
Sadie Cat and the Sky Tower - Draft 1

By Alexander Shen (July 2017)

Introduction

Once upon a time there was a dog with a cat's tail. Her name was Samantha Adelaide Catrell, but her friends called her Sadie Cat. She was a very adventurous explorer and loved going to places she had never been. Seeing new things and experiencing new places was her favorite thing to do. The world was filled with all kinds of magical things. Sometimes she would get in sticky situations, both figuratively and literally. We'll be reading her stories in order, though feel free to jump in whenever you would like. This is The Strange and Marvelous Adventures of Sadie Cat.

Chapter 1

The desert was hot. It's not weird for a desert to be hot, but it felt extraordinarily hot. It's probably because the last few months there had been little to no rain and the area was in a drought. Why would Sadie Cat be walking through the desert in the middle of the day? Sadie Cat had just come from a city she had on her map called Stonesburg. It was famous for making some of the world's most beautiful rainbow stones. She had asked the guard at Stonesburg where the next town was. He said there should be another town a few hours to the east. Her map was blank in that direction, which means she had never been that direction before from Stonesburg. She used this as a great excuse to go on an adventure.

"Thanks!" Sadie Cat said. "What's your name?"

The guard tipped his helmet and told her, "My name is Jonathan."

Sadie Cat waved goodbye to Jonathan the Guard and started walking east. A few hours later she realized the guard had no idea what he was talking about.

Chapter 2

Sadie Cat was down to her last bit of water. She knew she was in trouble. If she didn't find water soon, she would probably faint and would need to send out an emergency signal for someone to rescue her. She didn't like using the emergency signal because she only had a few in her bag. Sadie Cat took another step and fell to the ground, sand flying up all around her. Her body felt like it was sinking. Her eyes closed. She was so tired and so thirsty.

"I wonder if this is what it feels like right before you faint," she thought. She continued to have that sinking feeling.

Then she opened her eyes. This wasn't a sinking feeling. She was actually sinking! A few moments later the sand opened up beneath her and she fell into a deep dark cave.

"JONATHAAAAAAN!" she yelled as she fell deeper and deeper into the cave.

Chapter 3

Sadie Cat landed onto a tall mountain of sand. She rolled over the edge and continued to roll like a log down a hill. She rolled and then she rolled and then she rolled some more. Eventually, she hit the ground with a splash. Sadie Cat looked around. Even though the cave was supposed to be dark, it actually glowed a deep teal color. The water she was in was glowing!

Sadie Cat dug around in her bag and pulled out a small plant that looked like a corkscrew. It was old looking, brown, and dry. This was a Bassus Root and she stuck it into the water. The skin of the Bassus Root turned green and then the corkscrew straighten itself out. Sadie Cat now knew this water would be okay to drink. She stuck her face in the water and took a big gulp of this glowing teal water. Then she made a pained face. It may have been safe to drink, but it certainly did not taste good. It was sour and made her skin shiver.

Sadie Cat took the Bassus Root out of the water and in a few seconds it turned back into a corkscrew, dry, and brown. She put it in the bag and pulled out the two empty bottles that used to be filled with water. Filling each bottle with this glowing water should help her stay hydrated. Now all she needed was a way out of this cave.

Chapter 4

After a while Sadie Cat climbed back to the top of where she had entered. It was getting dark outside. The mountain of sand that was created when she fell into the save was tall, but not tall enough to get out. She could see the sky above her through the hole in the cave's ceiling, but it was too far too reach.

"There has to be another way out of here," Sadie Cat thought to herself. She looked around and all she could see was the glowing water around the mountain of sand. In the distance she noticed a different glow. It was a red glow, but it was small, under the water, and very far away. Something fell on her head and she brushed it off. She tried to get a better view of the red glowing thing under the water. Something fell on her head again and she brushed it off again. Why was there sand falling on her head? Sadie Cat looked up and there was a shadow standing at the entrance of the hole.

"Are you okay down there?" the voice yelled.

"Yes! Can you help?" Sadie Cat called back.

