloos, pillow tents, and jumping towers. She thought about how she would jump from the top of her closet down to her piles of pillows and burst out in laughter as she ran back up again.

Maybe she could one day make something like that but better, if only she had time. Time... that was the only thing she didn't have though, and frankly, it was the only thing she couldn't make. She started wanting things she never knew she needed. She aspired to make new forms of transportation so she could travel easier, and she could make that happen with this machine, she had plans for bigger wagons and trails to travel. She wanted much and the machine had changed her mindset and made her realize that. Things had changed, she now believed her life had been empty and thanks to The Flying Shuttle, she could now potentially fill that void and do so much more if she only could get some more time... one day maybe, she fooled herself.

Chapter 6- The turning point

Three sunsets later and the bitter smell of loneliness and the thick blanket of smog was now regular. Those moments when a new object was invented were no longer joyful for Hope, only regular. The purpose she thought she had found by being helpful, and transforming something broken into solid, she seemed to have missed a very important part; they were no longer a team and she was merely on her own, alone with her Desire. The friends she thought she gained were suddenly nowhere to be found, hiding cold in their overcrowded rooms.

As for one night, something awful yet necessary happened. The thunders hit the Estate hard and Aware had no strength to climb away from the falling objects coming from the cookery as her room was right next to it. That same moment, Hope’s hands started to tremble and the wheel inside The Shuttle kept spinning faster and faster as Hope started to lose control over it and her hands started to vibrate rapidly. As hard as she could without realizing it until later, she pulled her hands away from

The Shuttle and climbed down the ladder quivering out of breath towards the other side of the Oak, through the cookery and over the stone bridge and she realized, miraculously, Awaah was hurt, but still alive.

“I'm gonna...wait here... I promise I will fix this” Hope stumbled as tears ran down her cheeks and ran towards the tunnel by the cookery and shouted into it.

“Awaah is hurt, everyone gets to the other side of the Oak, to Awaah, NOW!

As in any serious series of actions, there was a turning point, and that was theirs. Amid that guilt chaos, an unbearable disgrace towards themselves occurred where they all started to embody themselves again while realizing what had happened. Only three sunsets had passed, but everything had changed, everything different now. But the spell had been broken and the formula was leaving them back being compassionate, powerful, appreciative, developing, grateful, loyal, brave, and calm individuals. They were up until the next sunrise that night, removing the remaining objects from the cookery, lid up the fire, tucked Awaah under a thick pile of blankets, and finally united they started communicating again. Groryh walked over to the corner of the remaining grains, she was off for a short moment and came back with a large pan of rice stew as she placed it on top of the fire,

“I'm sorry, that's all we got ” she said disappointed.

None of them seemed to care. Hungry and grateful for something, they dug in with their fingers.

“How about we go back to the landfill, I show you where it all started. We might find clues there, how to fix this” Hope suggested

Load voices started to overrule each other.

I'll go. Anyone who wants to find some answers, come with me, the rest of you, please make sure Awaah is taken care of” Hope said with decisiveness as she walked out the cookery, and this time she latches onto a rope and swung herself down to the entrance.

As they jogged through the muddy meadows, the women's voices came closer, and suddenly Viggo, Savora, Kindkua, Allea, and Groryh were jogging behind Hope, while Sinoya and Graatrud were back at the Estate taking care of Awaah. They were ready, Hope could tell by the force they came with, ready for whatever they might face. Passing the bushes and through the meadows, as they arrived at the landfill and walked around the dump, desperately kicking big pieces of material until their toes ached, seeking answers.

Without a warning, a large six-wheel wagon drove towards them. Quickly the women dove into the pile, and Hope was suddenly deeply regretting her decision to drag them all back to the place that had been haunting them. They felt a pulling from underneath them and suddenly a movement made them fall forward into the strong and unpleasant odor into piles of trash.

As they peaked their heads up, they had been lifted onto the now driving wagon, In a fast speed towards the opposite direction of the Estate. In fear for their life, and no idea where the wagon was taking them. This was the end for Hope, she thought, covered in dirt and the most unbearable smell.

“Craaash!”

Moments later they got dumped down on something hard, felt an endless storm of rocks hitting their backs. They stayed still until they could not hear the voices anymore. Hope peaked up through the trash and what she saw she could not believe,

“The Ocean!” she blurted out

As the pile of trash and stuff from the landfill got pushed inside the water she got shuck to tears. There were objects and broken gadgets everywhere, covering the land like an untouched crime scene. The other women saw it too, nothing further needed to be said, change was needed, now.

For a split second, she forgot she was in a pile of trash far away from the Oak Estate, and all she noticed was the large shivering black waves pushing against each other. She had been taught it was sacred grounds, now it was intoxicating their water, and god knows what else. A part of Hope wanted to jump up and confront them, but she had done too much already, instead, she shrunk back down into the pile of trash and kept her mouth shut, ready to give up.

