

A Passing Friend

Storytelling Document
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Content

1. Story introduction	3
2. Common story	4
3. Heroes journey	4
4. Story	5
5. Conflict Indication	9

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The background of the page is a stylized illustration of a forest with green pine trees and a greyish-blue ground. In the bottom left corner, a hand is holding a scroll. The scroll is unrolled, revealing text. The title 'Story introduction' is centered at the top of the scroll. Below it are two paragraphs of text. The hand holding the scroll is a light blue color, and the scroll itself is a yellowish-brown color with a black outline.

Story introduction

The upcoming story of A Passing Friend has been written in a way where the player gets to create their own story. The story is constructed from the personal perspective of the player. Each player has a background or pet of their own. Here you dive a bit deeper into the start of a players journey and what they feel during this adventure. It shows what it feels like to wake up in a strange surroundings and describes what you might experience.

I chose to leave an open ending in the written story because this has still to be written and experienced by the player. To still describe the main story line of the game, I made an overview of the general experience throughout the game.

Common Storyline and heroes journey

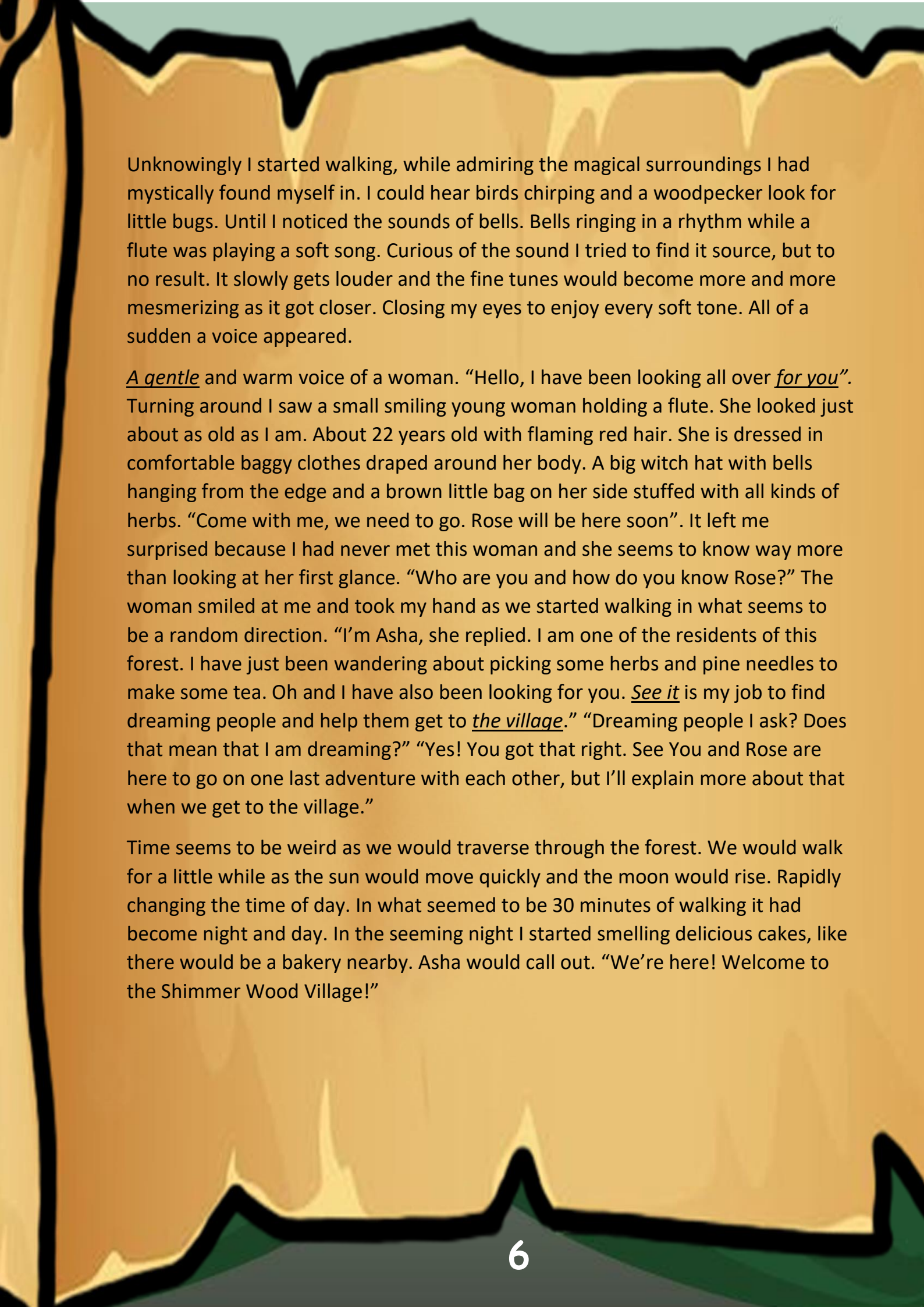
When animals grow old there is a place they'll go. A place where one last adventure with your friend is possible until you meet each other again in the afterlife. Somewhere deep in your dreams there is a small magical village, filled with witches and wonders. This is where your pet goes to find his way to the afterlife and you are able to go on one last adventure with them.

