

Young Oddish Questors

by S.A. Schneider

Copyright 2020 S.A. Schneider

Chapter 4 - Faeires and Consequences

Previously on Young Oddish Questors:

Frankie and Adam have the police called when they get locked into the school. Adam panics and the cops have a hard time handling him.

Sara angers Ms. Mcfarland by taking the computer apart.

###

Frankie slumped on the couch. His head hung down, not wanting to look up.

“Yes, sir.”

For the last ten minutes his foster parents, Mr. And Mrs. Zon, had been yelling at him and Adam. Poor Adam sat next to him and Frankie could feel him vibrating. Adam didn't handle the yelling well and probably wanted to escape and hide. Frankie knew Adam wanted to flap, but had learned long ago not to do that around others.

“Yes, sir, what?” Mr. Zon asked. The volume of his voice had lowered, but he was still angry.

“Yes, sir, we won't do that again.”

Mrs. Zon sighed. “Frankie, you've told us that before. What were you doing staying at the school like that?”

Before Frankie could answer, Mr. Zon jumped in, “Were you trying to rob it? Or maybe just trash one of the rooms? Is there a teacher you're mad at? Look at the terrible things you're teaching your brother. He doesn't understand this.”

OK, that was enough. If anyone knew Adam, it was certainly NOT these two. “Back off. We weren't doing anything wrong, just... checking some things out.”

Mr. Zon threw his hands up and looked toward the ceiling. “Just checking some things out. Until the police had to intervene and that brother of yours had one of his episodes.”

“Dear,” Mrs. Zon said but didn't finish as Frankie bolted off the couch. Though an inch shorter, he looked Mr. Zon in the eye. He wasn't afraid of him.

“That brother of mine? Episode?” Frankie hadn't yelled at foster parents before, but he wasn't taking any more of this. “You don't know him or understand him. Yeah, we were checking some stuff out. You wouldn't understand.”

Frankie stood glaring at the older man. Behind him he heard Adam rubbing his hands together,

not a good sign, but he held Mr. Zon's glare.

"Dear," Mrs. Zon repeated as she stepped close, "maybe we should discuss this when we've calmed down a bit." She laid a hand on her husband's arm.

"Fine, you can go. But you're grounded."

Before he finished his sentence, Adam leaped off the couch and lumbered upstairs. Frankie heard Adam's bedroom door slam shut before he broke eye contact. "Fine, whatever. Like it matters." He sauntered away from a sputtering Mr. Zon and took the stairs two at a time.

"Adam," he said as he knocked on his brother's door. He heard shuffling inside, but no answer, so he cracked the door. Inside, his brother paced the length of the room while flapping like he wanted to take off. Frankie slipped inside and shut the door behind him. He didn't try to stop his brother and stood for several minutes watching the other boy walk back and forth. When his brother slowed down, Frankie grinned and said, "Ruh roh, Raggie."

Adam stopped and a tentative smile crept across his lips. That's what Frankie wanted.

"Hey, Adam, don't let him bother you." Adam's smile grew. "Tell you what. I had an idea. How would you like a picture on your laptop of Scooby and Shaggy?"

Adam lit up, his eyes widening. It made Frankie feel good when he could make his brother feel good.

"Listen, I went past the art room the other day. They had a bunch of other students pictures hanging in the hall. There was one of your favorites. And it was good."

Now Adam flapped his hands because he was excited, not agitated. Frankie grinned.

"Here's my idea. You and I can earn some money and then we can hire this artist to paint it on your laptop. And then you'll have them with you all the time."

Adam nodded. Excited, he proceeded to talk like Scooby.

Now all Frankie had to do is figure out how to earn the money.

###

When Colin stepped into her room, Maegan tried not to laugh. She didn't succeed.

"Who are you?" she asked. Her brother held a pose she was sure he thought was majestic but made him look silly. He had on a brown hat that looked like something a gangster would wear. His shoulder bag hung almost to his knees and he had a whip, a fake toy whip, wrapped into his belt.

His smile wilted. "I'm Indiana Jones. Can't you tell?" He looked down at himself. "I didn't have a leather jacket."

Maegan giggled. Her brother always had crazy ideas and wanted to hunt one thing or another. "And where, oh mighty explorer, are you going this time?"

He brightened up. "Oh, you'll like this one. I'm going to find faeries."

Maegan gasped. She loved faeries and would love to see them.

"Really?"

“Ah hah, really.” He grinned at her. “Want to come?”

She hesitated. She didn’t want to get in trouble with the Millers again, and Colin’s ideas tended to do that. “I don’t know, Colin.”

“It’s OK, really. We don’t have to be out long. I asked Mrs. Miller if she had a necklace she didn’t want. I told her it was a science experiment.” He paused and cocked his head, thinking. “I wasn’t lying, it is kind of a science experiment. I just let her think it was for school.”

Maegan sighed. This is how it always started.

“Anyway,” Colin continued, “I want to put the necklace and a couple cookies out for the faeries. If they disappear, we’ll know there are faeries nearby.”

“Oh, can I make a flower bouquet to leave them?”

Colin’s lip lifted into a sneer. “Well, I guess.”

Maegan dashed outside, followed by her brother. Mrs. Miller had flowers planted in various planters around the yard. Meagan took a couple flowers from each box and wove them into a circle.

“What is that?”

She set the circle on her head. “It’s like a crown of flowers. I’m sure they’ll love it.”

“Whatever. Are you done so we can go?” Colin bounced from foot to foot and he kept looking toward the door. It was a small pleasure, but she enjoyed teasing him a bit when he was like this.

