

A wave of panic rose in twelve-year-old Starsha. “Nana!” she called from her sleeping furs in her grandmother’s cottage.

“What is it?” Nana’s groggy voice answered.

“It was that dream again with the cyclone tearing the roof off, but it was so much nearer. . . More real.”

Pinay crept closer to Starsha. She felt him snuggling up to her. “And the lightning exploding and killing all of us?”

How did a four-year-old know of such things? Reluctantly, Starsha admitted, “Yes. That dream.”

Pinay whimpered. “Are they going to get us?”

“No,” Nana whispered. “No, we won’t let them get you.”

“Oh, children,” Nana murmured. “I thought we’d be safe here.” She sighed and then continued with renewed strength, “Well, we have been safe for three years, but it appears that Garthazor is tracking us, or at least our energy. We’ve got to leave to keep Starsha’s dream from coming true.”

“Shall I gather our things so we can leave now?”

“Not now. It’s too dangerous at night. We’ll leave in the morning.”

“But where can we go?” Pinay sobbed. “To the Russet Clan?”

Starsha patted Pinay’s head to comfort him. In reality, Starsha was the one who needed comfort. “We can’t go back to the Russet Clan. Mama told us never to return there.”

“Build up the fire a bit,” Nana said.

The girl rose from her bedding and made her way to the fireplace.

Pinay clung to her night dress. He whimpered as she knelt by the banked fire. “Bring me some sticks from the wood box.”

He let go of her night clothes. She prodded the coals with the poker. In a moment, he gave her a handful of twigs.

“You can help me blow on the coals but don’t get too close.”

“I know.”

Soon a bright flame danced in the fireplace.

“That’s enough.”

Nana got up from her bed and shuffled to the loom. She reached out to touch a half-finished tapestry.

“We still don’t know where to go.” Starsha clutched at her stomach.

“I have been taking remedies to the Brown Clan. I believe we would be welcome there.”

Starsha’s jaw quivered. “What if they ask where we came from?”

Nana put her arm around Starsha. “We’ll tell them we came from the Tawny Clan.”

“The Tawny Clan?” The boy’s eyes grew round.

Starsha shook her head. “Didn’t Garthazor destroy your Clan?”

“Let me tell you what happened.”

Nana sat on the edge of her bed. “Before Starsha was born, I wove a magic tapestry for her mother. Garthazor found out about it. His men spied on us at unpredictable times and made life uncertain. Finally, my clan decided we needed to move.”

“Where did you go?” Pinay wondered.

“Right here.”

“Here? But where’s the other people?”

“I’m getting to that part. Normally, the first building in a new place is the council hall, but because of the magic tapestries, my Clan decided to start with a cottage for me.”

Starsha sighed as she thought of Nana’s quaint house in the forest. “They made it with rounded river rocks.”

“Pink and brown,” Pinay added.

“Yes.”

“Where’s the council hall?” He wondered.

“It was never built.”

“What happened?” Starsha asked.

“They brought my household goods, my bed, my weaving supplies, and my loom. Right away, I started on a new tapestry and it showed the Tawny Clan village burning.”

“Oh, that’s terrible!” Pinay cried. “Did they die?”

“They probably would have if they hadn’t been warned. The full moon in the picture showed them they had time to collect their essentials and hide in the mountains with their llamacorns. The village was burned, but the people and animals were safe.”

“So then what did they do?”

“After the attack, they came here for a short time. They soon realized that their presence here left them exposed to Garthazor’s searchers and left me at risk, too. It was a sad day when they decided to go east and then north to lands far from Garthazor. They took the tawny llamacorns. I haven’t seen any of my Clan since that day. You’re the only family I have left.”

Pinay sniffled. "We love you, Nana."

"And I love you, too, dear."

Starsha chewed on her lip. "So do we need to go north far from Garthazor?"

Pinay tugged on Nana's hand. "We can take you and find the Tawny Clan."

"No, love, there's something very important we need to do here. Remember the tapestry I wove for your mother?"

"Yes."

"Starsha, you are a key person in a prophecy. To fulfill your part of the foretelling, you must be near the Valley of Thunder."

Starsha's stomach churned. "But Nana, the dreams are so real! They're going to destroy everything!"

"I'll work tomorrow morning on the tapestry. Just remember, you're stronger than you think you are."

"Mama sang that song to me."

"It's true, Starsha. Never forget it."

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Morning sun lit the piece on Nana's loom. Her feet pressed one pedal and then the other opening spaces for her shuttle to fly through the warp threads.

Starsha bent over a pot as she cooked their breakfast.

Pinay stood close to Nana's elbow, sometimes bumping her arm. She refrained from scolding him because this tapestry was for him, too.

When another quarter was added to the piece, Pinay shouted, "I see the picture, Nana!"

“Yes. Come here, Starsha. You should see this, too.”

The tapestry showed the three of them entering the Brown Clan village.

Starsha shook her head. “They won’t take us in. We’re outsiders.”

“Nonsense. When I took herbs to cure their sickness, they practically begged me to stay in their village. Mark my words. We’ll be more than welcome.”

“But what about Pinay and me? We never went with you.”

“I’ll just explain that you’re my grandchildren and you gathered most of the herbs I took to them.”

It was true that while Nana made her visits to the Brown Clan, Starsha and Pinay foraged to replenish her supplies. They gathered medicinal herbs and plants to make the dyes for her tapestries.

“Your dream and my medicine opened the way for our safety.”

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Two years later Starsha and Pinay disappeared one night from the Brown Clan. Nana thought they had returned to the little cottage in the forest so she went to join them, but they were not at the cottage. While at her former home, she added to her tapestry. She then knew what she must do. Nana returned to the Brown Clan village and waited for the time of the prophecy.