

Little Schatzi, in the Beginning Book 1,

THE DREAMTIME

A story for the children of light who still believe in magic and goodness in the coldest of hearts...

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Birth

Once upon a time in a beautiful garden full of fragrant flowers, a new life was struggling up through the soil towards the crystal moonlight. As the little seedling started his journey to the surface the earthworms gave him baby kisses and soft soil to make his journey easier, up, up into the dark night.

The little plant burst through the last layer of soil. “Oh, this must be Heaven!” Since he was a newborn he did not have the words but his first baby thoughts consisted of his wonderful place of creation, and the ‘Loving Warm,’ for that is all he had ever known from the moment he first awakened in the ‘Waiting Place’.

Now in this garden for the first time, his newborn eyes gazed up at the sparkly, starry night. The silvered moon smiled down at the baby plant and all the butterflies of the night, fluttered in excited welcome, to greet the brand new life. The fairy Queen had told all the tiny beings in the garden that she had named him Schatzi. The Garden had waited a long time for his arrival. Schatzi too had waited a long time for this moment.

Schatzi thought it was a perfect place to be, and so as babies will, he rested and drifted back to the heavenly place where babies go when they sleep, back to the arms of his Protection Spirits where he would always feel safe, no matter what. This was something Schatzi would need in this strange new world. He did not understand at this moment, how important a safe place to rest would become. His very existence would depend on it.

The little Queen looked worried as she rode Skylar her pet Moth, off into the night. Something like this had never happened in the history of the Garden. What was she to do? Only time would tell. She must find the Counsel, and ask for their help. They would know what to do, but an aching in her heart gave her doubt for the first time ever...

The Little Queen

Skylar flew off into the moonlight, dodging leaves and other night things. He called to the lightening bugs as he passed them. “Light Bearers” he entreated, “The Queen needs your help!” The fireflies and the glow bugs, all surrounded Skylar and lit the way through the velvet darkness that was the night sky. But they were not the only ones who followed that night...

The vampire bug, Skeeter and his trained germ Uglar saw the glowing procession of the fireflies and the moth troops and they decided to follow also. Greedy Skeeter was always hungry and he was tired of having only squirrel blood to drink. A Fairy, especially a Queen, would have that tasty blue blood which he craved, and so off he went to follow them.

After traveling a great distance into the night, Skylar became tired and the little troop decided to find a safe place to sleep until dawn. They stopped in a thicket of soft ferns to rest until sunrise. Soon Skylar was fast asleep and snoring loudly. The little Queen laughed, and snuggled into his downy moth fur to catch forty winks. One by one the glow bugs and the fireflies, cuddled together to dream little bug dreams. One by one, the

tiny glow of the fireflies faded as they drifted off to sleep and once again the forest became velvet and shadowy black in the darkness. Soon everyone was fast asleep with a sleepytime hum of contented buggy sounds. Everyone that is, except Skeeter and Uglar.

Skeeter could not believe his good fortune. The little Queen was his for the taking! He half glided and half flew taking care not to make his greedy humming sound lest he awaken the huge Skylar. Ever so quietly he advanced toward the sleeping fairy and no one stirred. He took a moment to grin, excited over his good fortune. Silently he landed shaking with excitement, near the little Queen. His drool glistened in the silvery moonlight. Oh, how he was going to enjoy this feast!

The Dream

The little Queen was deep in dreamland. Her dream however was disturbing and unhappy. She dreamed she was trapped in 'Creepys' rotting web and he was coming closer and closer and she was unable to move. She opened her mouth to scream but no sound came forth! No one suspected that she was in danger so none of her guardians in the moth troops, came to her aid. She was all alone and very afraid. Now she dreamed Creepy was almost upon her. She could smell his rancid spider breath as he bent lower, his fangs deadly sharp and menacing, ever closer, closer... She was helpless and her silent scream stuck in her throat as her wicked dream took hold and she could feel fangs sink deep into her soft fairy throat. Mercifully the pain stopped and she dreamed further that she fainted and slowly she began to drift somewhere and nowhere. Floating away, ever higher, just drifting now, she would feel no more pain, no more anything...

Skeeter was sucking the fairy blood, and Oh My! it was even sweeter than he had ever imagined. Slurp! Suck! Slurp! The vampire bug was draining the very life force from the tiny sleeping fairy. "Me too! Me too!" Uglar whispered hoarsely, and jumped up and down in anticipation! The selfish Skeeter ignored his pet germ and continued to suck as the poor little fairy grew weaker, until she was very nearly transparent.

Of a sudden the itchy bitsy Germ gathered all his strength and slapped Skeeter in the back of the head, causing him to make a very loud "SLURP!" The sudden noise woke Skylar who dwarfed the skinny Skeeter. Skylar let out an ultrasonic shriek which the

other moths heard for miles around. Within seconds the air was filled with the sound of a million wings all vibrating in unison. Even in his gluttonous frenzy, Skeeter heard it too.

Rescue

It looked like a giant silvery cloud in the faint light of the moon but the sound was unmistakable. It was the moth warlord Khan and his hoards of Protectors. Skeeter barely had time to escape before the Protectors arrived. He was within a hairs breadth of total annihilation, when he disappeared into 'Lost Swamp' where no decent bug would follow. Skeeter and Uglar were nowhere to be found when the Great Khan arrived at last. The little fairy was very still and all the glow bugs began to cry and their little bug tears, put out their tiny lights with a sizzle and a puff of smoke. Soon there was no sound in the dark forest except for the way quiet sadness sounds, all whispery and pale.

Even the Great Khan was wiping his eyes when the little Queen coughed. "She's ALIVE! She's ALIVE!" The news spread like wild fire and all the bugs were so happy they began to dance about and wiggle fly while zzzzing gleefully.

