

# Lylac's Adventure

## Chapter 1

### “Jezebel”

At the very center of a dense and tangled forest, known as the Everwoods, was the kingdom of Woodhall. Woodhall was ruled by a rich king. Not only was he rich, but he was fair. His people loved him very much.

One day, Princess Lylac went for a walk in the castle garden. Now, this was no ordinary garden. This one was big and full of flowers and roses and a thousand other wonderful things. It even had rows and rows of corn in which she would play in during the growing season.

In the far corner of the garden, up over some rolling hills, there was a gently flowing stream of pure water that had somehow snuck its way into the garden. Lylac had never gone that far into the thickness of the garden.

Along the banks of the little stream grew many apple trees. While playing, she always picked an apple to eat every time she got hungry. And when she was thirsty, the stream was pure and cold.

One day, Lylac was picking a juicy red apple from one of the trees when she saw the face of a pure white horse in the waters reflection. The most amazing thing about this horse is that it had a horn on its head. Startled, Lylac backed away, suddenly afraid.

With a twinkle in her eyes, the white horned horse laughed with joy and pranced a bit.

“Oh, don't be afraid. I am not a monster, I am a Unicorn,” she said. “I won't hurt you.” Lylac stopped and wondered how such a creature could actually talk!

“Who are you?” the princess asked, still a bit nervous.

“I am Jezebel. What's your name?”

“My name is Lylac, Princess Lylac, and I live there,” she pointed, “in that castle.” The Unicorn snorted, almost as if it were laughing.

“I know where you live. I've been watching you now and then since you first crawled out here. You know, when your Momma had to come get you before you drank up all the water in this stream?” Lylac looked confused.

“You have?”

“Sure,” Jezebel replied as she stomped one hoof.” Lylac was surprised, for she was seven years old, and had come here many times to eat the apples and smell the flowers. She opened her mouth to say something to the Unicorn, but found she was speechless.

Jezebel reared up and shook her head, laughing merrily. Lylac instantly laughed with Jezebel, suddenly wondering why she had a horn stuck to her head.

“Why do you have a horn stuck in your head?” Jezebel's eyes opened wide at such a question.

“Do you want to touch it? I don't mind” Lylac looked back at the

castle, hesitating for only a moment, before giving in.

“Yes,” she whispered in awe as the Unicorn slowly moved toward her. Lylac shyly moved toward Jezebel, who was crossing the stream, making its way to her. When they came together, Jezebel timidly placed a hand on Jezebel's nose and stroked it gently. She then moved her hand up past its nose until her fingers delicately touched the horn.

“Why do you have a horn?” Softly, the Unicorn chuckled.

“Why do you have two legs instead of four?”

“Because that’s the way I was made, silly” Then Lylac understood what Jezebel meant. She was born with the horn in the middle of her head.

“Wow, I never met a real Unicorn before.” Jezebel nuzzled Lylac's hand, and softly snorted.

“Well, you are the first Human I've ever met. I’ve seen you, and I’ve watched you, but never had the courage to come out and talk to you. Can we please be friends?” Lylac instantly nodded and smiled.

“Yes, we can play in the garden together.” Backing up, Jezebel reared up and whinnied with delight as Lylac jumped up and down with her arms in the air. When the Unicorn came down, Lylac threw her arms around its neck, giving her new friend a huge hug.

Lylac was delighted that she had made a new friend, and it was a Unicorn!

## Chapter 2

### “Through the Wall”

The next morning Lylac got out of bed, excited about her new friend. Quickly, she got dressed, ran down to the kitchen and ate breakfast. As she ate, Lylac was very distracted about Jezebel, who was probably waiting under the apple tree where she met her yesterday.

Lylac had worn her favorite traveling shoes because she wanted to go on an adventure with the Unicorn. After finishing breakfast, she ran out the back door, across the drawbridge and into the garden. She had never ran so fast in all her life!

Out of breath, Lylac looked about the garden, hoping she had not missed her new friend. Nope, there she was, eating apples in the shade.

“Hi Jezebel,” Lylac called out happily, “how are you today?” Jezebel snorted and looked up at Lylac, a playful gleam in her eyes.

“Good, thank you. I love apples! Do you think we could take some with us?” Lylac laughed and pointed to her dress.

“Yep! We can put a few apples in the pockets of my traveling dress, see? I have four pockets!” Lylac pointed at her dress to prove she wasn’t just telling a tall tale, then began picking and stuffing apples into them until she could hold no more.

