

Maisie And The Dark Abyss

By Midori Mehandjiysky

The wind was blowing; the rickety swings of the old playground creaked. The autumn leaves blew off the trees, ready for winter to come. The girl looked around - no one was in sight. She sat down on a park bench, took off her backpack, pulled out a notebook, and held it out in front of her eyes. The words; *Diary of Maisie McBride, 13 y.o.* were staring back at her. She smiled, and set it down next to her.

A cat appeared from nowhere, yawning and stretching. He took no notice of the birds, pecking the ground in search for worms, for he had seen someone more important. He walked toward Maisie, who had now begun to write in her notebook. He gave a soft meow, as she looked down at him. He gave another meow and started walking away slowly. Maisie, who actually loved cats, immediately packed up all of her belongings, and soon stood right behind him.

“Why, hello there, kitten,” she said softly. “I see I’m not alone anymore.”

She smiled at the cat, and seemed to receive a smile back. She blinked and looked again, but the cat was already walking away once more. She followed.

He stopped in front of a pile of leaves, meowing loudly, and then jumped into it. However, instead of scattering everywhere, the leaves stayed as they were, but the cat had mysteriously vanished!

Maisie stared at the pile in shock. Shakily, she stepped onto the pile. She felt herself get sucked into some kind of vacuum.

“Ouch!” said Maisie, as she landed on her bottom with a thump. She stood up and looked around. She was in a four walled room, with no apparent way out. There were colorful murals on each of the walls. She walked over to one of the murals depicting a tree, and ran her fingers over its bark. It was smooth, yet bumpy. Suddenly, a kind of warmth ran through her.

“I would be careful if I were you,” said a woman’s voice behind her. The girl got startled and turned around. There, standing before her, was a beautiful woman holding the cat Maisie had seen in the park earlier.

“What’s your name, child?” the woman asked, smiling.

“Uh-umm, I’m Maisie..,”replied Maisie, who was still trembling.

“Well, then, Maisie,” the woman said with a playful grin, immediately removing all of the seriousness from the room. “Would you like to know why you’re here?” the woman asked. She paused for a second, and then resumed, “I suppose you want to know why I’m here as well, and where we are, and...”

“Yes,” replied Maisie, letting out a sigh of relief. “I would love to know why I’m here.”

“Of course,” said the woman happily. “Now, to begin. This young gentleman here,” She gestured to the cat, “Is named Prince Felipe III, of the Kingdom Louidor. Actually, he goes by Louis (don’t ask me why). Oh, and more to the point...”

“Ahem!” said the cat, who seemed very wise, now that Maisie took a look at him, “We will take care of this, Callista, for it seems that you are having difficulty. As you already know, We are Prince Louis, and We would greatly appreciate it if you refrained from calling us ‘your royal highness’ or ‘your majesty’. As We have said already, this young lady here is Callista, the

mistress of alternate worlds. If you look up, you will notice how We arrived here. This is Callista's power."

Maisie looked up, but saw no ceiling. Instead, there was some sort of portal that was radiating dark light. It seemed to go up forever!

"You might be wondering why a regal Prince like Ourselves is "fraternizing" with regular magical commoners. Well, a long time ago, when We were young, Callista had come to Our palace to speak with Our father, the King. Afterwards, Our father introduced Us, and thus We became close friends.

"Now, regarding you. You, my friend, are the *Chosen One*! Chosen, by the oracle herself! Yes, you my girl, are the one who will save the universe!!" He and Callista turned to Maisie with hopeful smiles on their faces. Maisie, now confused more than ever, smiled weakly and took a step back.

"As much as I would like to help you, I can't. I'm just a normal girl! And..I, well, would probably have to head home right about now, so.." said Maisie.

Callista and Louis looked at each other. Then Callista said, "Girl-"

"It's Maisie," said Maisie.