The little Queen tried to speak but her voice was barely a whisper, so the Great Khan bent low, so she could whisper in his moth ear. No one knows what she said to him, except that he bowed so low his antennae brushed the ground and he replied only this, "I promise by my life m'Lady" and promptly flew away closely followed by his loyal Protectors.

Skylar cradled the helpless Queen gently in his strong moth arms and said, "I will bring you hyacinth nectar and stay with you until you are strong again". She smiled weakly at her beloved Skylar. Once again his friendship had saved her life.

Khan assigned six Protectors to guard the little Queen between moonlight and dawn during the sleepy time.

Promise

The Great Khan was lost in thought as he was flying along. He was disturbed by the orders he was given by the Queen. It was always difficult to deal with the Firstborns when they landed in the right area but this one must be very special if the Queen herself was sanctioned as his Mentor. He would fulfill his promise and do his best as always but this time even HE had his doubts.

The Firstborn was called an Onion and rumor had it that he was *Purple*. Up to this point there were only Green Onions and Khan knew it was going to be hard on the little guy even IF he had been born in the Vegetable Gardens, but to accidentally wind up in the Flower Gardens was going to mean real trouble, and Khan had the unfortunate duty to be the one to sort it all out.

The Flower Gardens were occupied by the Top Dogwood Trees and all the Flowers there always felt superior to all the other Firstborns. Why he even heard rumors that once upon a time they had 'accidentally eliminated' a little Firstborn whom they determined to be an unwelcome weed. Everyone knew that a weed was just a flower that nobody loved. Anyway the whole mess was investigated but the records were destroyed by a suspicious lightning fire (during the wet season?) that could not be explained. The little guy was never seen again. Legend said that since the Wild Orchid Firstborn was destroyed, and as a precaution the Counsel personally sent the 2nd Orchid hatchlings to remote jungles where they were personally raised by Fairies to avoid the jealousy apparent in the Flower Gardens. However no one could replace the first little life that was lost. It left a small

hole in the fabric of Creation that would never be filled. Enough holes could place them all in danger so it was important that no species could determine the fate of another. It was the Law. No one ever spoke of the incident but everyone watched their step around the Flower Garden Elders. Like it or not they still had the dark powers and occasionally held the Dandelion wine rituals. It was all very secret and Khan and the Protectors avoided the garden except when the Counsel ordered pest control sweeps. Now he would have to deal with them head on, and he would wish it all away if he could, because deep in his heart, he knew they could not be trusted. All stuck up and snooty, that is how they were. They only allowed Butterflies into their air space and even followed the Protectors around while they were on pest control, considering the Protectors nothing more than a necessary nuisance.

The Garden seemed to be full of spies reporting back to the Elders. Khan felt they were up to no good but he had no evidence to provide the Counsel, only his intuition, but he was seldom wrong. He could only imagine how they would treat this little guy. He must get there before another ‘accident’ occurred. The Queen had entrusted him with this sacred duty. A dark hole in the Waiting Place could mean the end for all of them, for if enough firstborns were destroyed the Creators would stop sending them here and no new life could begin and the world would be only a place for dying.

Meanwhile...

Schatzi awoke to something warm on his face. His baby eyes could barely focus in the brightness of the new day, for you see, he had never seen the sun, because he was born in the gentle light of the moon. When he could finally focus and see around him, he

marveled at all the beautiful colors, and he could not help but feel lucky to be born in such a lovely place. The friendly earthworms tickled his toe rootsies and made him giggle, but his joy would be short lived, for you see the earthworms were blind. The flowers were not. Herbie heard a strange sound and turned his little tufted head toward the direction of the sound. Soon the sound became a scream. Herbie shivered with fright! What could be the cause of such a dangerous sound? Herbie was so frightened by all the screaming that he was very nearly vibrating. He looked all around and did not see anything scary. Soon the screaming reduced to loud noises and then to a muttering and grumbling. Finally a beautiful crimson dahlia called Delilah said, “What are YOU doing here thing?” Herbie knew he was not a THING, so he very politely tried to tell her in baby talk that he had learned from the Creators that he was to be an Onion. Schatzi did not know a lot of things because he was still pure love, but gradually as the Sun warmed his face he remembered the word ‘Onion’. He liked the word very much because the Spirits told him he was like a little bridge a *Union* of sorts. When he had tried to say Union, his baby voice had said Onion and so the Spirits laughed and said they liked that better and so Herbie was known as the Firstborn Purple Onion. He knew it was a very good thing because of the smiles whenever the Spirits looked at him. He remembered those smiles felt just like the Sun. In the Firstborns, thoughts are just like words so Schatzi sent the word Onion to Delilah by concentrating very hard. He tried to send more but could manage only that one word over and over. Onion. The crimson dahlia got the message and began to shriek, “Oh No you are NOT! Onions are GREEN! Green, Green, Green!” Over and over she ranted until the entire Garden was turning shades of red. Red petals, red leaves and stems, it seemed the whole world was turning red to little Schatzi.

The Spirits showed him a Rainbow and it fused with Schatzi and in that moment he knew all about color.

Schatzi could not understand how he could have been made the wrong color.

Everywhere he looked in the garden he saw the beautiful purple color that was on him.

He was brand new and already he had made his first mistake. Somehow he had been born the wrong color.

He thought that purple was beautiful and it was his favorite color of all that he saw in the Garden. He was happy with this hue and now what was he to going to do? The color was all over him. Suddenly a group of young daffodils in yellow dance fluffies began to laugh and poke him. He was hoping it was a new way of saying hello. It was not. Soon their laughing became mean and they were saying ugly things which made little Schatzi do the one thing that all babies do when they are unhappy. The little Onion began to cry. As he cried a funny thing happened, and little puffs of onion odor began to float up into the air. As the onion odor began to reach the daffodil Meanies, it began to burn their eyes, soon they were crying too and their yellow dance fluffies began to get all wet.