There was a pause. Then the end of a rope came flying over the edge and landed next to her. "Tie the rope around you!" the voice said. Sadie Cat quickly did as she was told and then tugged on the rope twice, letting whoever was up there know she was ready.

Slowly, but surely, Sadie Cat was lifted out of the cave.

Chapter 5

The frog was old or at least he looked old. He had a large beard and only wore what looked like the bottom half of a black wetsuit. Sadie Cat was surprised how strong he was for being so small. He seemed able to lift her out of the cave without that much trouble.

“Thank you so much!” she exclaimed.

“You’re welcome,” the old frog replied. He began to wrap the rope back into a neat circle around his elbow and shoulder. He took a peek behind Sadie Cat into the cave behind her. “It looks like you fell into a big surprise back there,” he said.

“It was a surprise! I was so thirsty and I almost fainted. I felt like I was sinking and it turned out I really was! In a second the ground opened up and I fell inside that cave.”

“Did you find anything interesting in that cave?” the old frog asked.

“Just this salty, glowing water,” Sadie Cat said. She took out one of the two bottles from her bag and shook it around. The glowing got brighter. “You can drink it. I checked. It tastes bad though,” she said in a disappointed tone. She put the bottle back in the bag.

The old frog nodded. “Anything else?” he asked.

“Nope. Just this water and the sand,” Sadie Cat replied. She paused and then asked, “Was there something down there I should have found?”

The old frog quickly shook his head and told her no. “It’s getting dark. We should get out of here before night comes. The desert gets incredibly cold when the sun goes down. I have a small home a little ways from here. You can stay there the night if you would like.”

Sadie Cat looked around and realized what the old frog said was true. The sun was going down and she could feel it getting colder. “If you don’t mind, I would really appreciate it. Thank you.”

The old frog nodded and motioned her to follow him. They started on their journey back to his home.

Chapter 6

The fireplace burned bright and the house was warm. It actually looked like an old restaurant. There were a few tables for people to sit and a long counter where folks could prepare food. The walls were covered with a lot of strange things that seemed out of place, namely a variety of ropes and hooks of different shapes and sizes. There were some that had three points and some that looked like claws. Some of the ropes were brown, others were black, and some were a shiny silver color.

“This is a very nice home you have. Thank you for inviting me,” Sadie Cat said.

The frog was digging around beneath the long counter, making banging noises and moving things around. “I don’t have a lot to eat.” He sounded frustrated and banged around some more, shoving pots and plates around.

“Oh!” Sadie Cat looked in her bag and pulled out a bread roll and some hard cheese. She also pulled out her favorite thing: honey carrots. They were golden yellow carrots that were

sweet like honey and grew in the large fields back where she came from. She put the food on the table. "I have some to share! It's the least I could do after you saved me from that cave."

The old frog looked at the food and was quiet for a second. He hadn't eaten in many days and was incredibly hungry. He was silent as he broke off a piece of the bread and took a big bite of the cheese. His eyes closed as he chewed slowly, enjoying the flavors of the hard cheese. Sadie Cat took the other half of the bread and chewed on it. She grabbed a handful of honey carrots and put those in her mouth too.

Sadie Cat swallowed her bread and honey carrots. "So what do you do out there? It seems awfully far from any cities or towns," she asked.

"Well," the old frog started, "there is the Sky Tower to the east. That's about a day away. There's also Stonesburg to the west. That's probably less than a day away. Walking, of course."

"A whole day!" Sadie Cat thought. That meant Jonathan the Guard was wrong by a lot.

"But I find myself doing odd jobs here and there," the old frog looked around at the ropes and hooks on the walls. "I clean windows on really tall buildings. Most of the tallest buildings are in the same town as the Sky Tower. I find myself there quite a lot."

Sadie Cat nodded. "That must be a very exciting job", she thought to herself. Sadie Cat was not a big fan of heights, so her heart raced just thinking about cleaning windows on a very tall building. What if there was a breeze? Her fur stood on end.