"Right- Maisie... First, time's paused in the realm you came from, no need to worry. It'll remain that way until you get back. Second, Maisie, nobody is really *normal*. A strange word isn't it? There really isn't a "normal." Everyone is different! If you're normal you're weird, and if you are weird, then you're normal! Simple as that!"

But Maisie didn't find it simple at all, and by now she was more confused than ever. Most of all, she was feeling homesick, though it had been only an hour since they had left her realm. But though she felt all of this, she could not help but feel another feeling- empathy. She didn't really know what was going on, but the universe was in trouble in some way, and they wanted her to help. *'I really must be getting home,'* thought Maisie, *'but I do want to help them. I simply must help them! Yes, that's it! I will help them, and then I shall go home. Callista said that time is paused there anyway until I get back... Alright then! It's settled!'*

"Right!" said Maisie suddenly. Callista and Louis looked at her, questioningly. "I'll do it!"

The three then smiled at each other, for it was decided. The chosen one would fulfill her prophecy.

"So, you see Maisie, with your powers, you should be able to tell which world is in trouble," said Callista, after explaining everything about alternate worlds.

"Right," said Maisie firmly, with a sharp nod of the head. "So... I simply look at the murals, and I can tell?"

"That's right," replied Callista warmly. Maisie looked at all of the murals around her. She saw trees, stars, flowers, animals, and each mural was different. Maisie walked over to the tree

mural that she had touched when she had first arrived. She suddenly felt a rush of heat course through her body.

“It’s this one,” said Maisie, pointing to the tree. “I’m sure of it.”

Louis and Callista nodded their heads.

“You are dismissed, Louis,” said Callista. “And I think it’s high time you met the dragon, Evör, Lord of the Western Ring. Louis?”

Louis nodded, and with a poof, he was gone. And as if on cue, a dragon fell on the ground, from the portal in the ceiling.

“Callista!!” he growled. “I told you to stop summoning me that way!!”

Callista shrugged, “I told Louis to make sure you find your way here, somehow. It wasn’t my fault.”

“Evör!!” cried Maisie suddenly. “It’s you!”

“You know each other?” inquired Callista, surprised.

“Yes,” said Evör with a wink. “You know that I have the power to go into dreams? Well, this young lady (Maisie, correct?) and I have been friends for quite some time.” And that was when Maisie ran over to Evör and gave him a big hug.

“Well, Maisie,” said Callista. “You’ll be glad to know that Evör is to be your helper. You know, for when you save the universe. It helps that you two know each other. Good teamwork, all that good stuff. Now. To business.”

Callista raised her arms, closed them, swirled them in the air, and pressed both palms onto the mural of the tree. The tree glowed a light blue, and then a blue, swirling portal opened.

“Good luck,” she said, winking. She shimmered gold and then disappeared.

“Shall we?” asked Evör.

“We shall,” said Maisie.

And the two, hand in talons, stepped into the portal.

The first thing they did was look around, they seemed to be in some kind of abandoned town.

“Quiet now, Maisie,” said Evör, frowning. “We don’t know what we might find here.” Suddenly they heard a terrified, high pitched scream.

“MOMMY!!!”

“NO!!! *I’m coming Elyse!!*”

“MAMA!!!”

“NOOOO!!! ELYSE!!!”

Evör and Maisie exchanged serious looks, nodded, and ran towards the scream. There they saw a sobbing mother lying in the middle of the street.

“They took her...,” she moaned. “Why Elyse? WHY???”

She broke down crying again. Maisie ran over to console her.

“Oh, miss, don’t cr-”

“MAISIE LOOK OUT!!!”

Maisie turned around just in time to see a gray-skinned monster with red eyes running toward her at full speed. She quickly turned around to try to help the lady, but in place of the sobbing mother, was a similar-looking monster with the figure of a woman. Maisie started crying, thinking that for sure her end was near, but suddenly she felt something pull her up into the air, flying very fast. Maisie looked up to see what had grabbed her hand.

