

# GREEN

“Well, the walls are pretty slippery, water trickling all along them. Ahh, this green light makes me feel so good. I should have brought someone with me. How stupid can I be? Pogo might be thirsty, I should have given her water before leaving. Bristles must be eating well in the sunshine. They never leave each other alone. I hope they don’t throw sticks at each other again. The plops and burble of the flowing water are the only things preventing me from panicking. I’ve heard much about that ‘screaming silence’ stuff and know how horrific it can be”, thought the gardener. He was in the town, fortunate enough to get hired by the owner of a magnificent mansion to look after her garden. The owner was an old lady in her late sixties, living with her only son and a daughter-in-law. Her grandson was a sailor, hence rarely got a chance to visit home.

He had been there for a month. People used to consider him crazy. Invariably jolly, talking to himself, arguing too and having an excessive obsession with plants, such that he used to treat them as his children, even calling them names. Crazy right? Yes, it was crazy that his craziness kept him aloof from all the deceit and deception around him. Ignorance is bliss sometimes. Does it not feel good to just imagine a life where you could be carefree, did what your heart desired and not give a damn about what others thought. The gardener lived the very life which many could only dream of, but, no one was able to comprehend it.

Behind the mansion was a large forest. The gardener used to venture inside it to fetch berries which he used to eat after the afternoon lunch. The forest had a lot of streams flowing. But one stream, in particular, intrigued him a lot. He often visibly noticed tiny but pretty green sparkles in the water. Initially, he considered them to be reflections of the lush greenery eloping him but upon further inspection, he found out that the sparkles were caused due to minuscule particles of green crystals suspended in the flowing water. The strange thing was that the stream emitted a faint green glow even after dusk. He and only he knew the location of the stream inside the deep forest

as he was the only one brave or rather stupid enough to venture inside the forest considered to be haunted by the townsfolk. The ones passing by the forest claimed to hear ghoulish, creaking sounds and a story had propagated within the townspeople that a ravenous and spiteful spirit had been sealed with the forest. But that was all nonsense, it was probably a trick of the villagers to keep him away from the lovely trees, the pretty flowers, the juicy berries and the ever-flowing streams with their sweet water. But nothing could stop the gardener from visiting his viridescent fellows.

He always wanted to follow the stream and reach its source and find where the green crystals came from but his old bones argued in opposition. But, one day, his curiosity dominated. He thought, "What if there is a big tree up there and it has these green stones instead of leaves or maybe someone up there, a gardener, just like me and knows about me and is releasing the crystals in the stream for me to follow and meet him? Or there might be plants yet to be discovered. I can bring them here. Pogo will bloom with happiness. Bristles surely won't mind sharing his apples with the new one. Manny would love to have some new friends. And Gaia; let's bees play with her flowers, she will befriend them too. All the others will like them as well. Yes, I will go tomorrow." He was resolved to find out the secret of the green glow.

He embarked the next day at dawn. He followed the stream for about three hours to find its source. The forest was full of every shade, tone, tint and hue of green an artist could create on his palette. From the green of the moss. To the green of the ivy leaves. From the green of the unripe berries to the green of the scum-laden ponds. All one could imagine. His knees were rebelling against him. In the end, he found the opening of a cave from where the stream was leaving. Inside, he could see a faint viridian glow wrapped by absolute darkness. Without giving it a second thought, he went inside. The walls of the cave were very slippery and all he could see and hear were the faint green glow and the constant sound of flowing cool water wetting his feet. He was about to slip when he held on to something. But when he regained his stability, he could find nothing around him that he

could have possibly held. But he did not have the time to waste on such trivial stuff for he had greater discoveries to make. Moving further he could see some mushrooms growing on the wall which emitted the same faint green glow. The sound of the tricking became sharper. He increased his pace and saw a halo of green light around him. He had entered some sort of chamber and all around him were glowing green rocks embedded in the walls with water trickling down from every crack and fissure in the walls, forming a shallow pond in the middle of the chamber from where the stream originated. When he picked up a small chunk of the glowing stone from the pond. It glowed even brighter. It had a specific symbol carved into its surface.

Suddenly, he heard the sound of bushes rubbing against each other. He turned to find a wall with a tiny crevice and the same glowing stone embedded in it. "There are no plants or trees in here, how could I hear sounds of bushes and leaves?" he thought. He bent down to look inside the crevice and surprisingly found a leaf at its opening, a type of which he had never seen before. He knew every plant of the forest. This was a new type of leaf. He heard splashing sounds in the pond behind him. He turned and what he saw was beyond belief.