"I think I'm going to go check out that Sky Tower. I haven't been before," Sadie Cat noted.

The old frog said if she went south first, she'll be able to go around the mountain ridge. It would be a longer distance as the crow flies, but because it was flat and not winding through the mountains she would get there sooner. The mountain ridge also had a steep cliff side, which meant she would be able to walk alongside it to get some shade. Sadie Cat took out the map from her bag and made some notes. The old frog complimented her on the map.

"Where did you get this?" he asked pointing at the map.

"Oh! I made it. It's a record of all the places I've been. I've been working on this for quite some time now, actually. A few years," Sadie Cat replied.

"It's wonderful," the old frog said. He stroked his beard and nodded, eyes closed.

Sadie Cat and the old frog spent the next few hours talking about all of their different adventures. They shared the different things they had learned and laughed about all the different folks that they had met. The old frog grabbed a piece of red rope from the wall and tied it made a few dozen knots in it, turning it into a bracelet. He handed it to Sadie Cat as a gift. You never know when a rope would come in handy. Sadie Cat pulled out a small bag of white seeds in return and handed them to the old frog. He dumped a few of the seeds into

his hand, pinching one between his thumb and forefinger. It was no larger than a small pea.

“These are Bassus Root seeds,” Sadie Cat said. “Like the root they’re extremely sensitive to water. If you put the seed in water, it will absorb it like a sponge and grow over 10 times the size! They’re also extremely flammable, so make sure you don’t heat them up too much. When burned they also create a big stink and a lot of smoke. It’s surprising.”

This was the first time in a long time the old frog had talked to anyone for fun and it made him happy.

Chapter 7

It was getting late and Sadie Cat let out a loud yawn. She said good night to the old frog and thanked him for his hospitality. The stairs were behind one of the tables and she made her way up into her room. When she got there, her eyes widened when she realized that she had forgotten her bag! Quickly she turned around and headed back downstairs to see the old frog by the counter, holding her bag in front of him.

“Forget this?” he asked.

“Yes!” she laughed nervously. “I would forget my head if it wasn’t screwed on.”

The old frog looked at her silently and then asked, “your head is screwed on?” He made a turning motion with his hands.

“No, no. It’s just a saying. It’s like a joke about how I always forget things and... never mind. Good night.” She went back up the stairs and fell on top of the bed. Before you could count to 10, she was asleep. It had been a very long day.

Chapter 8

The next morning came and Sadie was woken up by a loud clang. She hopped up and rushed down the stairs half expecting to see the old frog under a pile of pots and pans. Instead she saw nothing. The old frog wasn’t there. There were no pots or pans on the floor. Confused, Sadie Cat searched around the first floor of the building to see if the old frog had left anything behind like a note or a cake. There was nothing. She furrowed her eyebrows for a moment, shrugged, and then left the small house south toward the mountain ridge. The Sky Tower was her next destination.

Chapter 9

The day wasn’t nearly as hot as the day before, but it was still incredibly dry. She made sure to ration the water she had since it would still be a whole day’s walk to get to the Sky Tower. She imagined the new things she would see. Following what the old frog had told her the other night and headed toward the south. When Sadie Cat had made it to the furthest hill, the old frog stepped out from behind the small house and watched her disappear over the horizon. He looked up in the sky and noted the position of the sun. “A few more hours,” he said to himself. He walked back into the house and closed the door behind him.

Chapter 10

Sadie Cat ran her hands against the side of the cliff. She was thankful it was there. There was something calming about having one side of her protected, in case any wild monsters would try to sneak up on her. It also helped her make sure that she was going the right direction. As long as the side of the mountain was on her right, she knew that the Sky Tower would eventually be her destination.

Chapter 11

The sun started to set and the full moon was starting to peak over the horizon. The old frog was standing behind the counter, tying some knots in some ropes and attaching hooks to the ends of others. It seemed like he was going to go somewhere, but you never knew. The fire cracked in the fireplace. It was quiet and calm. Then there was a small wind that came blowing through the room, even though the door and windows were closed.

