

Young Oddish Questors

by S.A. Schneider

Chapter 1 - Witch hunt and footsteps

“Come on, Maegan, it will be fun.”

The brown haired boy, her silly brother, grinned - corners of lips pulled back so far his neck muscles stood out. The younger girl eyed him.

“I told you no. Leave me alone.”

She ignored him as she picked up a My Little Pony and proceeded to hold a Queen Amidala figure on it as if riding. The Miller’s had gotten a lot of great toys when she and Colin moved in and she didn’t want to stop playing right now. She hummed to herself as she played with her toys.

Colin hadn’t moved.

Maegan sighed. “Colin, can you move? You’re in the way of saving the universe.”

“It would probably be saving the galaxy, not the universe.”

She rolled her eyes. “Whatever, just move.”

When he didn’t move, she proceeded to have her horse (with rider) gallop over him. Up his leg, along his side, over his head (which he shook, aggravated) and down the other side. She made several horse sounds because she knew it would bother him.

He sat and watched his sister for a couple minutes, sighing several times. “Maegan, come on, it will be fun.”

Maegan, hair hanging in her face, glanced at her brother. “Fun? Why would that be fun?”

His grin reappeared. “It’s a witch’s grave, what wouldn’t be fun?”

“Colin, I am not going out on another of your crazy hunts.” He interrupted with “Expeditions”, and she stuck her tongue out at him. “I don’t want to get in trouble again. All that happened last time was that the Millers got mad and I tore my favorite dress. And I spent days combing leaves from my hair.”

“What? More happened. I mean, I got that plaster cast.”

Again, she rolled her eyes. “That is not a foot, it’s just a sunken area in the mud.”

“It is so a foot.” He jumped up and prepared to run from the room.

“No, I don’t want to see it again.” She continued playing, but he kept sighing. Loudly. “All right. I’ll go with you.”

“Great! OK, hold on.” He ran from the room to return with his satchel slung over one shoulder and carrying a radio.

“What’s with the radio?” She got closer, curious.

“Well, I don’t have an EMF detector, so I’m going to use this.” He fiddled with the knobs and she noted he messed with the AM band.

“What’s an ENF?”

“Eee Em Ef.” He pronounced each syllable distinctly. “It’s to detect changes in energy. I’m going to try and get the same thing with this.” He stuck his tongue in the corner of his mouth as he turned the knob. All that the radio emitted was static. “Perfect.”

“Brother, dear, you are so weird.”

“No, really, this will work. Come on.”

Together they headed downstairs, Colin chattering the whole way.

From the kitchen, Mrs. Miller called, “Hey you two. What are you up to?”

For a couple seconds there was silence, then Colin called, “Um, nothing. Just going outside for a bit.”

“OK, have fun and be careful.”

They exchanged a look before hurrying out the door. Maegan really liked the Millers, and they seemed to like her, but she feared they didn’t care for Colin as much. Hopefully, this adventure wouldn’t get them in more trouble.

Colin led her into the woods that surrounded the property. He jabbered the whole time and Maegan tuned him out. She was used to this from him. None of his adventures had ever amounted to anything other than her wishing she hadn’t wasted so much time.

Though she didn’t tell him, secretly she enjoyed spending the time on these adventures.

They walked through along the path with Colin explaining about witches and their graves and how the EMF would work when he got one. Blah blah blah. It’s not that he didn’t have interesting information, he just gushed about so much that her brain couldn’t keep up.

He stopped at one point and looked around. “All right, here.” Then he stepped off the path and headed into the denser wooded area. She hesitated.

“Maegan, come on, I promise, it will be all right.”

She glanced around. It seemed too quiet, no birds, no rustling, nothing. Not even wind. “I don’t know, Colin. This is eerie.”

He held up the radio. “See, the EMF isn’t detecting anything, it’s fine.” He grinned at her. His goofy grin, but it did its trick.

“OK, just a couple minutes.”