She continued to mess with her ring of flowers. She didn’t need to make any changes, but her fingers made adjustments and tweaked the flowers.

“Maegan, come on,” Colin implored.

She smiled and stood. Best not to tease him too long or his head might explode. “Let’s go.”

Together they ran outside, Colin’s bag thumping against his hip and Maegan clutching her flowers. She laughed as they ran. Her brother may be a bit weird, but she loved all the times he wanted her to do things with him.

Once they entered the woods, she breathed the scent of the pine. The earthiness and smell of wood was one of the most amazing smells, in her opinion.

“Right here.” Colin pointed to a log. Holes ran along its length from insects, and it had settled as it rotted away.

Her brother unslung his shoulder bag, pulled out the necklace and draped it on the log. He dropped a couple nickels next to it.

Maegan laid her flowers down and arranged them so they looked pretty.

“That’s perfect.” Colin said to her, then he looked up and raised his voice. “Uh, if you’re listening, these are for you. Thanks for, um, you know, like taking care of the forest and stuff.”

Maegan called out, “I hope you like the flowers.” Then she and Colin exchanged a grin.

“I think we’re having spaghetti tonight,” Colin said.

“Oh, I love spaghetti.”

“And garlic bread.”

“We should get back.”

They ran back to the house, sweaty and out of breath.

“Well, you two look like you’re having a good time,” Mrs. Miller said.

They nodded as they gasped for air.

“Well, get washed up, supper’s almost ready.”

They dashed upstairs and pushed to get access to the sink first. Once done Colin rushed back downstairs. Maegan paused a moment to wipe up the excess water on the sink. Things had been good and there was no reason to chance upsetting the Millers. Once done she joined everyone downstairs. The first waft of spaghetti and garlic bread reached her nostrils and her stomach grumbled.

“Maegan, it is so good,” Colin said as he slurped up a noodle which left a trail of sauce on his cheek.

Maegan accepted a plate from Mrs. Miller and joined in the feast. Colin babbled about his latest weirdness - a puk-wudjie. Mr. and Mrs. Miller listened and questioned him about it and then asked Maegan how school had been. She had trouble with a few kids and her best friend had moved. Making friends became difficult whenever they moved to a new foster home.

After dinner, Colin asked if they could go back outside.

“Get the dishes cleaned up first, sport,” Mr. Miller said.

Colin jumped up and cleared the table and rinsed the dishes in record time. Maegan didn’t do much while he bustled around the kitchen. When done, they raced back to the log.

“Ah, everything is still there,” Colin said as his shoulders slumped.

“Well, it has only been a couple hours. Maybe they need more time?” Maegan felt bad for him when things didn’t work out, but he needed to be reasonable.

“I guess. We’ll check it tomorrow after school.”

###

“Fankie.”

Frankie didn’t move. Was this a dream or real? Then he felt a hand shake his shoulder.

“Fankie.”

Real.

“What, Adam?” He didn’t open his eyes. It wasn’t unusual for Adam to wake him up at all hours of the night. Adam’s sleep schedule was anything but ordinary and he never realized that other people slept a more regular time and had to get up in the morning.

“Bad dream, Fankie.”

Figures. Frankie popped open an eye to see his brother looming over him, hair standing out like lightning had struck him. “Bout what, Adam?”

When Adam was upset, which was often lately, he didn't answer right away. He paced most of the time and might run his hands through his hair, which is what it looked like he had been doing. Probably didn't want to wake anyone, but couldn't wait for dawn. He might have only been pacing for two minutes but thought it was hours.

"Flowers," Adam replied, then he was silent.

"Wait, let me get this straight. You had a bad dream. About flowers?" The only thing worse than getting woken in the middle of the night was when it didn't even make sense.

"I don't know, Fankie." Adam furiously rubbed his hands together.

"OK, ok, settle, we'll figure it out."

He glanced at the clock to see it was 2:30. It was going to be a long night. Frankie rubbed his eyes to get the gunk out and sat up. "All right, tell me about it."

Adam talked for the next hour and Frankie attempted to interpret. When Adam was this upset, his thoughts shifted, and the conversation became hard to follow, but Frankie had learned through the years how to ask the right questions. Adam settled down as he talked.

"OK, wait, let me get this straight. What you are telling me, is that the dream you had was about flowers?"

"Round flowers," Adam said.

"Round flowers, whatever. And they disappeared? Poof."

"No, no, no," Adam said as he rubbed his hands together.

"Ok, settle, not poof. How?"

"I don't know, Fankie. Something, something, took the flowers."

"This doesn't sound so bad, something took the flowers..."

"Bad, Fankie, Bad."

Frankie watched his brother, who was obviously upset. But he had no clue what bad disappearing flowers meant. He looked at the time - almost 4 o'clock - and he had a history test in the morning.

"All, right, Adam, listen up. I need to think about the flowers, but I need it quiet. Can you go back to your room, be quiet, and let me think for a while?"

Adam nodded as he sprang from the bed and bolted to the door.

"Wait, Adam." Frankie held up the clock. "Don't come and ask me in five minutes if I have an answer. Wait until this number is at least a 7, got it?"

Adam nodded and left. Hopefully he would remember that and stay away so Frankie could sleep. Adam wasn't exactly friendly with time. To him, five minutes was the same as five hours. You needed to give him precise directions when it involved time. Which was something most of their foster parents had never learned and was part of the reason they usually got sent away again.

Frankie snuggled with his pillow. He could think about that later, when he woke up and after the history test.

As he drifted off, he heard Adam pacing in his own room and the sound of hands rubbing vigorously together reached his ears. He smiled and slept.

###

To be continued in Part 5 - After school