"It's not here," the old frog said without lifting up his head. He had incorrectly tied the knot he was working on and grunted in annoyance.

There was a noise. It was like a hissing noise from a leaky hose. There was no emotion in the voice. It was just a constant sound of words and then it shut itself off. It was either speaking or it wasn't, there wasn't a clear dynamic in the voice to when it was starting or ending a sentence.

"what do you mean it is not here?" the voice asked.

"It's not here. I don't have it," the old frog looked up. The fire twitched and shadows danced along the walls.

"where is it?" the voice split in two.

The old frog naively looked toward where Sky Tower was. It was the same place Sadie Cat was headed. He looked back down at his rope, hoping that the shadows didn't notice the split second mistake he had made. They did. He should not have done that. The shadows knew where they had to go next. They moved closer to the frog.

"you were given a very simple task and for the completion of that task you were to be paid appropriately." The shadows frowned. "we will make an example of you and be on our way to retrieve what is ours."

The old frog continued to stare at the ropes and hooks in front of him. "It wasn't right. I should never have taken the job," he said.

"but you did," the shadows reminded him.

"I did not realize how many folks would be affected. I did not realize how many folks would die!" the frog said angrily. He was still looking down.

"irrelevant," the shadows hissed as they moved closer to the old frog.

The old frog looked up at the shadows coming around him. He had to do something to make this right. In an instant, he snatched up one of the hooks in front of him. The end was unlike the others. Instead of spikes or prongs, it had a small iron capsule at the end like a small cage. He spun it around his head and flung it toward the fireplace. As it landed, the contents inside that little cage started to catch on fire. Bassus Root seeds lit up quickly and filled the entire house with smoke. Light started to be blotted out and only faint hues of orange and yellow could be seen through the thick smoke.

The old frog grabbed the remaining ropes and hooks from the counter and bolted out the door, making a straight line toward the cave where he had found Sadie Cat earlier the day before. He would have a small head start from the shadows, at least until the smoke disappeared and a moderate glow from the fire could be seen again. As he sprinted toward the underground cave, he glanced up at the full moon and exhaled a sharp breath in annoyance.

“Just my luck,” he said. “A full moon.”

He ran and then the shadows followed.

Chapter 12

Sadie Cat arrived to the town that had the Sky Tower in the center. It literally was a single tower with just a few small houses and stores dotted around it. There were a few red houses, a green house, a store that sold glasses, and another store that sold books. It looked like a mail house was also in the town as well as a grocery store. Then there was the Sky Tower.

The Sky Tower was a circular tower, about 20 feet in diameter decorated with carvings all along the purple walls and climbed up into the sky. There were carvings of clouds, of birds, of mountains, and other geometric shapes and designs. The Sky Tower was much taller in person than Sadie Cat had imagined. She wondered why she hadn't been able to see it from far away. Maybe it was a combination of the purple stone against the skyline that made it difficult to see from far away? It seemed unlikely, seeing as the tower just disappeared into the sky.

At one side of the Sky Tower was a large iron double door. Sadie Cat walked up to it and noted a small sign. It read: NO ENTRY. She looked around to see if anyone was watching. She touched the iron with her hand. It was warm to the touch and the edge of the door suddenly lit up with a strong yellow light. She could see it trace what looked like symbols and letters all along the edge. When she pulled her hand back, the light disappeared and she could no longer see the symbols.

“What in the world?” she asked herself.

Once the light disappeared she noticed how dark it was. The moon was now hanging high in the sky and the few lanterns in the town barely lit up the streets. It was a little spooky, so she headed to what looked like a small restaurant and inn.

Chapter 13

The old frog scrambled down the hole, scaled down the mountain of sand and made it to the beach of bioluminescent water. He looked over his shoulder and saw the shadows looming around the entrance. It looked like they were trying to figure out the best way down into the hole without hurting themselves. The old frog tried his best to not disturb the water too much, but it was no use. There was just so much water. As soon as he set two feet into it and starting wading toward the red glow in the distance, the water lit up like a teal sun. This was enough light for the shadows and they made their way down the mountain of sand and after the old frog.