She followed him for a couple minutes. He backtracked and changed direction a couple times while mumbling things like, “No, it must be this way.” And “I thought it was over here.”

Without warning, he spun to face her. “SEE! It’s here!”

He gleefully clambored onto some rocks and jumped down the other side. Before following, Maegan looked things over. The rocks looked like a wall. A wall that was only a couple feet high and created a square, with Colin currently walking around inside.

“Colin, what is this?” She didn’t want to approach it.

“The witch’s grave. See? It’s really here!” He dropped his bag to the ground and rummaged through it.

Maegan crossed her arms and hugged herself. She had a chill. “I’m not coming over there.”

He looked at her with puppy dog eyes. “Please, Maegan, I need some help.”

“No. I’m going to sit over here. I came along, if you keep bugging me I’ll go back.” She

knew she wouldn't walk back without him, but she didn't want him to know that. Maegan sat with her back against a tree and watched.

"Fine. Let me see if I get any EVP." He pulled an old tape deck from his pack. It was rectangular and bigger than her lunch box. Several cassettes were taken from the bag and he sorted through them.

"Where did you get that? And what's it for?"

"Isn't it cool? It's a tape recorder. Mr. Miller got it for me when we went to that rummage sale. I hope to catch the witch talking to me with it."

Her brother hustled around. He placed the staticky radio on the wall where it sat crackling. He put the tape recorder on the opposite side and pressed two of the buttons then stood in the center of the square.

"Is there anyone here?" He paused. "Does anyone want to talk with us?" He paused as if listening.

"What are you doing?"

"Shh, don't interrupt. I'm asking questions of the spirit world. If they answer, it will either get recorded on the tape recorder or the EMF radio will tell me what they said."

"Whatever."

"Shhhh, you can't keep interrupting."

Bored, Maegan played with some rocks and the weeds. She hoped this wouldn't take long.

Colin continued to ask questions and listen. He repeated the questions and added new ones as he cycled through them.

Still bored, Maegan lay down and watched the clouds.

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Sara clutched her covers and watched her closed bedroom door.

Thump thump thump

The footsteps approached her door and stopped.

She wanted to call out, but was afraid of what Ms. Mcfarland would say. She had only been with Ms. Mcfarland a couple weeks and didn't want to leave so soon. Other than the footsteps, life was good at the moment.

Thump thump thump

The footsteps receded. Without blinking, Sara continued watching the door. More specifically, the door handle to see if it turned. It was the same thing she had done for the past several nights.

Thump thump thump

Pause

Thump thump thump

The first night it happened, she thought Ms. Mcfarland was coming to check her and tuck her in. She had always wanted a mom to tuck her in at night, and she'd leapt into bed, but then the footsteps went away.

Disappointed, Sara had listened until the footsteps approached her door again. She rushed to the door and yanked it open - to see no one there. Confused, she closed the door only to hear the footsteps walking away.

Of course that had sent shivers along her spine and she hid under her covers. In the morning, she asked Ms. Mcfarland who had been walking in the hall all night. Ms. Mcfarland laughed and called her a silly girl. Sara didn't want Ms. Mcfarland to send her away, so she never mentioned the footsteps again. Besides, she really hated being called a silly girl.

A yawn escaped her. She fought falling asleep. Maybe if she just laid her head on the pillow for a minute.

She slept.

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“Maegan, wake up!”

Maegan's eyes shot open. Where was she?

She sat up, a leaf falling from her hair, and surveyed her surroundings. It was dark and she was cold. Colin was clambering over a rock wall, dragging his bag behind him.

“We fell asleep! It's late. Mr. Miller is going to be so mad!”

Maegan jumped to her feet. The witch's grave. Oh man, this was bad. The Miller's would be upset, maybe even send them back. She didn't want to go back.

Colin stopped by her and looked into the woods. “What do we do?”

“Colin, it's dark. I'm scared.”

He put his arm around her. “I'm here Maegan.”

It didn't make her feel much better since he looked as scared as she felt.

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To be continued in Part 2 - Aftermath and haunted stage