“Hey, what is all the ruckus!?” Old Blue an elderly carnation yelled. “What is going on here?” she demanded. The daffodil Meanies began to complain all at once as they were very rude anyway, so no one could figure out what they were saying at all. Finally, one of the elder Gloomies said, “I saw the whole thing, that purple bulb thing (pointing to poor Schatzi) spat poison on everyone to burn out their eyes! Schatzi tried to tell them he did not even know what happened, and because they were not listening, he began to cry harder. Soon all the flowers’ eyes were burning and the Wolfs bane began to howl for help. Suddenly all you could hear was the vibrating sound of a million wings!

The Mighty Khan

Soon all the moth Protectors, were in the Garden.

“Who is in charge here?” demanded Khan, in a booming voice, which scared the Meanies into silence even though they were still arguing, while their eyes burned. The elder Gloomie King replied, “We have an odd bulb here, that is not acceptable for our Garden, and I fear he is poison!” At the word poison, a gasp arose from all the flowers in the garden. The Great Khan was very disturbed, because he made a promise to the Queen, to protect the little Firstborn Onion, and to seek the advice of the Counsel as to the safety of the baby. Now he would be forced to make a decision without the advice of the Counsel, as there was no time. The situation was bad and becoming worse, this could mean trouble but he had no choice. The little Onion was in grave danger. The memory of the little Orchid burned in his mind and the First Law ‘A Reverence for all Life’ gave him renewed courage. He had no choice.

All eyes were on Khan, he would have only a few seconds to make the right decision. Soon he announced. “The little purple onion known as Schatzi shall be removed from your Garden”. A loud cheer arose from the crowds of flowers. He quieted them, by gesturing his furry moth hands. When they were quiet again, he continued, “The little Onion is too special and rare to be with the likes of YOU! You have all shamed the Fairy

Queen. You have been deemed cruel and unfeeling, even towards a baby. A baby of ANY species is to be treasured and nurtured by all creatures.

It is the FIRST Law, '**All Creatures shall show a REVERENCE for ALL life**'

The Counsel gave the Fairy Queen authority over all the growing things, and she in turn gave her command through me. I act on behalf of the High Counsel and YOU shall all FEEL the WRATH of KHAN!!!"

The Flowers again gasped, and tried to protest their innocence by talking all at once. Several of the Meanies and the Gloomies lifted up their roots and attempted to get closer to, and actually fake HUG the tiny Onion, in order to appease Khan. He saw through their trickery. "Silence", shouted Khan. "You have sealed your fate. From this day forward all Roses shall blush with shame and the Protectors will never again come to your Garden for Pest control. Any bugs that choose to feast on your flower flesh may do so. We will not remove Weeds from your area. This, I will bring to the Counsel as a fitting punishment for twice now, you have contaminated our Valley with evil. Once, with the Firstborn Orchid, and now again with Schatzi. We can no longer be blind to this *pollution* you bring to our lives. It must END, NOW!" With a loud SNAP of his wings, the conversation was over. All the flowers were whining and blaming each other and the whole Garden was in chaos.

With his mind only, Khan vibrated commands to the Protectors and six of his strongest moths flew over to Schatzi who was so frightened by all the shouting that he squeezed shut his eyes and pictured his Spirits and wished that he had never come to this awful place. The six moths surrounded Schatzi and hid him from the view of the Flowers. The mighty furry white moths hovered above Schatzi. The wind from their

flapping wings made his little tuft of hair, blow this way and that. They gently and in unison, held on tight to his little tuft of baby hair, and ever so gradually pulled him from the soft soil. The friendly blind earthworms were busy keeping Schatzis' soil soft, and his toe rootsies cozy, all poked their heads up in surprise. They looked like a small plate of spaghetti without any sauce! The six Protectors lifted Schatzi up, higher and higher he went, he saw not only the Garden, but the dark Forest and far beyond a Swamp. He was frightened, but strangely excited also. He felt sad too, because now he did not have a HOME. The sad thought settled on the little baby and once again the tiny baby did the only thing that babies do when they are afraid and once again, he began to cry.

The Friendly Skies

Schatzi could not help but cry as he was very sad. I guess you know that the more the baby onion cried the more onion odor puffs arose into the air, and soon even the Protector Moths themselves were all weeping. It was quite a funny sight to see all the Protectors flying along and crying with Schatzi. Since Khan was in the lead position, he was the last to feel the burning of the onion odor when he looked back to see all the Protectors, stalwartly flying in formation without complaint but with eyes full of tears.

“Halt!” shouted Khan and a million pairs of wings glided gently to the ground. Khan approached Schatzi, who was still shivering with fear. “Be calm Little One, we mean you no harm. We have come to rescue you and take you home!” Schatzi managed a little smile and repeated the word “HOME???” Schatzi knew this word, the meaning was buried deep inside and for all the things he had yet to learn, he understood *HOME*. This was a place he belonged to and it belonged to him, he just did not know where that was. The great Khan was linked to the baby mind and so he understood even without words that Schatzi wanted this as much as Khan wanted to make him secure. Khan also knew that it was against the natural Laws to mislead or lie to a Firstborn, yet he really did not know where to take the little onion, so he would be safe to grow strong. After all he was the only purple onion ever created and as such, he must be protected at all costs. Khan

had told many lies in his life as Leader of the Protectors. Many times as one of his warrior moths lay mortally wounded and as he cradled the fallen moth, “Am I going to die Sir?” “No Son, you are going to make it!” He pondered how the multitude of lies would mount up in the other world and he hoped the Spirits could forgive his breaking the law so many times for it was always done out of kindness. He quickly shook off the dark thoughts and looked once again at the problem at hand.

Khan was startled from his reverie by a familiar moth call, and turned to see Skylar with his precious cargo strapped securely to his back with silk-worm threads.

The little Queen was still frail and translucent but able to sit up and speak softly. She was thrilled to see Schatzi, and ordered Skylar to kneel near him so she could kiss his baby face, and give him a fairy blessing also. She then turned to the great Khan.