The old frog, now seeing the shadows were right behind him, started to swim as fast as he could. The shadows didn't have to swim as they were able to simply glide over the water. It was silent as they got closer to the old frog, triangle wakes forming behind them. The old frog could hear their hisses behind him.

"pay," they said. They kept repeating the word "pay".

Ten feet away from the old frog was the red glow. Then it was eight feet. Six feet. The claws of the shadows grew longer and longer as the combination of the teal water and the red glow got stronger, mixing into a deep purple pulsating light. Four feet. The old frog could feel his heart beating faster and faster between the distance of his eyes. He reached out with his right hand as far as it would go. Two feet. The claws were inches away from the old frog's back. Water splashed. A shadow reached and grabbed a hold of one of the ropes slung around the old frog's shoulder and yanked, but that's all that there was. Just a loose loop of rope.

The shadows loomed over the teal water now with just the rope in hand. They merged back together as one larger shadow and growled a low tone. The red glow was gone as was the old frog.

Chapter 14

Sadie Cat was stuffed. The restaurant had a special on a Honey Carrot casserole, mixed with peas, corn, milk, and flour. Sprigs of rosemary were roasted on top with a nice hunk of bread as a perfect dipping tool. She should have stopped at seconds, but her eyes were bigger than her stomach and now she found herself face up on her bed, staring at the ceiling, groaning.

"Honey carrots," she mumbled. "THE BEST!" she shouted as she raised her fist in the air. It fell limp to the side and she fell asleep.

Sadie Cat started to dream. She was flying amongst the clouds. Her arms were spread wide and she was gliding from side to side, making little track patterns where her paws grazed the cumulous skin. Sadie Cat dipped her head down to catch some clouds on her face when she was met with a surprising view. The old frog's disembodied head floated in front of her, parts of the clouds blending into his beard.

"Sadie Cat!" he said in a spooky tone, "You have to listen to me!"

"Old frog! I missed you when I left. Where did you go?" Sadie Cat asked.

“I had to take care of something,” the old frog said. He sounded hesitant. “You are in great danger and I’m sorry.”

“Danger? What are you talking about?” Sadie Cat was confused. She wondered if the overload of butter carrots put her in this very odd dream state.

“You have to enter the Sky Tower and get to the top. You’ll know what to do when you get there.”

“Enter the Sky Tower?” Sadie Cat asked. “I can’t do that. There’s a no entry sign and I got this really weird feeling when I touched the door earlier today.”

“Those are the protective runes!” the Old Frog spoke faster.

“Protective runes?” Sadie cat asked.

“They stop anyone from getting into the Sky Tower, both normal and magical. Don’t worry about that. I don’t have a lot of time. Just head down to the Sky Tower. The doors will be open, but only for a few more minutes. You must hurry!” the Old Frog shouted.

“This is starting to feel a little too real, Old Frog. I think I’m going to just get back to my dream about flying,” Sadie Cat stated. She lifted her head and noticed an incoming mountainside that had popped up out of nowhere. “I guess this is your way of telling me to wake up.” Sadie Cat woke up before slamming face first and carving a place for herself as the flattest dreamer in the universe.

Sadie Cat sat up, sweat all over her body, and she looked out the window by her room. She took a few breaths and weighed the different options available to her. Was this dream just a dream and nothing more? Was it the Old Frog actually talking to her and telling her to do something? What was the danger he was talking about?

She threw her legs over the side of the bed, grabbed her bag, and jogged down the stairs to the open street. The moon was still high in the sky, but the entire town was sleeping. A single lantern was still burning, casting a very faint light across the town square. She never noticed how weird shadows looked in the middle of the night. It felt like they were longer than normal. It also seemed weird that the dim light would cast several shadows of her in three different directions.

“give it to us” the Shadows whispered and they rose from the ground.