- The player wakes up in the Shimmer Woods like they just entered a dream. Here they meet Asha, one of the main NPCs who will explain the situation to them. Together they walk to the village and this is where the player has its first interaction with the game environment.
- They go to the shop/house of Asha where she introduces her to the ways of the village. Together they wait for the players pet to arrive. This is the moment where the player gets to customize their pet, like naming, animal and colour.
- Once this is achieved the player gets a list of items and memories that need to be found and a starting location to begin with their quest.
- From this point the players find out how the mechanics of the game work by looking at an assignment board with all the instructions. This includes the moving mechanism, interaction and the walking during the day and night. This board also shows the amount of memories and items that have been collected.
- Each quests leads them to several NPCs who will show them the beauty of life and death, making the player more aware of what is happening while they achieve their set out goals. Seeing this makes the player more aware of their progression and confronts them with the reality of having to soon let go of their friend.
- All items and memories have been collected and the player got to look back on their previous life together showing that all beautiful things come to an end but are never really over. They say their goodbyes to their friend and the pet goes through a portal to the afterlife.
- Asha the main NPC of the game approaches the player, telling them she is moved by the player and their pet's story. She asks the player to become a friend to those animals who had none when they passed away. Giving the player the opportunity to play again with other animals and unlocking new adventures.
- The whole cycle starts again and shows the player a different perspective of the in game world with different animals.

Story

My eyes are growing heavier and heavier each breath I take. I try to keep them open for as long as I can. I'm afraid that when I close them, so will the eyes of Rose, my 12 year old Stabyhoun. She lays there next to my bed heavy breathing. Something she often does right before she falls into a deep slumber only to start snoring like a whole forest being cut down. Only this time I noticed the signs of her getting older. Her hips would get stiff and the grey hair around her nose is beginning to become more noticeable. She would sleep for longer periods of time outside in the sun, curdled up into a little ball. The realisation of the inevitable fact that one day I might no longer be able to fall asleep next to her snoring or being able to scratch behind her floppy ears, brings tears to my eyes. I just can't seem to keep my eyes open as a single tear rolls down my cheek. Only to fall asleep when it reaches my pillow. I feel my body relax as I think of the fond memories that we made. Playing them over and over in my head. Slowly these memories fade into nothing as everything starts to become black. The only thing really noticeable in the background is the sound of Rose's snoring. After a while I lose consciousness as I fall deeper into my sleep.