“Together we must go to the Counsel, but first Schatzi needs safe, soft soil in order to keep up his strength and grow strong.”

The little Queen and the great Khan both agreed they could not leave the baby onion alone. It was also necessary to keep him from crying, as his odor puffs made everyone's eyes burn so badly, that even the Protectors were miserable without complaint, but were unable to see where they were going whenever Schatzi cried. They decided to have the caterpillars weave him a blanket of soft grass silk and lined the blanket with rich, dark soil, so that he would be safe for the long journey to find the Counsel. The caterpillars were summoned and so they began their task. They were honored to make a special blanket for the Fairy Queen as a gift for the Firstborn. It was made with 6 handles for the moths to hold on to, and a small flap to cover Schatzi's face and keep him warm, but also to keep the onion puffs from escaping in case he should begin to cry. All the Protectors

were relieved even though no one would admit out loud that it burned their eyes. Khan was secretly amused but proud of his warriors, like a loving father is of his sons.

The Secret Counsel

The Counsel Guardians only met during the full Moon at a location known only to the Fairy Queen, the Guardians themselves, and the firstborn of each new species. Soon Schatzi would have the secret knowledge of the Firstborns. As Schatzi grew and gained the knowledge of the Firstborns, he would be important to all the natural world. He just might be the very one to stop the Wars always gathering when Good and Evil, Darkness and Light became imbalanced and upset the natural laws. The little Queen knew that she had to keep him safe at any cost, even if it meant giving up her own life.

Onward they went towards the sunset now gathering into night mist. Schatzi quietly snuggled down into his warm blanket and dreamed. He drifted sleepily among clouds and little baby dreams of stars and the soothing sound of wings, all synchronized in flight, until the rhythm was not unlike a heartbeat.

The Counsel Guardians, after much debate, had decided Schatzi must be secured in a far away safe place, upon getting the mind link report from the Great Khan.

The Guardians decided to convene a formal meeting later, but in the meantime they would send Schatzi to the Ice Kingdom to be with the great Teacher. She would keep Schatzi and educate him, and the very isolation of the Ice Kingdom would keep him safe as the memories of the Firstborns begin to emerge. The Firstborn of each species knew

inside their own hearts how to help the world around them, with a gift called *INSTINCT*. It is a kind of intuition buried deep in their hearts, telling the Firstborns what to do, even if they were brand new to the problems at hand. If the Firstborns were disturbed and unhappy during this growing process the 'gift' of instinct would not develop or worse yet, improperly or partially develop causing great harm to the nature and balance of the world around them, if they were not able to make good decisions for themselves, it could eventually affect everything. This Instinct, was really little more than the ability to *listen* to their hearts, but it would be important to the entire mystical Valley, because when natural laws get out of balance everyone suffers.

Without the guidance of the Counsel and the knowledge of the Teacher, the new species might become selfish and use their gifts to damage others in favor of their own kind, just like the swamp mosquitoes and ticks did!

Destination

Schatzi awoke to the sound of voices. He peeked out of the flap of his blanket to see the little Queen talking with creatures he had never seen before, but somehow they looked vaguely familiar as though he knew them, perhaps from a dream. The little Queen was speaking of the “One of the Dreamtime” it made no sense to Schatzi so he drifted back to sleep, but this time he began to dream...He saw a place all white and very cold and for a moment he began to shiver. Suddenly there was a warm fire and a very old being was holding him and he felt very safe. The old being told him he must go soon and that made him feel very sad and he wanted to cry, as he did not want to leave. “No, Na Na, let me stay with you”. She kissed him tenderly on his face and said, “Soon the whole world will call you Shatzi’ and my job will be finished.”

Meanwhile back in the Swamp, Skeeter and Uglar had barely managed to escape the hoards of Protectors after very nearly killing the Fairy Queen, when as usual they began to fight and argue. “You never share!”, whined Uglar. “You ungrateful Germ!” moaned Skeeter, “Don’t I always let you lick off my lips and swim in my...”...Just then Skeeter was distracted by a skunk beetle moving slowly beneath the swamp grass. He jackknifed

down so fast upon the beetle, that itty bitty Uglar fell backwards landing onto a black widow spider, and he had to pretend to be her red dot all day long, until she went to sleep that night.

He vowed to get even with Skeeter for being so rotten. He needed a plan to make to Skeeter PAY! All at once it was clear. Uglar knew just how he was going to get even...He began to hatch a plan inside his itty, bitty, buggy brain.

Premonition

Far away in the Ice Kingdom, Old Nana was crouched by the fire swapping secrets with the Smoke Wizards. The Smoke Wizards lived in things barely visible, like smoke, fog and night mists. Since these things exist everywhere, the Smoke Wizards were very wise, because they learned from all of nature and always listened quietly to all its creatures, both Dark and Light. No one seemed to even notice the Wizards. No one that is, except NaNa, who spent many hours listening to the Quiet things in life. She was in tune to the natural vibrations of the Earth, Wind, Water, Fire and Quiet. Her favorite was the Fire as it always drew the Smoke Wizards to her. NaNa was very old and made little creaking sounds as she moved about. Her favorite color was purple and she always stained her silvery hair with dark razzleberries in purple tips against the silver strands.

In the moonlight standing on the stark white of the snow scape, against the reflection of the fire she was glowing purple and pink, however in the stark moonlight this night as she began to feel the presence of Schatzi she was pure Silver...

As NaNa watched the Smoke rising out of the fire, it began to wrap itself round and round into a spiral. A tiny shape appeared and began to cry. "NaNa, NaNa", the little thing wailed and as it cried the smoke intensified and began to burn NaNas' eyes...NaNa was startled, and backed away from the fire. She summoned the Wizards to explain the brief vision. They said it was another Firstborn in need of the Gifts, but they felt this one was different and she should Dream-Link with the new one. NaNa went out into the cold starry night and raised her arms to the Northern Lights. She closed her eyes and

somewhere a thousand miles away, a tiny purple onion stirred beneath his cozy baby blanket.

