

SHARED POWERS

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MUFFLED DOTS OF RAIN ticked harmonic on the pitched roof its window. Dark clouds passed by, the perfect kind of day. Or so Aria thought. She swept a lock of hair out of her face, not caring about the brush leaving a trail of splatters on the floor, and looked intently at the easel in front of her. Castle Like towers rose up from behind the dark forest, surrounded by mountains and a black lake. Snow fell down and a single white owl flew towards one of the dozen warm, brightly colored windows. The picture almost seemed to be alive. Almost. She looked at it longingly for a second then resolutely turned around and hopped towards the stairs, ignoring the disapproving sounds coming from the other pictures hanging on the wall as she scampered down.

Eight o'clock. Only six more nights for Sofia to come home, she would go to bed early tonight. But first, hot cocoa.

The dark, sweet, smell of chocolate filled the kitchen, when a loud pop rang as Aria poured two mugs of cocoa. She casually shoved one of them to the woman that now stood at the kitchen table in front of her.

"There's absolutely no need to call in the guys of accidental magic reversal Bob..." said the woman matter-of-factly to her mobile. "...I told you, I fixed it..." she looked at Aria and rolled her eyes dramatically. "...Yes Bob, just swipe the red icon right and we both can have some peace and quiet with our families for once. Good night." She put away her phone and plopped down at the kitchen table.

Aria chuckled.

"Hi mom," she said. "Bob's still not used to the muggle devices then?"

"Hi kid," her mother said. "No, he's not, though of course it took me a while too," she warmed her hands on the mug. "Hmm, just what I needed."

Aria sat down in front of her mother and for a minute they sat in silence, enjoying their cocoa and the somewhat rare pleantry of each other's company.

"So, any thoughts on what house you want to be in?" her mother asked, breaking the silence. Her eyes twinkling as she looked at Aria expectantly.

“Well,” Aria said “I was hoping Ravenclaw like Sofia.”

“Ah, yes,” her mother agreed. “That would make things easier for the both of you, I suppose. Though I’m not actually sure if they do assign the two of you to a house, considering the circumstances,” she looked away thoughtfully. “I for one think you’d make a fine Ravenclaw student. Although, Slytherin would suit you too.”

Aria nodded. “Sofia thought so as well,” she said, then she sighed. “I would really hate it if they wouldn’t assign us to a house though, I know I would be a lot older than the first years, but that way things won’t change as much for Sofia.”

“That, and it’s one of the many wonderful experiences that make Hogwarts so great,” her mother said. “You’ve been wanting to be part of it from ever since you were little. It’s something we should discuss with the headmaster when we are going to schedule your rehabilitation program and lessons. After we finished the procedure at St. Mungo’s of course.”

Aria felt her stomach clench at the mention of St. Mungo’s. She didn’t entirely know what to expect, even though she had done her research... But she couldn’t wait to finally be able to use magic just like the rest of her family. Having to wait five to ten years was but a small price to pay she thought.

“I’ve started a new painting,” Sofia said, trying to diverse the subject away from St. Mungo’s.

THE NEXT DAY Aria woke up still tired, she hadn’t slept much that night. Her thoughts had kept on flashing back and forth to St. Mungo’s. She looked at the painting in the middle of her room, and smiled despite herself. She couldn’t wait to finish it.

When she came downstairs the dishes were done and a note on the table explained her mother had already gone to work. Something about Bob managing to accidentally put a Sonorous charm on his phone, scaring the pants off everyone at the children’s party they were supposed to meet up at, undercover... And, that Aria should see her friends. She was right of course, Aria thought.

She didn’t know when, or if she would see the guys again after the procedure. Not anytime soon at least. “There could be some complications,” the healers at St. Mungo’s had explained. Sofia and Aria had had the giggles coming up with different ‘accidents’ that could happen. Including the spiriting away of Rick, and making the haunted mansion of Simon’s

parents a reality. At that time the thought of her being able to use magic seemed so surreal. Now, with it becoming close to reality, she had a hard time picturing herself holding an actual wand.

Of course she had read the famous '*My life as a squib*'. Also every book Sofia had brought home from classes at least twice. Next to that, she had read up on the reports of the first successful cases for their procedure at St. Mungo's. And, naturally the files her mother obtained for them about the less successful ones, before the procedure had been declared a hundred percent safe and successful. She couldn't be more prepared.

