

## SHORT STORIES 3-5

## The Shadow

One summer day while I was shopping with my older sister, I found some very shimmery sunglasses among the others on the rack. They were like jewels among stones. I asked her if I could buy them and she said "Why Fern, those are simply gorgeous! Of course you can. They will shade your eyes nicely when I read to you at the park."

I brought them to the counter and paid a mere \$3 for those "simply gorgeous" sunglasses. Then we went to the park and Rachel read to me out of *Little Women*. Just as Meg and her husband start having marriage problems, I said to Rachel, "It's time to go home!" And she replied, "You're right!"

So we got up and I put on my sunglasses. All of a sudden I saw a girl my own age standing in front of me! I walked over to say hello.

She was beautiful! Her hair was jet black and her eyes were silvery grey. Her skin was as dark as the shadows that surrounded her. She looked more like an Egyptian princess than a young girl.

I moved a little bit closer and said, "Hello, my name is Fern. What's yours?"

The girl, who moved with the grace and agility of a large cat, said, "My name is Shadowa, and I'm pleased to meet you. I'm a Shadow person of the clan of Evening. Only you can see me because you are wearing the glasses made by the Golden Elves. The people of the Earthansky, the shadow people and many others, were first to come here and will be the last to go."

I was shocked by this statement but retained my manners enough to say, "I'm glad to meet you but I have two questions: First of all, I only have glasses on but I can hear you. Is

that part of the magic? And second of all, how come my sister can't hear us talking?"

"In answer to your first question," Shadowa said, "It is part of the magic because the elves who made those were very special. The answer to your second question is easy — I am a shadow person so what I say sounds like the wind whispering in the trees and you are talking to me so what you say sounds as silent as the snow." Then I asked if she had a family.

To this she replied, "Of course I do. Would you like to meet them? I could take you home with me." She smiled at this idea as though it held great pleasure.

Then I began an amazing journey to Shadowa's home.

On the way we stopped at the home of Father Time. While we were there, we ate 9s, 7s, and 3s for lunch.

By the time we got to Shadowa's house, it was late afternoon.

After a tour of the house, Shadowa showed me her room. I was amazed to see it had plenty of windows to let in light. All the other rooms in the house had had only one window, facing north, which gave just enough light to cast huge shadows.

However, Shadowa's room was different. It was filled with starlight. On the ceiling were beautiful stars, shining like it was night already.

Seeing the direction of my gaze, Shadowa explained that these were from Diana, the Princess of Night, whom we were going to see before I left.

After we played with Shadowa's shadow dolls, we left for Diana's house on a big grey horse.

When we got to the castle, I was not surprised to see a footman waiting for us. He showed us up to Diana's room and there I found someone even more beautiful than Shadowa. Her hair was the color of wheat and her eyes were the color of the deep blue ocean. Her skin was as dark as night. Around her glowed a globe of light that pulsed with her every breath. The globe disappeared when she saw us come in.

She said, "You must be Fern. I'm Diana."

And I said "I don't mean to be rude, but how did you know my name?"

Then she replied, "I'm psychic. And besides, you're wearing the Golden Elves' sunglasses so you can be detected by any of the children of the Earthansky. We are the only ones who can find that aura nowadays."

Then Shadowa cut in, "Show us your birthday present. I can't wait to see it!" So Diana showed us a room that had doors like a large closet. From inside I could hear a soft purr much like the hum of a furnace. When she opened the doors I was blinded by a silver light.

When my eyes had cleared I beheld a beautiful star.

From the star came the purr I had heard. Also, I heard a soft clicking noise. I wondered what it could be.

My thoughts were interrupted by Diana's voice. "The clicking noise you hear is the Star Dragon hatching through the star. When the star breaks, a thousand sparks will come out and become the sunset."

Diana's voice was cut off by the cracking of the star, and the shower of sparks that followed. When the veil of golden light had settled, I was astonished to see a blue and gold dragon sitting in front of us, cleaning its paws like a cat. The dragon was only about as big as a St. Bernard, with a foot-long tail and small claws.

Diana said, "He is the dragon I will ride to light the stars tonight. I must get him ready because it is almost dark."

I looked out the window and saw that the golden light of sunset was gone and in its place the last dark red clouds were flying across the sky.

"Oh," I exclaimed, "I must hurry back! But how do I get back?"

Shadowa replied, "Simply take off your sunglasses!"

So I took off my sunglasses and was surprised to see myself back on the sidewalk where I had first met Shadowa.

I was so stunned by the beauty of the sunset. In Shadowa's world there had been only dark colors: dark red, dark blue, black, grey, and so on. Here, on my earth, there were reds, golds, and purples combined to make a spectacular sight.

The grass was a shiny olive green with a reflection of the last golden light.

My world was so beautiful that right then I decided to describe it to Shadowa the next time I visited her.

Ariel

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