

The Secret Society of Imagination

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Clouds covered the sun and made the sky ominously dark in the English countryside. A fearsome dragon reared up on its scaly hind legs, unfolding its giant wings making it all the more intimidating. Its eyes glinted menacingly on the hard lines of its face like gold medallions reflecting the sun. Smoke poured out of its nostrils and drifted around its face but did not shield its victim's eyes from the white glare of its razor sharp teeth. King Thomas and Queen Marilla backed away, only to be met by an impassable wall. The queen's light brown hair looked darker against her pale face and the beauty of her round blue eyes was impeded by the intense fear that encapsulated them. The king tried to hide the fact he was afraid as he swept his longish blonde hair away from his face so the ends of it would not hang down almost to his mischievous brown eyes. There was no longer any hope of escape as the monster's wings covered all exits. The Queen closed her eyes and hid behind King Thomas.

The dragon drew closer.

Suddenly the monster bellowed a mighty cry as a girl in a dark as night kimono with equally black waist length hair swung down onto the hideous creature's back.

She hung on hard as she shouted to the ground "Toss me the rope, Sir Michael!"

A knight in dark armor with a symbol of a dragon on it responded quickly, throwing a large

coil of rope in such a way that it wrapped itself securely around the beast's snout. The girl grabbed both ends and pulled it tight.

"We did a good job today, Violet." Sir Michael said to the dragon rider.

The queen peeked out. The king let out the breath he hadn't known he was holding.

Everything was calm. For a moment. The dragon swiped at the rope with one of its mighty claws, ripping the rope in half. It let out a terrible roar, and with a shake of its head threw Violet to the ground. It turned towards sir Michael and leapt upon him.

"Run, save yourselves!" He called out while the dragon began licking him to death.

"DINNERTIME." A woman's voice called.

"Yum!" Michael said, throwing the dog off of him and removing his slobbery helmet.

It's true they weren't really in medieval England, they were not royalty nor knights and their dog Cupcake, though huge, was absolutely not a dragon.

They were just Tom White, Mike and Marilla Sky from Wildwater, Alberta and Violet something from nobody knew where. All anyone knew about her was that she was a reliable friend.

Violet walked over to Mike "You broke your watch." she said

"I don't think-" he started to say that it was fine but she cut him off.

"You can have one of mine." She pulled a high tech watch out of her pocket.

Mike gulped as she slipped it on his wrist, sincerely hoping she hadn't stolen it.

“Last call for dinner! Come now if you want to eat.” The woman called again. She was Tom's mom, they had been playing in his backyard and were invited to stay for dinner. The kids all rushed inside, eager for her homemade meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

Mike forgot all about the watch until late that night when he was at home in bed reading and the watch's screen turned on, and it began to beep the sos signal. It projected an image of a map, a map of wildwater forest. In the center of that map was a big red X.

Now as you probably know, ten year old boys cannot resist the lure of a mystery or a map. (None of us can, really).

Mike got out of bed softly and covered the light of the screen with his hand. He tiptoed down the hallway as quietly as possible so as not to wake Marilla or his parents. He opened the squeaky garage door as slowly as possible. He heard a noise in the next room over. He held his breath but it was just his dad rolling over. He stepped into the garage and exhaled. In the dark he could make out the shape of his beat up dirt bike. He put his hand down on a shelf and pulled back. He had found his dirt bike gear, still a little slobbery from its earlier use as armor.

He put it on quietly and quickly, opened the door that led to the driveway and pushed the bike out. He walked it around the corner and into the woods. He started it up, hoping no one in the house would hear. He settled into the seat and revved the engine taking off into the dense trees. Branches snapped beneath his tires, brambles and bushes clawed at his clothes. He knew his parents would start asking questions when they saw the checkered pajamas all torn up. As he

rode on full power he watched the blue dot representing himself get closer and closer to his destination.

Finally the watch showed that he was right on top of the red X. He cut the motor and got off, looking around for something significant - a reason someone would put a message in a watch- but found none. Instead he just stood there, listening to an owl that was somewhere in the night. The woods were beautiful in the daytime, when the sun shone down in rays through the treetops and made the moss shine a brilliant green, but in the dark he couldn't see anything beautiful, just black.

“So you made it.” He heard Violet's voice say and she flipped down from the tree above his head.