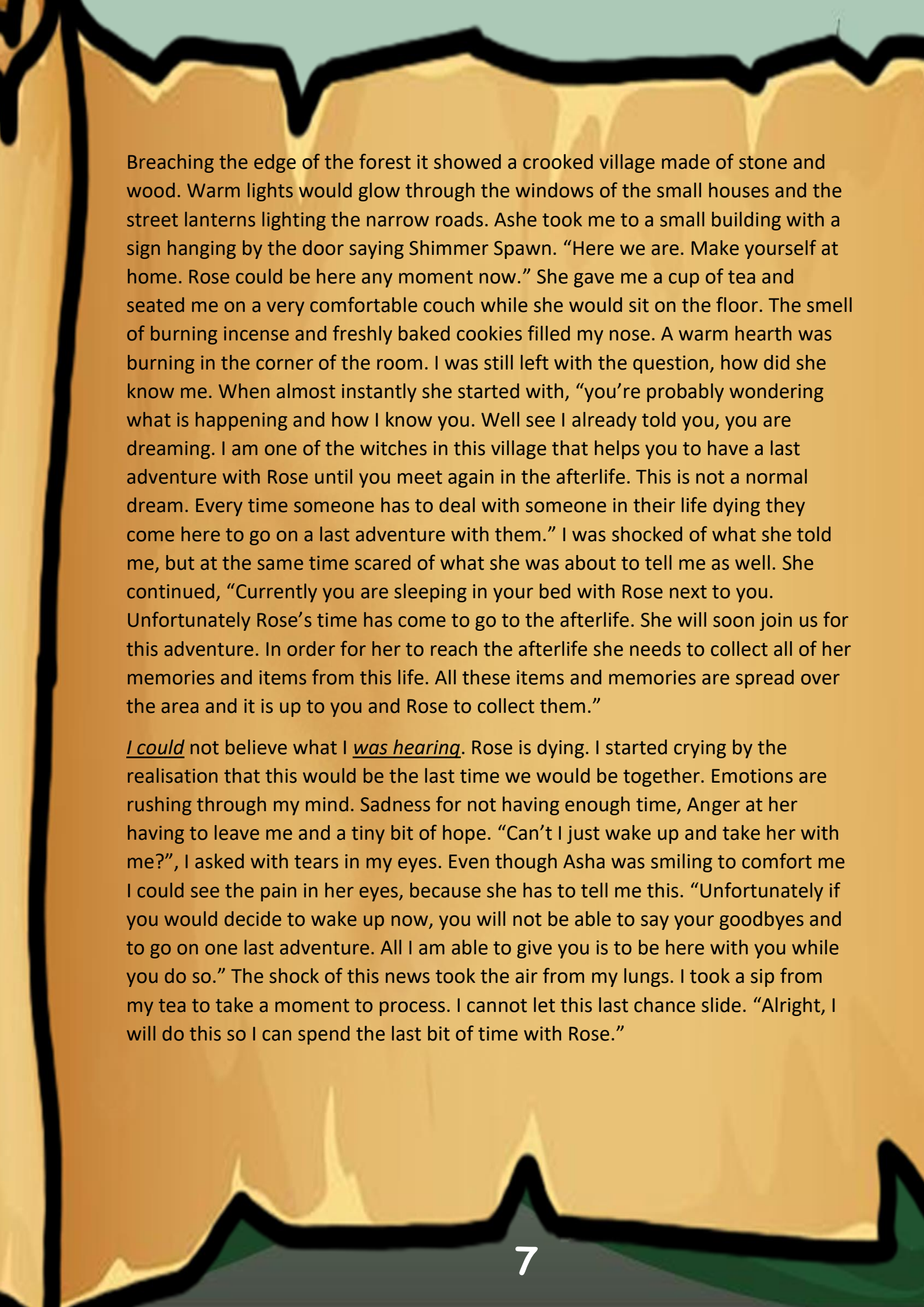
After what feels like seconds, maybe even hours or years, I wake up as a drop of water lands on my forehead. I notice I am laying down on something other than my room. The ground is wet and does not have the same warm and cosy feeling as my bed. The smell of pine trees and dirt fills my nostrils as my hands try to grasp for my pillow, but end up grabbing into the forest flooring. Getting up is not hard even though I was so tired before. All of a sudden I am no longer tired and seem to have regained all my energy like some kind of magic spell had been cast. Looking around the area it seemed I had ended up somewhere I had never been before. Even though this would have normally had made me scared and concerned, I felt calm. I couldn't shake the sense of being where I am supposed to be. I could see tall pine trees, standing all around. Each one of them looking like they are so tall that they would pierce beyond the sky.