Sadie Cat opened her mouth but a scream wouldn’t come out. Before she could even think, her legs started moving toward the Sky Tower. The Shadows were right behind her, floating across the cobblestones and reaching out their claws to get back what was theirs.

Chapter 15

The Old Frog was lying on his back, staring at the ceiling, breathing heavily. Pink petals of

some flowers were painted on the ceiling right behind a low hanging ceiling lamp, which had a lightbulb that flickered every few seconds. The room was small and red. A fuzzy gray carpet was beneath him, soaking up the sweat collecting in the small of his back. He rolled over to his side and saw a tiny television that had two knobs on the front, wooden exterior, and a pair of rabbit ears on the top. The screen sprang to life and was accompanied by a few lines of static. The lines of static moved as the voice spoke.

“You’re back,” the voice on the television said.

“Not by choice,” the Old Frog said as he got up from his prone position. He stretched backwards and cracked his back a few times.

“You know it’s going to take you at least twice as long to get back this time around,” the voice on the television said.

“I know,” the Old Frog sighed. He searched his pockets for something.

“I heard you were awake while you were traveling here,” the voice said.

“It was a trick I tried last time and wanted to see if I could do it again,” the Old Frog admitted. He could still feel soreness in his bones.

“You know the strain isn’t good for you. You shouldn’t be awake when you’re traveling here.” The television’s voice paused for a moment and then continued, “The next time you come here you may not make it out at all,” the voice on the television warned.

“I know.” The Old Frog stood in front of the television, hands on his hips. He looked a little annoyed, like a teenager hearing the same warning from their parents for the 1,000th time.

“You should also find a new place for the gateway. We’re worried that underwater cave is compromised now and it’s clearly not as hidden as you thought. I mean that dog cat thing almost found it and that was just from aimlessly wandering the desert,” the voice on the television stated.

The Old Frog nodded. He spotted a small table in the corner of the windowless room and walked over to it. There was a small knob on the front and he pulled, revealing a small drawer with a single piece of candy in it. It was a red and white peppermint candy wrapped in a clear piece of plastic. He opened it and put it in his mouth, dropping the wrapper on the floor.

“You know I hate this flavor, right?” the Old Frog asked.

“Of course I do,” the voice on the television said. “That’s why I chose it. Also pick up your trash. Don’t litter.”

The Old Frog smirked, nodded his head, put the wrapper in his pocket, and said to the television, “say hello to the old crone for me.” The television shut off with a click, the room was silent, and the lightbulb burned out. The Old Frog opened up the wooden door that

appeared and was gone.

Chapter 16

Sadie Cat remembered when life was just wandering around, looking at cool things, and going to sleep on a full stomach. Now she was running through a town she had never been in before while chased by two giant shadows, emotions overwhelming her chest as if she were going to die any second. Oh how things change over the course of a few months.

She rounded the corner of one of the houses and made it down the slim alleyway. There were garbage cans, cardboard boxes, and other wooden crates blocking her way. She did her best to dodge, jump, and roll around anything while kicking them backwards so as to slow down the Shadows on her tail. Unfortunately, the Shadows didn't seem deterred by those obstacles at all. Her arms flailed and she scrambled further and further towards the Sky Tower.

Around another corner she found herself heading straight for the double doors she had touched earlier in the day. The yellow symbols and letters were glowing again, but now the doors were open. She pumped her legs as hard as she could and tumbled straight through the doors. Another set of glass doors shut behind her, and she could feel her heart sink to the pit of her stomach. She was going up faster and faster up the Sky Tower.

The Shadows hissed at Sadie Cat and stopped at the double doors. They looked at the glowing symbols and waited. They hissed something back and forth and the yellow glow began to fade. Eventually it was a cold dark steel gray color again, which prompted the Shadows to fly into the open doors and up the elevator shaft right behind Sadie Cat. The maintenance lights below and above the elevator swirled around in a rotating spotlight of orange. Billows of smoke streamed behind them as they rose higher and higher. As long as the elevator moved, the Shadows could follow.