It hadn't rained all day so she decided to pick up Rick and Simon to sketch somewhere. She ran upstairs to get her leather bound sketchbook, quickly grabbed some tools from her desk and put them in a worn out totebag that had been gathering dust in a corner. She threw on her black velvet coat and green beanie, then locked the front door behind her as she left the house in a hurry, eager to spend some time drawing outside with her friends.

Later that night, as she lay in bed, her thoughts dwelled on Rick and Simon, how she had only just now told them that she wouldn't be able to see them for a while as she was moving. Simon had told them that he was going to Art school next year. During their cocoa time, her mother had listened to her sniffing about having to lie to her friends. And comforted her when Aria confessed she would miss them the most when she would finally be able to attend Hogwarts.

Aria looked at the sketches she had made that day, the far spreaded grasslands with cows, the creeks, tall birches and maple trees, the sheep, goats and deer, all spread over the last five pages of her sketchbook, one page dedicated to the little sparrows she always loved to watch and the old aspen that stood tall with the house. She had wanted to capture the polder, her home, her birthplace. She couldn't believe that next year this time, she would be living in the steamy streets of London, she would need to get a new sketchbook.

Five more nights. She turned off the light and dozed off into a dreamless sleep.

FOUR MORE NIGHTS, Aria thought. Today had flown by. She had tried her hand at the painting which she was so eager to finish, but she simply had been too nervous to do anything properly that day. So she gave up and had seated herself comfortably in front of the television to watch her favourite movies as outside the rain danced to the rhythm of the wind.

ARIA WAS STARING AT the letter in her hand. She sipped at her cocoa absentmindedly, she couldn't believe her eyes. Sofia was smart, Aria had always known that. But receiving an Outstanding on all of her Owls, that was something else entirely was it not? She wiped her clammy hands on the table cloth. She wished her mother would come home tonight.

Three more nights...

WITH DELICATE STROKES Aria guided the paint over the canvas. She wanted a brighter moon, and more reflections in the black lake. She was excited, it was so close to being finished, and she felt good about it too.

Should she spend more time refining the forest? She actually liked the loose and playful strokes that simply suggested hints of detail and distance between the foliage as it was. She took a few steps back, she could see it then, Hogwart's magnificent towers rising between the backdrop of the forest, the soft flickering of the lights, the owl flying, the trees dancing in the wind, the water glittering with the touch of moonlight. She knew it was finished.

Two more nights then she could show it to Sofia.

SOFIA WAS STARING AT the paper in her hand. "I guess I could focus on the two missing owls during my rehabilitation." Sofia exclaimed. The Hogwarts express rumbled through the fast changing landscape as they were brought home for their summer holidays. Debby looked at her in awe.

"But you will have to almost start all over again!" she said shocked.

"No, not all over, I discussed it with professor McGonagall." Sofia triumphantly waved the paper in front of Debby's face. "I've been reading up on it a lot, the knowledge won't just disappear. It's not like I become a different person or something, it's actually quite simple," she continued passionately. "Picture yourself a vessel, and you're filled with magic, every time you use magic, you use energy right? It's like walking or swimming. Now picture my little sister, an empty vessel but compatible with my magic, since I was born with magic, I simply am a constant source of magic myself. So we take all my magic, and over the course of half a year, we implement that in a continuous flow into my sister. That way her body will get used to having magic. During that time, my magic will slowly regenerate too. Though my body needs to get used to magic again as well and that is where the five to ten years of

rehabilitation come in for the both of us.” She snorted at Debby’s look of disbelief.

“Obviously it’s not THAT simple, lot’s of incredibly difficult charms and some extremely complicated potions come into the process as well, but that’s a very complicated story and I rather spend my time enjoying my last moments of carefree magic,” she said.

“But, don’t you regret it, now that you know your owls?” Debby asked softly. “I heard what professor Longbottom told you.”

“So what,” Sofia said. “You don’t understand what it’s like. My little sister and I were as close as could be when we were little. Until that letter came. We had always hoped she would receive one too, but of course we knew better deep down. And that was that, I went off to study at Hogwarts, while mom had to work around the clock to pay for the both of us, leaving poor Aria home alone with her muggle life and her muggle friends.” She raised her wand and, “Expecto patronum!” she bellowed. A silver jaguar darted from the tip of her wand and landed gracefully in front of her. “Of course I will miss this.” She whispered. The beast stretched itself lazily before it dashed off and vaporised into a silver huff of smoke.