Lost in sleep, he murmured a single word, “NaNa”...

Old Nana, sat crouched by the fire enjoying the swirl and energy of the Smoke Wizards as she bade them surround her. In an instant she felt a sudden chill and the Wizards still entwined in her energy shattered into frozen fragments and made little tinkling sounds as they made contact with the frozen ground like the melody of a wind chime. The Wizards gathered back into Smoke and hovered only over the fire, puzzled at the sudden change in Nana.

Nana appeared in a trancelike state, transfixed and gazing straight at the moon and all at once she thought she saw a new face in the moon. She knew instantly that it was a Firstborn and that it was calling to her for help. Usually the Firstborns had all the help in the world as all of creation welcomed a new species to widen the diversity and energy of the Earth womb. This felt different and a sense of urgency pervaded her reverie and she knew that she must travel, and Nana hated to travel away from her ice palace and beloved Wizards and Quiet Things. She felt she was too old to make any sense of the other world and preferred to stay on the Counsel as an Energy Warrior only, now she may have to open the old war chest and recapture the skill of the ancient ways. She felt a certain urgency, and began to hurry back to the ice cave in search of her tools. It had been a long time and the Crystals may need to be charged in the moonlight before they could give her the guidance she would need to find her way through the Badlands and back again.

Consequences

Schatzi awoke and for the first time he somehow felt different and everyone else felt it too. Since all the Firstborns were mind linked to the Protectors, the Queen and the Counsel, everyone was feeling slightly startled this dawn. For the first time Schatzi was not sad anymore about his hurt and did not wish to cry but something else was brewing because now of a sudden he began to feel angry. This was not a good sign. It was way too soon for a Firstborn to begin to adapt to the world. He did not yet have the Gifts and if he was already showing power, he must get the Knowledge quickly in order to contribute. Pure Anger would contaminate and the pollution would become powerful and this was not good! Khan had already noticed a mist hovering above his silk 'blanket'. Just as shade and showers made him appreciate sun and dry days, Schatzi was too young to understand how to control the world around him but it was undeniable that the little creature felt more comfortable in a cool misty climate and sure enough to Khans surprise and delight, the only cool mist was hovering directly above Schatzi where he lay asleep and cozy. Was it possible that the baby could already command the Mist? It was amazing and frightening both at the same time. If Schatzi could do this as a baby, what would he be like when he was mature? Now he knew why the Counsel was so concerned about Schatzi. This was no ordinary Firstborn!

Not even Khan could summon the cooling Mists and this brought great suffering to his Protectors who worked in spite of the burn of the hot times without complaint.

He immediately tried to link with the Counsel but all he could see, was a vision of a beautiful crystalline house surrounded by snow with multi-colored lights sparkling in the night sky.

Decisions, Decisions

NaNa stopped dead in her tracks as suddenly she felt a cold rush of anger and it traveled down her spine and splatted hard against the ice, and it was gone as sudden as it came. Her eyes began to burn and the tears sizzled as it hit the flames of the fire. Just as suddenly as it came, it was gone, both the anger and the burn in her eyes. For a moment the Smoke Wizards stopped their spiral dance and became still and misty, and just as swiftly everything was normal again. Everything, that is, except NaNa. She felt strange and had a foreboding and instantly knew she could not take the journey she had planned. It was not like her to change her mind so she stood up and paced around the fire. She could see pairs of eyes glistening in the faint light of the moon and recognizing the Snow Panther she bade him forward and he emerged from the shadows and lay on the smooth ice by her feet in front of the flames. As NaNa began to stroke her soft fur the Panther made a soothing purr sound not unlike that of the small Kits that run in the garden world. As NaNa connected to the Panther she began to feel the thoughts inside the wild mind of the huge cat. He purred “Stay, Stay, Stay...” NaNa knew that she must be patient and wait. This was very difficult for NaNa as she liked to make things happen and waiting was not what she wanted to do all. She felt like she was part of a battle and rather than going out to fight the War, she knew instinctively that the War would find her. She kept her hand on the fur of the Panther and watched as the northern lights reflected across his

pure white coat and between the giant cat and the firelight NaNa began to beckon calm back into her mind and knew she must be patient...she now understood that waiting, was her most important job for the time being.

Journey

The moth Protectors were happy to carry the small bundle as the mist hovering above Schatzi was soothing and cool, so it was a happy task indeed in the hot summer sun. Khan knew that the quickest route up the sleeping volcano to the ice glacier was over Lost Swamp. He dreaded the fly over, but it would shorten their journey by 3 sunrises yet he also knew there was a risk he could lose some of his mothmen also. Based on the mist and the feelings that Schatzi was able to emit already, Khan knew that he had to take the risk and save the 3 days that might much more than just time, in the end. He called to his mothmen and gave the order to away in an easterly direction, over the Rainbow Hills and through the Fairy Forest directly toward Lost Swamp and the Shadow Things. They set out, the brave humming throng carrying the little Firstborn. They all knew the danger they would be facing but they did not believe in fear. This does not mean that they were never afraid, but it did mean that fear was just a small pinch that once felt was now over. Fear was now over for them, and so on they flew to Lost Swamp.