“E- Evör...”, whispered Maisie, weakly. “Thank you... I... I’m so sorry! This is all my fault...”

“Hush, child,” said Evör softly. “It was not your fault.. Though I did warn you....It wasn't your fault. Don’t take it too seriously. After all, you have me.”

Maisie sighed, “Oh, Evör, what ever will we do? How will we save this place? We barely understand the problem!”

“Don’t worry, Maisie,” said Evör. “I think I have a vague idea.”

A few minutes later, they landed in a tree. It was a very tall tree, and they could see the whole town. It was slightly eerie, for there was no movement or sound besides the wind in the trees.

“What’s your idea, Evör?” asked Maisie.

“Well, I was analyzing what I had seen. So, in order to have a village, there must be people somewhere to start it. We saw some monsters down there. Do you know what they are?”

“No, of course not,” said Maisie. “Should I?”

“I wouldn’t expect you to,” sighed Evör. “Not being from Earth. Well, you see... These monsters are called Virmentyls. They eat the souls out of innocent human beings, and then the humans souls are theirs. Basically, the soul is put in jail. ”

“What??” asked Maisie, alarmed.

“It’s true,” replied Evör, shaking his head. “No human has ever come back from that state.”

“Gosh, that’s horrible!” cried Maisie. “What can we do?”

“Look,” said Evör. “See that building in the middle of the town? It’s different from the rest.” And he was right. Instead of small homes made of wood, straw, and hay, there was a bigger building made of brick and glass windows.

“Do you think that that building might have a connection to our problem?” asked Maisie.

“I’m positive,” said Evör firmly. “After all, in order for those monsters to appear, they must have been summoned.”

They soon arrived at the building after a short flight from the tree. They saw that the building was surrounded by the monsters. There were so many, it looked to be about one hundred!

“This is bad,” said Evör. “ There typically isn’t over twenty in a colony. Oh, this is bad...”

“Don’t worry, Evör,” said Maisie, soothingly. “I’m sure we’ll find a way! In fact.. Look!” She pointed to the top of the building. “Suppose there’s an entrance there?”

“Great idea, Maisie!” Evör happily said. Maisie blushed.

They flew up into the air and landed on the rooftop, which had a wooden trapdoor.

“I don’t know if I’ll fit, Maisie,” said Evör.

“Oh, bother,” said Maisie. “How are we going to fight those monsters?”

“Not we,” said Evör. “You.”

“What??” cried Maisie. “What do you mean??”

“The only safe way in, Maisie, is through this trapdoor. As I cannot fit, you’ll have to go alone. I wish you good luck, chosen one.”

“No... Evör, I can’t do this alone!” Maisie’s eyes brimmed with tears. “I-I’m not a chosen one, I’m only a normal person! If I go in, I’ll probably end up worse than dead!”

Evör smiled gently. “Maisie, I’ve known you through many long nights full of dreams, and I know that if you put your mind to something, you can do it!”

“B-but Evör,” sobbed Maisie. “T-those were only dreams! I can’t even fly like you in real life!”

Evör smiled. “Who said that dreams aren’t real? Good luck, Maisie.” He gave her a wink, and a red streak soon stained the air as Evör flew away.

‘Alright, Maisie, you can do this,’ she said to herself. She plucked up the courage, opened the trapdoor, and climbed inside, finding herself in a ceiling vent. She saw a man on a throne, wearing a red bracelet talking to a scrawny man with glasses, who appeared to be a scientist.

“So, tell me, Dr. Kim... How is the experiment coming along? Is the antidote ready?”

“Well.. You see, Master. According to my calculations, the antidote should be ready by one P.M. tomorrow. But may I ask why we must make it? After all, sir, it was you that summoned those beasts-”

“FOOL!!” shouted the man on the throne. “The whole point of this was to summon those monsters so that I could save those idiots, and then they would make me king, and then I would-”

“Take over the world,” grumbled Dr. Kim. “Yes, yes..” He started to walk away.