Unknowingly I started walking, while admiring the magical surroundings I had mystically found myself in. I could hear birds chirping and a woodpecker look for little bugs. Until I noticed the sounds of bells. Bells ringing in a rhythm while a flute was playing a soft song. Curious of the sound I tried to find its source, but to no result. It slowly gets louder and the fine tunes would become more and more mesmerizing as it got closer. Closing my eyes to enjoy every soft tone. All of a sudden a voice appeared.

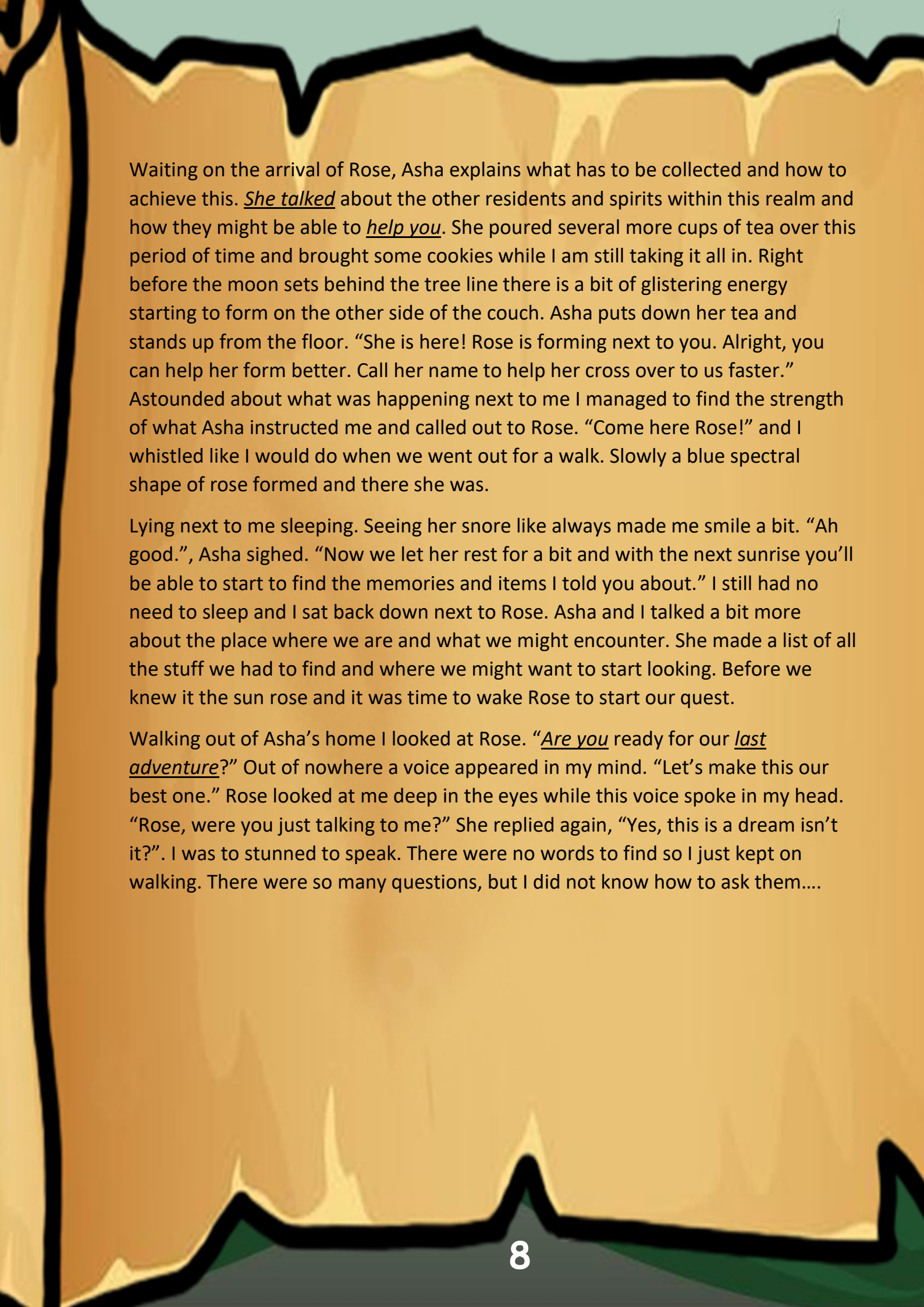
A gentle and warm voice of a woman. “Hello, I have been looking all over for you”. Turning around I saw a small smiling young woman holding a flute. She looked just about as old as I am. About 22 years old with flaming red hair. She is dressed in comfortable baggy clothes draped around her body. A big witch hat with bells hanging from the edge and a brown little bag on her side stuffed with all kinds of herbs. “Come with me, we need to go. Rose will be here soon”. It left me surprised because I had never met this woman and she seems to know way more than looking at her first glance. “Who are you and how do you know Rose?” The woman smiled at me and took my hand as we started walking in what seems to be a random direction. “I’m Asha, she replied. I am one of the residents of this forest. I have just been wandering about picking some herbs and pine needles to make some tea. Oh and I have also been looking for you. See it is my job to find dreaming people and help them get to the village.” “Dreaming people I ask? Does that mean that I am dreaming?” “Yes! You got that right. See you and Rose are here to go on one last adventure with each other, but I’ll explain more about that when we get to the village.”