“There, that makes twelve apples we can eat. I don’t think I could eat this many in two days, but you can help.” Jezebel snorted with delight and motioned for Lylac to follow. Carefully the two picked their way to the stone wall at the very back of the garden where Lylac had

never gone before. Already this was an adventure!

See these hanging vines on the wall here, Lylac? Can you see anything special?" Searching through the green leaves and long stems, Lylac was surprised to see a large crack in the wall. In fact the opening was so big, Jezebel could slip in and out with ease.

"I never saw this before," Lylac said, suddenly curious and a little afraid.

"You can't tell until you move this massive cluster of vines to the side. It's so thick, it covers it up all the way, hiding it from everyone! Well, not from me - I found it." They both laughed for a while, and then pulled the cluster of creeping vines and leafage apart at the center just enough to get through the large opening in the wall. It wasn't easy work, but with a Unicorn's help, Lylac was soon on the other side of the castle garden wall.

Lylac had never been outside the castle before, so this was new and kind of scary for her. But the excitement of being on an adventure quickly made Lylac forget her fear as she looked both ways down a path she had never see before.

Before leaving on their adventure, they each ate one red juicy apple, still leaving ten left. Once they were finished, Lylac tossed her apple core back over the wall and laughed, but Jezebel ate her core. Lylac sighed and hugged Jezebel.

"Shall we start our adventure?" Lylac said, pointing. Without a word, Jezebel snorted and lead the way.

The path was old and covered with grass and few vines here and there, but not enough to make it more than fun to travel. This path led along the backside of a mountain that loomed up beside the castle she had grown up in.

Lylac had always seen the mountain, but not close up like this. It was never used by any travelers or any of the King's men anymore. As they walked, they found themselves truly alone, well except for each other, which was good. Lylac didn't like the deeper shadows to either side of the long since deserted pathway.

And so, Lylac and Jezebel wandered down the path, happily enjoying each other's company. Little did Lylac know, she was beginning a journey into danger. And had she known what lay ahead, she would have turned and gone straight back into the safety and protection of the castle garden. But, she simply did not know what adventures she and her new friend were about to begin, and so on they traveled.

## Chapter 3

### “The Old Road”

Jezebel and Lylac walked up the old road, talking quietly about all the old legends. Lylac loved to hear these stories very much, and the Unicorn was happy to tell her many tales, some of which made Lylac shiver with excitement.

After a long while, Jezebel quieted, pointing at yet another mountain beyond with her horn.

“That mountain has clouds coming out the top,” Jezebel said, her voice quieting to a hush.

“Let's go explore it,” Lylac urged, suddenly very excited to see it close up. Jezebel reared up high and snorted.

“Okay, but before we get there, can we have lunch?” Jezebel shook her mane and stomped as Lylac pulled two apples from her dress. She handed one to the Unicorn, and then began eating hers, carefully watching for worms with every bite. Sometimes, if she wasn't careful, she would find only half a worm in her apple, and that was disgusting. Still, worms in the apples from the castle garden were very rare.

Lylac and Jezebel ate one apple each. Jezebel ate the core, again, but Lylac did not.

“Lylac, can I have your apple core?”

“Sure,” Lylac said, scrunching her face. “I never eat the apple core.” Jezebel snorted as Lylac tossed it to her. Jezebel caught it in her mouth.

“I do,” she said, crunching it up and quickly swallowing. “It's the best part!” she said, still savoring the taste in her mouth. “Well, are you

ready?" Lylac nodded.

"Yep" Whinnying, Jezebel lowered herself a bit.

"Jump on. I'll run us to the mountain. It's not far if we run, and it will save you from getting sore feet." Lylac was kind of tired, and so she agreed. Getting up on Jezebel's back wasn't too hard, and when Lylac started out, she only walked. Lylac was confused.

"Didn't you say you were going to run?" With a snort, Jezebel turned her head.

"First, I'm going to break you in," she stated, then laughed, as if something was funny. Seeing Lylac's look of confusing, Jezebel laughed even the more. "It's usually humans that break in horses. Now, I'm breaking you in, get it?" Lylac shook her head and smiled.

"Yeah, yeah, I get it." Jezebel continued.

"At first, I'll walk. As soon as you get used to riding while I walk, I'll go faster. You could fall off if I galloped. I'm really fast!" Seeing Jezebel's point, she began straightening out the Unicorn's mane.

"I didn't think of that. Thank you."

"You're welcome. Tell me when you feel like you can go a little faster, and I'll pick up the pace. Don't rush. We have all the time in the world." Lylac leaned over and hugged Jezebel tight, and then sat up.

"I'm ready" With that, they began walking until Lylac felt comfortable. She was happy to have such a thoughtful friend.