“This is why my plants are not growing, the water is filthy from all the toxic gadgets. But nature has its ways, we just need a little bit of Hope,” Groryh preached.

Those shadows got closer to the wagon again, they duck their heads down and patiently waited, anticipated, hoping they would get back to where they left off. Rightfully so, they did. They jogged the same path pack and they scrubbed themselves clean with a water hose in the backyard. As an evident reminder, out came the dirty water. They looked around and slowly started to walk back inside again. As they were headed to their beds, desperately in need of sleep, they peaked in through the cookery as Awaah was resting while Snuzu and Gratrud sat by her side and took turns apologizing and brushing her hair, in envy too for she was the only one who possessed it yet.

The next morning Hope was faced with the Shuttle. Just standing there, waiting to be devoured.

“Anyone who can come help me carry this” She shouted down the tunnel.

Up they came, one by one, and together they helped to carry The Shuttle down as it had mysteriously grown thicker and heavier by the wearing and tearing. Down the ladder, round the tunnel, and right above the big door to The Estate, Hope grabbed her hammer and some pins from her dress and locked that thing up. No one questioned it, a silent agreement had been made. On the way back, Hope stopped by the cookery to check on Awaah. Tears flowed like a river down her boney cheeks, too ashamed to formulate a real sentence, Hope was silent, all she could hear was those mean voices in her head.

Awaah finally broke the load silence and told her,

“great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds.” A wise soul once told.” (His name was Alexander Graham Bell). “What happens when pushing other forces away is that we are left with an unbalanced mind as one force goes alone and tries to be heroic, fearless and seek praise.

“And praise can be an icky thing, for if you keep chasing it, you might end up being its victim as you forget about what matters.”

Hope realized she had entered the Estate, and her mind was ready to find something further than her past, but her whole soul was still stuck somewhere else. She was looking for praise while looking hard for her purpose. She kept trying too hard, she never became one of them, and only once their forces would be together, true bliss would occur. That moment, it was the purpose all along that she had to find out for herself and she needed to dare to try and fail. Somewhere along the lines of what happened next came to be the most important part of this tale, for this is when the woman came to teach her that lesson. The universe was yet lying in their hands, for that would always be the case. But... what they wanted, they needed more than request, and they were all capable of doing it, once together.

Chapter 7 - When we gather, great things happen

Four sunsets had now passed as they were located a bit further away from the Estate onto a now muddy meadow. Was no sun or blue sky, or green grass, blue flowers or big trees to provide shade, and no funny-looking creatures running over their feet, but they were united again and determined to find a way to save their tree.

“How will the air and the water going to get clean again?” Sinoya asked as she was lying restlessly tossing and turning, with the eight other women circled around her.

“We need to use our land so our trees can help us get our clean air back” Groryh replied

“The universe knows how to regulate itself, it has for millions of years. We just need to bring the universe back into balance.” She continued, now with a sharper tone in her voice. She spoke as she had just realized something very important.

Hope was lying down in the old grassless meadow a bit further away, pondering over what and how she could fix this, She glanced over to their now rotten black and damaged tree, and suddenly she felt a pull from her hair.

“What the...” she bursts out as the muddy meadow grabbed her long hair and pulled her down.

Hope shrieked out and before she knew it she was getting further pushed down the muddy meadow. The eight women ran towards her and as Viggo tried holding her body above ground as much as she could bear, Groryh went forward as she used to do in the old cookery, bouncing around with knives in her hands, chopping off the now thin hair that was left. She removed her hair by the tip of it, one string after the other as she did her best to save both Hope and her remaining hair.

When she had gotten loose, and as she looked up, something truly wonderful happened. A large shadow appeared in front of them, and as they looked behind them they witnessed a calm and controlled root that had started to shape its first stem, slowly and controlled a shape was growing in front of their very eyes shaking the ground forcing them to jump back towards The Estate. A whole

tree was taking its shape growing thicker and taller and suddenly a robust plant enclosed in hairy bark and glowing blond leaves stood solid as a rock in front of them.

They could not believe what they had just witnessed, yet another miracle, but this time, the good kind. The odyssey had made them not only recognize magic was all around, but sometimes the best thing was to leave it up to the faith in nature to solve itself. They cheered loudly and jumped around the meadow and they held each other upside down, attempting to make the meadow grab their hair too. The solution was right in front of their very eyes, all that time it was as simple as hair. Hope not only learned to understand her value, but she learned to stop trying so hard, and she learned to ask for help.

As they all continued feeding the earth with their forever-growing hair, the trees started to flourish further and further out of their land, the smog slowly disappeared and the sun started to shine its light onto the meadow and their Estate. Their plants started to grow and the animals started to appear again, for there was the food they could finally stomach. The water had shifted from the dark-colored fragrance into a crystal-clear turquoise one. Soon it started to appear even more beautiful than before, as that would even be possible. The only sound they could hear now was the hummingbirds and the grasshoppers were back.