One more night.

THE FIREPLACE SPUTTERED happily as Sofia hopped into the living room, smiling widely as she saw her sister. Aria greeted her with an equally wide grin and rushed to the fireplace to give Sofia a quick hug. They joined forces to pull aside the wickedly massive trunk when their mother followed gracefully out of the fire. She looked at her daughters and beamed.

“I’m so happy to have both of you here for a change,” she said, and she hugged the girls tightly.

Soon there was cocoa, and the three of them sat and drank and chatted for a while.

“Alright Ri,” Sofia said, standing up. “Let’s see that painting of yours you’ve been working on.”

The girls sprinted up the stairs to Aria’s room that now had two beds. Sofia walked over to the painting in the easel and gasped.

“It’s so beautiful,” she almost whispered. “It’s really like it’s alive!” she looked up at Aria. “I practised something this year, especially for your work,” she stepped away from the painting and brushed her hair back with her fingers.

“No way,” Aria blurted out. “You did it, didn’t you!”

Sofia burst into laughter. "I did!"

They started dancing and shouting and stamped with their feet on the floor. Aria's face was red with excitement.

"Do it, do it, do it," she said while bouncing up and down.

Sofia rolled up her sleeves, and took out her wand. She made sure she was exactly in the middle and she breathed in deeply. She swayed her wand in a series of impressive swirls, "Subiectus vivet!" she whooped.

At first, nothing happened, then, a soft gust of wind seemed to go through the painting, the stars were sparkling, the water in the lake rippled, the trees in the forest swayed beautifully in the wind, and the white owl flew towards the upper tower of grey impressive towers of Hogwarts.

Aria yelped. "You did it!" She laughed, and flew into her sister's arms then started to cry. "Of course you did it," she went on. "How could you not, ten owls you're amazing," Aria now really was bawling uncontrollably. As her mother came rushing upstairs asking what all the commotion was about, she found them in a tight embrace Aria's shoulders bouncing up and down with the occasional sniff. She then saw the now living picture and let out a low whistle.

"You two are really something else, my sweet sweet girls," she sat with them and gave them both a tight hug.

Aria wiped her nose with her sleeve, and sat up straight. "Mom, Sofia... I have to tell you something."

THERE SHE WAS FINALLY Aria thought amazed. She couldn't believe she, a squib, got to set foot into Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. She was holding her painting close to her chest as they stepped into the massive entrance hall, the torches on the wall were lit and while Aria still was soaking in the impressiveness of it all, Sofia already was halfway up the magnificent marble staircase yelling at Aria and her mother that she would be right behind them but she had to go and say hi to her friends really quick.

A tall, grey-haired witch in emerald-green robes, that Aria instantly recognised as the famous professor McGonagall walked up to them.

"Good evening Mrs. Glas, Miss Glas," She said. "Would you kindly follow me to my office? Thank you."

They followed McGonagall into the headmistress' office, they sat down and Aria looked around stunned by the overwhelming amount of magic in the room. She gulped.

The door flew open as Sofia came dashing in.

"Sorry I'm late professor!" she wheezed.

"That's quite alright Miss Glas," McGonagall said. "Classes haven't started yet so no harm is done."

Sofia smiled nervously and sat down with her mother and Aria.

"So, you had something to tell me?" she continued in a more serious tone.

"Yes," Sofia and Aria exclaimed in sync.

Their mother looked at them and nodded in encouragement.

"We, or I," Aria let out. "I came to bring you this, and to see Hogwarts just once, before I go back to the muggle world and attend Art school, which is where I should be," she took a deep breath. "I am proud to be a squib. And I am very proud of my sister and I hope we can bring our worlds a little bit closer in the future, by combining my art and her magical knowledge."

She handed McGonagall the painting she had made, that Sofia had brought to life.

McGonagall looked at her intently for a moment. "Very good Miss Glas," she said. "I am looking forward to seeing more of your work in the future then." She smiled.

THE DARK SWEET SMELL of chocolate filled the kitchen, as Aria poured three mugs of cocoa. They sat in a comfortable silence, enjoying the rare pleantry of each other's company.

One more night, before her new life would begin.