In The Pit

As the brave little troupe passed over the Rainbow Hills they stopped to rest and take on provisions. Schatzi was smiling and happy and did not need to drink as he held fast to the mist hovering above him and kept his soil moist and warm around him. The Finches and Hummingbirds nested there in great numbers as none of the other larger birds were allowed in with the smaller birds. The colors of the birds were unbelievably beautiful. The little birds had evolved in any color that they could dream of, and some of the tiny birds glistened like purple diamonds, gold and rubies. In the Rainbow valley whatever you dreamed came to be. Others of the birdies were as small as the moths and bumblebees, choosing to evolve ever smaller to conserve food in the Hills. The birds groomed and shared nesting sights and even though they occasionally ate insects like the moths, they had an unspoken pact with Khan to never disturb the mothmen while on a mission of good. The moths loved the Rainbow valley because of all the honey sweet flowers and during any mission they were guarded and safe within the valley and the surrounding hills. This night they would rest beneath a shower of stars, full of honey wine, in complete safety. It did not get any better than this.

Beyond the Hills

Khan needed permission to go through the Fairy Forest as it was magical and full of secrets, so Notice had to be given and since the attack on the Fairy Queen it was most important to comply with all the laws. No matter how hard he tried to mind link with the Fairies or the Counsel all he could see in his vision was the crystalline house in the frozen zone. He knew he would just have to take a chance that the surrounding cloud of Good would be able to shield them and protect them on their journey, in spite of the problems. He noticed along with the mist above Schatzi that it now extended over all the mothmen during the sun times and disappeared when the moon began to rise. Schatzis' powers were increasing with each new moon. During night travel there was a bit of luminescence almost like the glow of the fireflies but more subtle, hovering just above the baby basket. The light would increase when the forest was particularly dark and decrease when the moon was full. Khan did not know the source of these little miracles but in his heart he suspected it was all the doing of a tiny Onion that was accidentally made the wrong color.

Fairy Woods

Khan could see the blue lights dancing in the trees far in front of them and he knew it was the Guardians coming out to meet them from the woods. The Guardians used the blue light to blind intruders and when increased the light would burn to discourage the intruders and if they were not sufficiently discouraged, the light at its most intense would incinerate the victim. The Fairies did not like to use this intense light except in the most dire of circumstances, as it could get out of control and could burn the forest. Khan was a bit nervous at the sight of the eerie lights, so he swallowed hard and headed straight for them.

As the lights grew closer something strange started to happen. He noticed that the lights were separating into 2 distinct rows and the rows bowed out into a curve and began to move out and away from the Protectors. Khan stayed on course and eventually the lights faded. Suddenly Khan realized that he had a blue light exactly next to him on either side. When he glanced back he saw that the lights extended in 2 bright rows down either side of his mothmen troops, and ended with a flank of 4 lights directly behind Herbie.

Khan was surprised as no one ever lived to tell the true nature of the blue lights up close and personal until this moment.. As he flew along with his lighted escort he could

clearly see that the glowing lights were the royal blue wings of Fairies that appeared to be half insect, with what appeared to be thorns on the backs of their hands. They did not try to mind link nor did they speak to Khan, they merely acted as a directed light into the heart of the Fairy Forest.

All of a sudden the blue lighted Fairies converged into a V shape in front of the mothmen, forcing Khan and the troops downward into a clearing in the forest, surrounded by a small rivulet that circled a central island topped with beautiful rock formations of various colors with lights that seemed to come from the rocks themselves.

Khan was relieved to see the little Queen with Skylar by her side sitting on the very top of a rock glowing orange and purple. He was greatly relieved to see how fit she looked and not at all transparent. As the troops landed, one by one they were attended by tiny elves carrying dew grass and honey for the mothmen. A great fairy feast had been prepared in their honor and the little Queen beckoned Khan to fly over to her and he complied. She whispered to Khan and he flew back to the troops and ordered them to carry Schatzi over to a raised stone platform on the other side of the rivulet and hidden from view by the stone island. When the task was done Khan and the men were ordered to eat and rest and suddenly Khan and his mothmen could no longer keep awake and as their eyes grew heavy Khan imagined he saw some glittery dust floating down over him and before he could speak, he was fast asleep and snoring.

Gifts

Schatzi suddenly was acutely aware that something had changed and he had a feeling somewhere between sad and scared, so he peeked out of his blanket to see beautiful lights unlike the moon or the sun or anything he had ever seen before. He began to wish for a protective mist more intensely than ever before, and as the mist gathered he wished it to shield him from the lights that he did not understand. As the mist began to gather over Schatzi, it thickened into a dense fog shielding him from the unfamiliar lights. He began to notice that it was quiet and he could not hear the heartbeat flap of the wings of the mothmen. This time he began to wish for HOME, whatever that was, and suddenly it began to get cold in the middle of summer, in the middle of Fairy Forest.

The Fairies having put the Khan and his mothmen to sleep gathered together to see the Firstborn and were stunned to see that little Schatzi could gather mist into fog and ran excitedly to see him within the mist. The little Queen cautioned them not to startle the little guy so they waited until the Queen flew to the silk basket and landed inches from Schatzi. Schatzi began to smell the sweetest odor and thought he must be dreaming. A

soft voice gently called his name and a tiny baby face pushed against the flap on the basket and Schatzi peeked outside. Schatzi had never seen such a beautiful face looking back at him and he was suddenly happy and the cold fog began to dissipate. The little Queen asked Schatzi if she could kiss him and she giggled when Schatzi thought “What’s that?”... Throughout the long night all the Fairies brought to him a kiss and with it a Wish Gift and all night long he grew smarter and stronger with each wish. “Thoughts are Things”, “Honesty is Kind”, “Be Patient”, “Think Love and Anger Leaves”... all these things the baby onion did not fully understand but that was OK because as each ‘Gift’ imprinted on his baby mind Schatzi knew that somehow it would be important later. Schatzi would know when the gifts were needed. When the thousand plus fairies were finished it was almost dawn and the sky glowed lavender, pink and turquoise. Schatzi *felt* all the colors rather than *seeing* them. He even noticed that the little queen had violet black hair and in the dawn light it seemed to glow.