“Why did you get me to come here?” Mike asked with a gesture of confusion.

“Just follow me.” She said, walking toward the trunk of the tree. Reaching up, she pressed her finger into a knot hole. Mike's jaw dropped as a panel of the tree slid forward and up, revealing what appeared to be a capsule-like elevator.

“Come on in.” Violet said, grabbing Mike's arm, pulling him into the tree. Once inside she tapped some buttons and the tree slid back. She pressed one last button and the capsule shot downward with immense speed. The tube that surrounded them became translucent and they were momentarily blinded by the bright light. Mike watched through the glass as they flew over hundreds of high tech gadgets. There were silent motorcycles with glowing rims and hover

boards that folded up to look like math books and there were even things that looked like nothing he had ever seen before in his life. It was like a movie, like the games he'd played, but it was real.

The capsule suddenly stopped, giving him an unexpected jolt. Violet pulled him out and he just gazed around in wonder.

“What is this place? Is this where you live?” He asked, still shaken from the exhilarating ride.

“This is my home and much much more, welcome to the Secret Society of Imagination!” she answered, opening her arms wide as if words could not portray how amazing that place was.

“Why is it a secret and what is it?” Mike asked.

“You promise never to tell?” She asked and when he nodded she continued “my parents discovered that someone is trying to erase kids ability to imagine. They have devoted their lives to stopping him but they realized that there is only one thing that can stop them: kids with imagination. But my brother and I are the only kids who know about this. We needed to find more kids who could still imagine and I thought of you. Would you join?” She stuck out her hand for him to shake but as he reached out to grab it a shot rang out and Violet sank to the ground clutching her arm. A poison dart that had been apparently fired from a tranquilizer gun stuck out of her shoulder. It was lodged too deep for him to remove but he could see a piece of paper tied to the edge. He pulled it off carefully and sat down next to his injured

friend. Violet was still conscious but in too much pain to read it herself so he read it out loud.

He was only two lines in when he realized the typed note was for him.

It said this

48 hours until poison takes full effect. Do not join the secret society of imagination if you want the antidote. Otherwise your friend faces complete paralysis. Remember 48 hours.

Questions churned in his mind. Should he do what's right, be the good guy and join the secret society? But what about Violet, how could he save her from a fate worse than death? Caught in the unknowns he did not what a courageous knight or a fearless spy would do. Instead he did what a ten year old boy would do; slump down with his head in his hands and cry.

He fell asleep there by her side and only half woke up when he felt hands pick him up, but he was too tired to fight so he let himself be carried away and just hoped it was the good guys.

The next morning he was back in his own bed. He wondered if it could have all been a dream, and sort of hoped it was true. He got dressed quickly and slid down the banister.

He leapt off right into his mother who was coming up the hall.

“Woah there, where's the fire?” she asked. “I was just coming to get you, I heard your best friend was admitted to the hospital late last night, would you like to go visit her or something?”

So it was true. It had all been real.

“Let’s go right now.” he requested urgently, pulling on his coat and shoes.

“But you haven’t had breakfast.”

“It doesn’t matter.”

He tapped his foot against the floor of the car during the entire drive and as soon as the hospital was in view he had his hand on the seat belt, ready to jump right out of the vehicle.

“There’s no parking here, I’ll have to park down the street, but I can drop you here if you want.” She had barely pulled up to the curb when Mike catapulted himself out.

“She’s in room 204!” She yelled after him.

When he entered through the glass doors the smell of chemicals and sickness greeted him. He went to an elevator and hit the up button several times but when it didn’t come within thirty seconds he rushed over to the stairway. He did the stairs two at a time because he couldn’t slide up a banister, and there wasn’t even one in the hospital at all, just gray walls on either side of him.

He reached the second story and looked up and down for room 204 while he caught his breath.

It was just across the hall.

Violet was sitting up in bed when he burst in. “You came back!” She exclaimed.

She seemed sort of powerless then, in a white bed covered in the sterilized blankets. She’d always been the most fearless person he knew. It was right there, looking into her stormy eyes that he knew exactly what he wanted to do.

“I had to, there's something last night I didn't get to do.” He picked up her hand and shook it.

“I'm in.”

“What if it is impossible to find the antidote?” she asked, with a hint of worry creasing her features.

“That's what imagination is, isn't it?” Mike sat on the edge of her bed. “Believing the impossible.”