Chapter 17

Sadie Cat was scared. She didn't have a lot of options as she rode the elevator. There weren't any buttons to press or any levers to pull. There wasn't a little red emergency intercom for her to use. There weren't even windows for her to look out to see how far she had gotten. All she could do was wait as the elevator ascended further and further into the sky. She had gotten used to the speed by now and could still hear the Shadows hissing beneath her.

There was a small speaker on one part of the circular elevator compartment playing a medium tempo song with a bossa nova beat. Unfortunately, it didn't do much to ease her nerves. If anything it reminded her how far she was from a relaxing resort island where they served you sweet drinks in cups made out of coconuts.

"How far up is this tower?" Sadie Cat thought to herself.

She decided to calm her nerves by rummaging through her bag for something to snack on. She had run out of honey carrots, but there had to be some sort of dried fruit or something hiding in the crevices of her bag. There was a fuzzy thing and a rough thing. She passed by a gooey thing and a squeaky thing. All of this was normal. Then she passed over a hard,

faceted, cold thing. This was new. She pulled it out and the shadows she could hear extremely loud audible hisses from beneath her.

“What in the world?” she thought to herself.

It was a crystal blue gem. She rotated it with her hand, examining all of the sides and watching how the light would bounce off the edges of the surface. It looked like there was something inside, a fluid of some kind. She shook it, but nothing moved. There weren't any bubbles or anything else, just a deep clear blue gem.

The elevator began to shake and slow down. Sadie Cat worried that the shadows chasing her perhaps got a hold of the gears or lift that was powering the elevator. The music abruptly stopped and a woman's voice said over the speaker, “Now approaching: floor 2.” As soon as the doors opened she bolted out and ran down the hallway.

Chapter 18

The hallway was long and carpeted with a very low pile blue diamond pattern. Her shoes made a dull plodding noise with each stride that she took, putting more and more distance between herself and the now closed elevator doors. Small mobiles of blue crystals, similar looking to the one in her hand, turned and rotated near the ceiling about six feet above her head. They shot shards of light throughout the hallway as she continued to run with no idea where she was actually going.

The shadows seeped through the cracks of the elevator door and floor of the hallway, appearing to grow in size and in number as they made it into the hallway. It didn't seem to help that the new light source made it easier for the shadows to move quickly, catching up to Sadie with two steps for every single one of hers.

“give it to us” they hissed as they got closer and closer to Sadie Cat.

Sadie Cat's legs were feeling tired and she didn't know if she could keep going. What appeared at the edge of her sight was a blessing as it looked like a pair of golden doors stood no more than a minute's run away. If she could make it through those doors before the shadows caught up with her, then maybe she could buy herself some time to formulate a plan.

The thought of just giving the shadows what they wanted had crossed her mind. It seemed like the item that mysteriously appeared in her bag would likely get them to stop chasing her altogether. There was another part of her, call it a gut feeling, that knew that if she gave it to the shadows then something bad would happen. Her intuition had generally been pretty good, so she banked on that idea to give her the motivation to keep her going. Turns out that running at full speed, regardless of the mental strength, would eventually turn anyone's legs into jelly.

The shadows swiped at her and knocked the side of her bag. She yelped, shut her eyes, and went for it.

Sadie Cat lunged at the double doors, hoping her weight and speed would just send her through without any trouble. Fortunately she did make it through without any trouble. The doors actually opened by themselves. She hit the ground hard, tumbled, and slammed her chin against the ground. The shadows flew over her back and appeared on the other side of the room.

The room was circular in shape, covered with what looked like mirrors all over. There was a layer of glass between the shadows and Sadie Cat and all of the mirrors. There were a few pedestals scattered around the edge of the room, each with a different top. A few windows were also posted around the walls, with very slight indications of dawn shining through. Sadie Cat slowly got her self up, brushing off her arms and rubbing her chin. The gem, it was gone. She searched all around and noticed that it had fallen from her hand, on the ground, still spinning from the impact. She looked up at the shadows and they looked down at her. Then they all eyed the spinning gem between them. They looked at each other again and there was nothing but silence.