The little Queen awakened Khan. He awoke startled and apologizing for having rudely fallen asleep. She laughed heartily and explained to him that no outsider was allowed to see a fairy ritual of the Firstborns and so the Counsel who knew of his coming gave permission to do the ceremony while Khan passed over the Fairy lands on his way to the glacier. Since Khan had been unable to mind link for nearly 3 days he did not quite understand so the Queen explained that sometimes the mind link was just one way instead of a complete circuit. She further apologized for the sleeping dust that was necessary for him and his mothmen. The Fairies were very private and it was crucial that very few beings believed in them, that way they were able to work secretly for the greater good in times of darkness and when the Shadow Things tried to find out where they lived

no one was able to show them. That was their protection, you see, to most of the world, they simply did not exist. Since all beings are linked in the natural world, the less the Hard Beings thought about them the better for everyone. The Hard Beings were bigger than most of creation and were not careful with the little things so it was only natural that once in awhile the little things had to rescue the Hard Beings from themselves.

The Great Khan bowed low to the little Queen and asked if he could retrieve Schatzi as he needed to continue their foray to the glacier, following the Mind Link that he had received from the Counsel. The little Queen gave him her blessing for a safe journey, and so he proceeded to notify the carrier mothmen to get Schatzi and off he flew to oversee the pick-up. When the carriers arrived and began to lift the baby onion, they very nearly dropped Schatzi as he had doubled his weight overnight. The Queen explained that time stopped in the Forest and they had been with the Fairies for nearly 13 moon days.

Khan had had enough and his head was already pounding from the fairy dust, and he longed to be back in a world he understood. He called for more carriers to lift Schatzi, and bade the Queen farewell and off they all flew and once again, a cool mist from out of nowhere appeared, to protect the entire troop from the heat of the sun, and hid their progress from prying eyes.

Shadows

Khan directed the little troop east once again and although he greatly admired the work of the Fairies and loved the Queen, he was glad to be out in the natural world and away from the mysteries of the Fairy world. He knew that soon he would be taking his mothmen into the grave danger inside the Lost Swamp and he wondered if they would ever be the same when they emerged out the other side. He received a thought and decided that hiding in this fog was best for the time being but sometimes in the swamp,

the Shadow Things stuck to you and unknowingly you came out of the swamp with the things attached. He must caution his mothmen to keep their thoughts clean and brave. The Shadow Things could smell fear and that is how you draw them to you. They must all be careful as he could sense a small gap from the Waiting Place to the Natural World and he did not want to be responsible for another incident, which might cause a tear in the fabric of creation. This was his chance to set things right and save the natural world from more pollution and evil from the Shadow Things. One more death of a Firstborn and the Waiting Place could close forever to Earth and the Creator Spirits would send their beloved seeds to another Planet and Earth would die, not from big things but because of neglect to the little things. It was always the small details that made a difference. Like erosion of soil near the rivers and so it was with evil things. They attached themselves to you and little by little you could no longer tell the difference between good and bad. It caused a dimming of your light and your decisions were no longer clear. You began to doubt yourself long before anyone could really see the attached Shadow Thing on you. Khan remembered that his own Grandfather had fallen prey to their lure and had left his family to live alone in the Swamp, lost forever to all who loved him and that he once loved. Khan shook off the sad thoughts as he realized it was one of the things that happened to all the creatures in that lost world. It was a place of all pervading sadness and this feeling let him know that he was close and that the sad place was trying to connect to him...

The stink was the first thing Khan noticed and he knew the Swamp was close now. He ordered his mothmen down to prepare them for the Shadow world of Lost Swamp.

Together Khan and the mothmen decided to repeat any words over and over that spoke of goodness. Things like Love, Honor, Bravery, Kindness, Reverence, Compassion, Courage, Respect...and that way there would be nothing ugly for the Shadows to stick to. Fly swift and fast. That was the plan...

The stench over the swamp was like a never ending fart. The troop of mothmen were repeating their goodness words, when one of the older mothmen passed out and fell directly into some swamp crud. Two more hit the ground and Khan looked back to see half of his mothmen gone. They had followed their friends down into the Swamp. Friends do things like that for one another. The bad news was that all of the mothmen had stopped occupying their minds with good things, and so as we already knew, the Shadows could smell their rising fear and things began to get sticky quickly.

Khan ordered everyone to the surface and one by one they began to land carefully and last of all they were forced to set Schatzi down in the very worst of all places...Lost Swamp.

High up and nearly invisible on a tree branch sat a very small red dot. It was Uglar who had never quite recovered from being the black widows spot, so much so, that he still was not able to control his color and remained red. However he was watching all the action in the small greasy pool of stinky wormy swamp water. All of the mothmen were afraid and upset and not feeling brave at all, and they were doubly afraid of what could happen to Schatzi and suddenly they heard the baby crying and little puffs of onion odor began to mix with the fart stink of the swamp. Just then Khan noticed some creepy crawlies moving toward Schatzi when suddenly his crying stopped and his blanket suddenly began to glow blue, faintly at first, and then brighter and brighter. One of the

oily poisonous centipedes began to climb up on the glowing blanket and just like that, it began to burn and melt, howling so loudly in pain that the other poison things moved fast away and only the glowing blue, silky, grass, baby blanket was left. Suddenly the swamp floor became alive with gray smoky Shadows undulating near the frightened wet mothmen. Everyone was afraid, well almost everyone. Khan picked up one side of Schatzis' basket and screamed "Pull Mothmen!" and 4 strong moths pulled Schatzi up and into the air once again. Suddenly the blue light began to fade and in its place a mist began to rise and then a thick fog and finally a clean pure rain and it poured down and began to clean the muck from off the wings of the downed mothmen. Khan began a chant of Love, Love, Love and all the mothmen chimed in and the rain began to pour down and the Shadow creatures were exposed and whining, while inside the foggy protective cloud, it was warm and dry and the baby blanket was glowing a soft purple. The troops were through the swamp and out safely on the other side unharmed except for one small red dot on the wing of the last mothman to leave the swamp.