Maisie was shocked. Outraged. ‘How could someone be so cruel?’ The more and more she asked herself this, the more angry she got.

And then, without even meaning to, she jumped out of the vent, and threw her shoe at the man as hard as she could. The man fell to the floor with a thump. Dr. Kim looked at her, shocked. Then he looked hopeful.

“Erm..” he said. “Would it be possible for you to remove this? It’s constricting my blood flow and my fingers are getting rather numb.” He held out his hands, and each had a strange-looking bracelet with a lock.

“I’m not sure if I can...,” said Maisie. “After all, I don’t know what they are, nor how to get rid of them...”

The doctor smirked. “You are the chosen one, are you not?”

Maisie said, “All right. I suppose I could try.”

She took both the doctor's hands in hers, and looked at the bracelets intensely. Then the bracelet broke in her hands.

"Oh.. Here doctor!" she said, smiling.

"I appreciate it, miss," he said awkwardly. "But please refrain from grabbing me again. It causes me some unpleasantness. "

Suddenly, the man that was unconscious came to.

He then realized the doctor's hands had been released from the trap. He gasped, screaming "GUARDS!!"

The doctor grabbed Maisie by the arm, and they ran out of the room.

"Come with me!" he said. "The antidote should be ready by now! We'll take it and give it to the villagers! Hurry!"

"Right!" Maisie nodded.

They soon found themselves in the scientific laboratory.

"Listen up, scientists!" barked the doctor. "Load the spray guns with the antidote, and hurry! The Master is coming!"

There was a hustle and bustle as the scientists all filled spray guns with the antidote. A woman with the name tag "Lisa" tossed Maisie a spray gun. The army of scientists ran out of the room.

"To the dungeons!" cried Maisie.

They all rushed to the dungeons, opened the cells, and freed as many people as possible, giving them more antidote to help others. Soon, everyone was free. The man ran into the room, with a bunch of monsters running behind him, their red eyes, scary as ever. And that's when Maisie had an idea. *'What if the color of their eyes, and that red gleaming bracelet are connected? What if that man is mind controlling them??'* Maisie pulled the doctor aside and told him about her idea.

"Why, Maisie, that's brilliant!" he exclaimed. "I've an idea. You could break the Master's bracelet just like you broke mine! That may set the beasts free, and they wouldn't attack us."

Maisie ran towards the man with the red bracelet. *"This's what you get, you jerk!"*

The man looked up, surprised. Maisie grabbed his arm, and the bracelet fell off. Immediately, the monsters stopped attacking the scientists, and left the room, silently and calmly.

Maisie breathed, smiling. She couldn't believe that she had actually done it! She let out a shriek of happiness. The scientists and villagers looked at her. She blushed.

"Sorry... Got excited."

But then the people all screamed and shrieked and danced around, until Maisie cleared her throat.

"I am terribly sorry, everyone, but I really must be getting home. I can't leave my parents waiting any longer. I must be getting home to Earth."

“Earth?” said Mr. Kim. “Would you mind taking me with you? I am originally from there, but came to another realm to explore my scientific inquiries. You see, I left my sister behind, and...”

“But of course you can come!” said Evör, who had just entered the room. “Good job, Maisie, doctor, everyone. It is great to see you all, however, we must be home soon. Farewell, everyone!”

The three flew back towards the tree that Evör had brought Maisie earlier. Evör was about to say something, but Maisie knew what to do. She raised her arms, closed them, swirled them in the air, and pressed both palms onto the tree, just as Callista had done. The tree glowed a light blue, and then a blue, swirling portal opened, and brought the three heroes back home.

This time, instead of arriving in the mural room, Maisie and the doctor appeared in the park that Maisie had come to.

“It’s like I never left,” said Maisie and the doctor at the same time. They smiled at each other one last time, and walked their separate ways home.