Time seems to be weird as we would traverse through the forest. We would walk for a little while as the sun would move quickly and the moon would rise. Rapidly changing the time of day. In what seemed to be 30 minutes of walking it had become night and day. In the seeming night I started smelling delicious cakes, like there would be a bakery nearby. Asha would call out. “We’re here! Welcome to the Shimmer Wood Village!”



Breaching the edge of the forest it showed a crooked village made of stone and wood. Warm lights would glow through the windows of the small houses and the street lanterns lighting the narrow roads. Ashe took me to a small building with a sign hanging by the door saying Shimmer Spawn. "Here we are. Make yourself at home. Rose could be here any moment now." She gave me a cup of tea and seated me on a very comfortable couch while she would sit on the floor. The smell of burning incense and freshly baked cookies filled my nose. A warm hearth was burning in the corner of the room. I was still left with the question, how did she know me. When almost instantly she started with, "you're probably wondering what is happening and how I know you. Well see I already told you, you are dreaming. I am one of the witches in this village that helps you to have a last adventure with Rose until you meet again in the afterlife. This is not a normal dream. Every time someone has to deal with someone in their life dying they come here to go on a last adventure with them." I was shocked of what she told me, but at the same time scared of what she was about to tell me as well. She continued, "Currently you are sleeping in your bed with Rose next to you. Unfortunately Rose's time has come to go to the afterlife. She will soon join us for this adventure. In order for her to reach the afterlife she needs to collect all of her memories and items from this life. All these items and memories are spread over the area and it is up to you and Rose to collect them."

I could not believe what I *was hearing*. Rose is dying. I started crying by the realisation that this would be the last time we would be together. Emotions are rushing through my mind. Sadness for not having enough time, Anger at her having to leave me and a tiny bit of hope. "Can't I just wake up and take her with me?", I asked with tears in my eyes. Even though Asha was smiling to comfort me I could see the pain in her eyes, because she has to tell me this. "Unfortunately if you would decide to wake up now, you will not be able to say your goodbyes and to go on one last adventure. All I am able to give you is to be here with you while you do so." The shock of this news took the air from my lungs. I took a sip from my tea to take a moment to process. I cannot let this last chance slide. "Alright, I will do this so I can spend the last bit of time with Rose."



Waiting on the arrival of Rose, Asha explains what has to be collected and how to achieve this. She talked about the other residents and spirits within this realm and how they might be able to help you. She poured several more cups of tea over this period of time and brought some cookies while I am still taking it all in. Right before the moon sets behind the tree line there is a bit of glistening energy starting to form on the other side of the couch. Asha puts down her tea and stands up from the floor. "She is here! Rose is forming next to you. Alright, you can help her form better. Call her name to help her cross over to us faster." Astounded about what was happening next to me I managed to find the strength of what Asha instructed me and called out to Rose. "Come here Rose!" and I whistled like I would do when we went out for a walk. Slowly a blue spectral shape of rose formed and there she was.

