

# THE ENCHANTED CAVE

Little Ember flapped her tiny wings as she darted between the ancient stone pillars of the dragon sanctuary. The game of hide-and-seek with her siblings had taken an exciting turn—she had found the perfect hiding spot.

She skidded to a stop before a dark cave, its entrance framed by strange glowing runes that pulsed like fireflies. Curiosity sparked in her golden eyes. With a final glance over her shoulder, she stepped inside.

The air inside the cave was thick with magic. The glow of the runes illuminated the walls, casting dancing shadows. Ember shivered, not from fear but from the feeling that she wasn't alone.

Then, the cave trembled.

A deep, echoing voice rumbled from the depths. "Who dares enter my domain?"

Ember yelped and scrambled backward as a spectral figure emerged from the darkness—a towering, translucent dragon with shimmering blue scales that flickered like starlight.

"I—I didn't mean to intrude," Ember stammered, her wings drooping.

The spirit's glowing eyes studied her. "You are young, yet you have found your way to the Cave of Wisdom. Very well, hatchling. I shall grant you a challenge. Solve three riddles, and the cave's greatest secret will be revealed to you."

Ember gulped, but her adventurous heart leaped at the chance. “I accept!”

The spirit’s voice deepened. “First riddle. I can be cracked, made, told, and played. What am I?”

Ember scrunched her snout, deep in thought. She remembered her siblings’ laughter when they played pranks. “A joke!” she said.

The spirit nodded approvingly. “Correct.”

The runes along the walls glowed brighter.

“Second riddle,” the spirit continued. “The more you take, the more you leave behind. What am I?”

Ember’s tail flicked as she pondered. Then she thought of her own footprints in the soft cave dust. “Footsteps!” she chirped.

The spirit smiled, its ghostly wings stirring the air. “You are clever, little one.”

A soft hum filled the cave as the walls shimmered like a pool of moonlight.

“For the final riddle,” the spirit said, its voice now softer, “I am not alive, but I grow. I do not have lungs, but I need air. I do not have a mouth, yet water kills me. What am I?”

Ember blinked. She thought of the flickering torches that lined the sanctuary, of the fire that lived inside her own tiny belly. A slow smile spread across her face.

“Fire,” she whispered.

The cave pulsed with golden light. The spirit let out a low chuckle. “Indeed. You have proven yourself wise beyond your years.”

Before Ember could ask what the great secret was, the cave’s light gathered into a single, glowing sphere. It floated toward her, warm and alive, sinking gently into her chest.

A rush of knowledge filled her mind—not just of riddles, but of herself. She understood now: true power wasn’t in strength alone, but in wisdom.

When she emerged from the cave, her siblings found her glowing, her eyes bright with newfound understanding.

She had won the game of hide-and-seek—but more than that, she had discovered something far greater.

Wisdom, after all, was the greatest treasure of all.