The shadows made the first move and went for the gem and Sadie Cat threw her bag at them. They split off to avoid being hit and she dove for the gem, grabbing it as she rolled over it in a somersault motion. The shadows circled back around and raced to her back. Sadie Cat, now running from her somersault, grabbed her bag and jumped up on the mirror in front of her. The mirror felt solid as she jumped and her two feet slammed against it, allowing her to push off and fly backwards through the shadows again. The shadows hit the wall from where Sadie Cat jumped, hissing in frustration, and turned around to see Sadie Cat still soaring through the air in a seated position.

This wasn't going to end very well.

Sadie Cat landed on her bottom with a loud crack and the pain shot straight up her spine and punched her brain. Her hands flew open and she let go of the blue gem again. The shadows hissed as the gem went flying backwards through the air back toward the double doors they came through. It spun around and illuminated a blue glow as it flew closer and closer to the doors. But the gem wasn't going to hit the double doors, it was going to hit the small bowl next to the double doors.

A mirrored pedestal stood next to the double doors with a bowl on top that looked like it was cut out of blue diamonds. The blue gem hit the edge of the bowl and started to circle it. The shadows raced past Sadie Cat, who was now lying on her back and watching the gem with an upside down view. The blue gem turned and tumbled down the bowl until it hit the center, a small cutout that was the exact shape of the blue gem. There was a click. There was a whirl. And then Sadie Cat heard the shadows utter something that was one of the seven worst curse words anyone could ever say out loud.

The blue gem began to grow brighter and brighter, the pedestals in the room sinking into the floor of the room. The double doors closed tight behind her and then there was a bright blue light that filled the entire room.

Chapter 19

There was a little girl standing in her backyard. She wasn't wearing any shoes, but that hadn't mattered for a long time. The worst her feet were going to get was going to be dusty. Remnants of what used to be grass crunched beneath her toes as she paced around, squatting down every few moments to observe the creepy crawlies sharing the yard. Except there hadn't been creepy crawlies in a long time either.

Something hit her head.

She wasn't sure what it was a first. Was her older brother out there playing a joke and throwing rocks at her? Nobody was around. Her whole family was still sleeping inside and the sun was barely making its way across to where she was standing.

Something hit her head again.

This time she felt it on the top of her hair. She touched it with her hand. It was wet. She stared up into the sky and the next thing she realized she was soaking wet. The rain had come once again and it was wonderful.

Chapter 20

Sadie Cat didn't know where she was. Her vision was blurry. She could feel that she was some wet ground and could hear the sound of rain pounding the cobblestone street around her. It took a few minutes, but her vision eventually returned to her and she could see that she was sitting at the entrance of the Sky Tower. The doors that led into the elevator were closed and when she touched it, the yellow runes glowed. She checked around her quickly and was relieved that her bag was sitting next to her doing a wonderful job soaking up the water on the ground.

Sadie Cat stared up into the sky and let the rain fall on her face. It felt nice and she was happy. Her stomach gurgled. She decided that she'd have to find some breakfast first and then she'd be able to make preparations on where to go next. There was adventure waiting for her and she didn't want to miss her appointment.

Epilogue

There was a circular screen hovering above a large metal console. Buttons and levers protruded all over the machine as it made beeps and blips every few seconds. A group of shadows were moving all around the room, clipboards in hand, surveying the results they saw on the screen and conversing with each other. One particular shadow, also carrying a clipboard, was watching the circular screen intently as two of the red dots disappeared.

"it has begun to rain," hissed a shadow across the room, staring at another screen displaying an overhead image of the Sky Tower and towns surrounding it.

A crackle came over a speaker located inside the ceiling and a pleasant three note melody was played.

"the father would like to speak with you," the voice hissed on the speaker.

The shadow that was watching the circular screen turned around and headed out towards the hallway. Before exiting the control room, it placed its clipboard on a table as well as a small metal badge. It looked back to see if any of the the shadows were watching, but they weren't. It left the room and was never seen again.