Lying next to me sleeping. Seeing her snore like always made me smile a bit. "Ah good.", Asha sighed. "Now we let her rest for a bit and with the next sunrise you'll be able to start to find the memories and items I told you about." I still had no need to sleep and I sat back down next to Rose. Asha and I talked a bit more about the place where we are and what we might encounter. She made a list of all the stuff we had to find and where we might want to start looking. Before we knew it the sun rose and it was time to wake Rose to start our quest.

Walking out of Asha's home I looked at Rose. "Are you ready for our last adventure?" Out of nowhere a voice appeared in my mind. "Let's make this our best one." Rose looked at me deep in the eyes while this voice spoke in my head. "Rose, were you just talking to me?" She replied again, "Yes, this is a dream isn't it?". I was too stunned to speak. There were no words to find so I just kept on walking. There were so many questions, but I did not know how to ask them....

Adventure Storyline

1. The highest point

Setting out with your companion you are on the look out for clues. You learned from Asha how to stick to the shadows and now is the moment to put this knowledge to practice. Gazing across the village horizon from where you stand, a giant tree, towering high above anything else in the village catches your eye. This would be a great place to oversee the area and find out where the item might be located based on your instruction. Jumping from shadow to shadow together with your companion you gradually start nearing the tree.

2. Finding items

Standing at the foot of the tree you look up at the climb that is ahead of you. It will not be an easy task to stay in the shadow while climbing to the highest possible point. Reaching the top of the tree all the while sticking to the shadow. You look in front of you and are able to see almost the whole village. You take note of your surroundings during the day and are ready to find the missing items and memories. One after another you start to locate and find the missing items. You talk to the local residents and spirits, who are helping you make sense of the vague clues you received from others.

3. Step through to the afterlife

All the items have been collected and you start to realize that it is almost time to say goodbye to your friend. Asha stands there with you at the altar, making preparations to open the portal to the afterlife. All items are placed in a specific locations. As Asha draws her wand she asks you to help her open the portal by repeating the motions she is making. As you do so a bright shimmering light starts to appear, slowly turning into a big swirling portal. You are ready to say goodbye, but Asha tells you, you need to traverse through the portal, for your journey has not come to an end just yet.

4. The final goodbye

You stepped through the portal as a warm energy fills your body. On the other side a magical place shows itself to you and you immediately notice that all that you have learned with your friend will now be tested. One last time you will have to find your way by the on lying obstacles. It is hard and some times seemingly impossible as you have to start over, but in the end you just make it to a giant white radiating wall. The veil to the afterlife. Looking at your friend a tear start to form in the corner of your eye. The moment that you have been dreading has finally arrived. Time to say goodbye.

5. Return to the village

After your goodbyes you are at peace with what has happened. You return to the village where Asha is waiting for you. She comforts you, talking about some beautiful moments you shared. Seeing how well you helped your companion pass and how much pain still remains, Asha ask you a question. She asks you to come back the next time you fall asleep. Come back to the village and help the pets and animals who do not have someone to help them find their lost memories, traverse to the afterlife. To be the guide and friend they deserve at their final moment.

Conflict Indication

This section can be used to indicate where the conflict happens within the story. All the other conflicts can be described in the "Heroes journey".

I. Ordinary World

Within the dream the player is confronted with the reality that this is indeed a dream and something life changing will happen in the waking world.

Point of reference Page: 6 Sentence: "See it ... the village"

II. Call to Adventure

You seem to appear in a magical place. One that you have never been before. You are greeted by one of the people from this place explaining what it is and how you got here. They tell you, you will get to go on one last adventure with your best friend before they have to go to the afterlife.

Point of reference Page: 6 Sentence: "A gentle ... for you."

III. Refusal of the Call

For some this might be hard to accept, but after hearing what this person told you and them offering you to go to your best friend. The player accepts to go with on one last adventure.

Point of reference Page: 7 Sentence: "I could ... was hearing"

IV. Meeting the Mentor

All the people seem to be experienced in helping animals and people on their last adventure. Here they are able to process what is happening and why it is one of the most beautiful things there is.

Point of reference Page: 6 Sentence: "A gentle ... for you."

8 "She talked ... help you"

V. Crossing the Threshold

Knowing what the player and their pet have to do they set out to find the lost items and memories.

Point of reference Page: 8 Sentence: "Are you ... last adventure"