Uglar hung on for dear life. He began to feel queasy, dizzy and excited all at the same time. He had felt lousy most all of the time that he lived on Skeeter in the Swamp, and never before had he felt the least bit of happiness and now here clinging on the wing of the last mothman he was scared but smiling. As he experienced this new feeling, he began to think of Skeeter and how awful that he was, and as soon as the sadness washed over him, he noticed something floating just by the corner of his eye. As Uglar became more frightened the thing floating with him began to grow and shift in size and shape. At last he understood just what the thing was. Pure evil in the form of a Shadow Thing had been attracted to him because Uglar was evil too. He was out to hurt Skeeter and anything else that got in his way. Uglar was very lonely and he said aloud to no one, "I want to be loved!" A piercing shriek stung his ears as the Shadow Thing began to tear apart. As Uglar became afraid once again the Shadow Thing began to grow once again. All at once the last mothman began to chant "Love and Light...Love and Light, Warriors of Honor, hold back the Night!!" ... As the mothman chanted their little song of courage, the Shadow Thing began to rip and shred, screaming with pain and eventually it fell away and the last thread of the Shadow was removed from Uglar and not by his own doing, but just by being near to the company of goodness. In that moment Uglar was transformed and for the first time he knew what he must do. However little he was, he knew that at least he could say good things. He could be a source of encouragement and ward off the Shadow Things because it was the right thing to do. At that moment, though he was so small he was practically invisible, but he had never felt so big.

As Uglar rode along on the last mothmans' wing he began to notice intermixed along with the flying mothmen were the telltale grumbling sounds of the Shadow Things. All at once Uglar knew that he too could be brave and he began to chant, "I love my flying brothers, and I am loved in return, I will never sleep until the Shadows burn"...As the last mothman caught up with the others, Uglar was able to put little rips and tears in the Shadow Things with his happy thoughts and left them helpless, tattered and screaming. One by one Uglar, the smallest one of all, destroyed all the Shadow infections hanging on to the Protectors and eventually the Shadow Things were no more. Now at last Uglar understood how important the smallest of creatures and details were, because he knew he was connected to each and every one. Everyone and Everything was connected, like it or not. Meanness could spread just like nightfall when the sun sets. This was a big moment for Uglar and just maybe for all of nature, for now he knew that someone as small as a germ could hold back the night.

The Protectors may never know that they had all been saved by a little red germ who knew what it meant to do the 'right thing'. Uglar still wanted to put flea grease in Skeeters' tea, but he knew he never would, well maybe just a little...

The moon would rise and change for many days and the mothmen were weary and longed for the sweet nectar fields of home. All at once the very air became intensely cold and their breath created tiny clouds as they exhaled. It was becoming uncomfortable and their wings became heavy with a thin icy overlayer when of a sudden a slight orange glow began to emanate from the little baby blanket of grass on Schatzis' basket. The glow began to shift and change almost in the same way as fire will except that the red orange glow was tipped in a royal blue and very beautiful to behold. The mothmen could no longer see their breath as it moved in and out, and the air began to warm around them. The thin layer of ice that was on their wings melted away and on they flew with renewed energy. The glacier loomed large against the jagged mountain cliffs and Khan began to feel relief for the first time since he rescued Schatzi from his birth garden. The Great Khan was a simple creature and he did not like to meddle in the Natural Laws. He just wanted to be a good soldier and take care of his men. He liked to feel that he made a difference in the lives of all the growing things but most of all he took care of the Firstborns. No matter what, he was ready to die to save one. Never again would he lose another and he longed for someday when he might happen upon a baby Orchid hidden deep in the forest, as he just could not bring himself to believe that the baby Orchid was really destroyed. He blamed himself. As he flew along lost in his thought he heard a low grinding noise. He signaled his mothmen to land in a nearby meadow that was void of all the ice and snow because of a steaming hot spring feeding into a large pond. As they landed in the meadow they set the baby basket near to the pond to provide some steamy warmth and the basket ceased to glow and once again the air was chilly cold all around. Khan shushed the mothmen and there was no sound at all. The entire meadow was quiet

and still. For a moment he thought it was just his imagination when low and mean he heard the growling sound that he could not identify before. This time the sound was unmistakable and Khan knew at once it was the legendary Snow Panther. No one had ever seen the huge cat before, but they all heard the stories and the mothmen quickly flew to the trees to hide and watch. In their fright, they had forgotten the tiny basket sitting beside the pond. Khan dove down to stand beside the basket just as the white Panther jumped from its perch among the cliff rocks just stopping short of crushing Khan and the basket full of Schatzi. As the huge cat sniffed at Khan all of the mothmen flew down and beating their wings as fast as possible created a high pitched sound that startled the Snow Panther into a low crouch. Khan attempted to mind meld with the Panther but the mind meld required silence and the cat was growling and the mothmen were frantically trying to save Khan. He forced his mothmen to quiet and he stood alone attempting to contact the Panther when all at once the growling sound faded to a regular soft melody and the great cat lay down next to Khan and continued to purr. The mothmen heaved a collective sigh of relief and then they all notice that the blanket surrounding the little onion was glowing a violet purple and the thought that was being shared between Khan, the Snow Panther and all the mothmen was that they were all gathered for the same purpose. The Panther was here to bring Schatzi to the Cold Place where NaNa was waiting for him. As the Snow Panther continued to purr his thoughts to Khan, the mothmen lifted the little purple basket with the sleeping baby inside and within his baby dream, again the single word 'NaNa' and this time all the mothmen, the Great Khan and the beautiful Snow Panther heard it too.

The white Panther was now gray and brown as the thousands of mothmen attached themselves to the fur of the great cat. The cat was covered in warm soft downy wings and for the first time in a fort night the exhausted troop hitched a ride on the back of the Snow Panther and along with the purring sound of the cat was another sound, of very sleepy, safe, snoring mothmen.