They never discussed Hope's position in Oak Estate again. Against all odds, she was one of them. Hope had brought with her a little bit of chaos, being the target for greed and dominance, possessed under a gruesome spell. For they knew, it's not only the good they do that made their worth something. They knew she was kind, bold, and fearless and never meant to hurt anyone. It had brought perspective to the Estate, even if this time, what was outside was dangerous, there was much more outside to explore. Hope kept learning to ask for help and work together, as she taught them to be open to what might be lurking outside their comfortable Estate.

As all would soon be forgiven but never forgotten. They would forever remember what they might be facing, for darkness would always appear. Only next time, they would be prepared. Reunited once more, Oak Estate had finally been redeemed, for now...

Afterword

I've been writing most parts of this story under a tree of my own, but my tree is not an Oak tree but a fig tree, and it's not located in a fictional universe but my very much exciting garden. I haven't bothered to clean up out here for a while, I'm determined to do this soon but I need to write something first. In the background, I'm listening to Sylvan Esso and she sings; They teach you how to be on the screen, those friends you're making on the screen, they teach you how to be, to be.

Remember when we had to go to the video store to get our movies? I press pause and I call up my twin brother as I refresh his memory. We used to lay five options each down onto the green velvety carpet in the back of the dimmed video store, sit down, and one by one take away the ones we didn't wanna watch until we were left with the best option that we all agreed on. My twin brother and I had a shared favorite, we both loved *The Rescuers*. A Disney animation made 1977, one of their first original stories. Two small mice who were from the rescue department in NYC were on a mission to save a little orphan girl's life who had been captured by an evil lady. There were also times we didn't agree as to what to watch, like when he wanted to watch *Ninja Turtles*, and I was the *Little Mermaid*. I came to wonder, did any of these stories we watched make a difference in my childhood? It was not just the movies, it was in the advertisements, at toys' R us, costume parties, printed on school bags, pen cases, and our bedsheets. I was being the princess and most often wanted to be. I liked being a princess I could mirror myself in, which happened to be easy since I was a white, blond, and blue-eyed lanky little girl.

While digging in my memory box I remembered the good and bad feelings fairy tales and characters on the screens, in the books, advertisements, costume play had given me. Whilst searching for my voice, there were more places than the comfort of my home to seek inspiration from. Except for my mother, when I grew up my role models were often fictional, like Pippi Longstocking, *Mulan*, *Pocahontas*, *Sailor Moon*, or *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. Some of the role models were also less empowering, and many of them had similar personality traits. Traits we consider good girl traits, like the *Little Mermaid*, *Cinderella*, *Belle* in the *Beauty and the Beast* who all share the pleasing gene. Sacrifice one's voice as the *Little Mermaid* to receive the prize which then will be the perfect Prince. Looking back at some of these stories, there were also twisted stereotypes that I didn't understand at that point, where discrimination and lack of diversity were common caricatures. Influencing how I viewed the world, but yet nothing I was aware of then. It was a liberating feeling when I understood the power of all of these tales, how they had changed through time as it had put me in a state of searching for a new tale, as I ended up creating my own.

How we deal with any issues we are facing, how we handle our emotions and decide if they are either our friend or our enemy, is in this fictive universe as well as out in the real world, my response to tackle any sort of change. My characters are absorbed by big words. To be Hopeful is bold, fearless, and amazing, but it's needed in moderation and it's a necessity to let other emotions in, and so naturally, it is needed to let other people in, whatever emotion they might be consumed by, no matter how they might look like or how far they may have traveled.

Summary/synopsis

Once upon a time, there was a young girl who went by the name Hope who learned to find her way with the support of a strong female system. The nine women lived together in a magnificent Treehouse, and they all traveled from all over the universe to get there. With the support of each other, they manage to live in harmony without any extravaganza. Life in Oak Town was magical, to say the least. Until one day when Hope's fascination for a particular object led her to mistakes as well as figure out her role in this universe. As she kept fighting to find her voice and strived for a greater universe beyond herself, she stumbled upon real issues, such as realizing her past, strange things hair can do, and what happens when she includes other women. The interwoven systems that are narrated in this tale are things as privileged, diversity, feminism, the industrial revolution, and our dear climate. How do we come together or apart in times of crisis? I hope that you as a young leader will be inspired to be a dreamer like Hope, mindful as Awaah, progressive as Groryh, calming as Sinoya, delighted as Savora, powerful as Viggo, appreciative as Grattrud, Kind as Kindkua, and as friendly as Allea. I hope you will keep fighting together with me and all the other earthlings for a better world, for that is the reason I'm being truthful, with a touch of magic, so you know what we are fighting for.