"Okay, I'm ready to go a little faster." Jezebel snorted and began to slowly trot down the old road. Soon, Lylac was ready to go faster, and told Jezebel so.

Repeating this a number of times, Lylac soon found the trees and

undergrowth speeding by as Jezebel galloped toward the mountain that endlessly puffed out clouds from its top.

Finally they reached the side of the mountain.

“We are here, Lylac. Look over there, a cave. Shall we explore it?” Lylac saw the cave as well, and nodded. Sliding off the Unicorn, she felt a little bit sore and stiff in the legs.

“Sure. Let's go,” Lylac groaned, still walking off the stiffness. “Let's go solve this mystery.” Jezebel reared up and fell into step beside Lylac, who tenderly limped to the mouth of a cave that looked as though it wanted to eat her. Of course, she knew better. I mean, it was only a cave.

## Chapter 4

### “Ember”

As they entered into the cave, they found it was no ordinary cave at all. Much to their alarm, they found themselves staring at a stream of lava! Afraid to cross it, Lylac and Jezebel waited, looking around the area to see if there was any other way to get over it. The problem was, there was no way into the tunnel beyond the cave except to jump the red-hot lava! As they looked at each other, Lylac grinned nervously, seeing a determined look in Jezebel's eyes.

“You are not thinking what I think you are thinking, are you?” Lylac said, feeling rather distressed.

“Uh huh,” replied Jezebel, who backed up three steps and got ready to run. But, as Jezebel prepared to run, she saw something up ahead in the tunnel. Turning sideways, she pranced a bit, squinting ahead.

“What is that?” Jezebel asked Lylac. Both peered ahead, squinting their eyes as hard as they could.

“Look, Lylac, there is a flame, see? And its moving!” Lylac's vision was not as good as Jezebel's, but as she looked, she did see a flame, dancing this way and that, coming closer and closer and closer.

“I think its moving!” Lylac said, looking to Jezebel, who snorted and reared up.

“I think you are right! No, now its going away. Whatever it is, it's fast, and I know fast.” The two decided to jump over the stream of lava,

seeming it wasn't too far to the other side. But, if they made a mistake, it could go really bad.

“Get on my back, Lylac. I’ll get us over the lava safe.” Without arguing, Lylac climbed up on Jezebel’s back and grabbed on to her mane. Holding on as tight as she could, she closed her eyes tight.

“I’m ready!” she yelled.

“Okay, here we go!” Jezebel surged forward, careful not to let Lylac fall as she ran forward toward the stream of fiery, flowing rock. Over she jumped, laughing at Lylac as she soared through the air. Landing on the other side, the Unicorn stopped.

“You can open your eyes now, scaredy’ cat.” Lylac slowly cracked her eyes open and looked around.

“Wow, you can really jump!” Jezebel sneezed once, then nodded.

“Excuse me. Yep, cause my horn has magic in it. I used it to get us over, but it makes me tired and hungry when I use the magic in it.” Jezebel lowered down so Lylac could slide off without any trouble. Once down, Lylac gave her an apple, then another, leaving her with six remaining.

“We still have enough food, but I’m thirsty and,” she pointed at the lava stream, “we can’t drink from that.” Jezebel gave her a funny look.

“Why would you even say that; that’s lava!” Lylac gave Jezebel a sheepish grin.

“I was just trying to be funny.” The Unicorn laughed and fixed Lylac’s hair with the tip of her horn.

“You got me on that one. Well, we did make it across easily enough, but now I don’t feel so very brave. How-a-bout you?” Lylac grinned and shook her head.

“Well, I feel a little brave, since I’m with you.” Jezebel seemed happy to hear Lylac say such a thing.

“Thank you, Lylac. That was nice of you to say. You know, it seems we both feel the same way now. In the beginning, it was easy to begin this adventure. Now it has become more serious, and it’s getting kinda hot.” Seeing Lylac's reluctance to go first, Jezebel snorted, defying her own fears.

“I'll lead us. Follow me.” As they carefully made their way down the tunnel, that flame appeared up ahead again. An echoing snort sounded up the tunnel, causing Lylac and Jezebel to jump. With eyes as big as the apples she carried in her dress, Jezebel looked at Lylac.

“I've heard of these creatures. They are legends, and not all good ones. In fact, many of them end in a bad way for people like me, and Unicorns like you. Maybe we should leave.” Looking up the tunnel, Jezebel lowered her horn, but Lylac notice it was shaking. Jezebel was scared!

“Okay, let me get on your back and you can take us back out,” Lylac whispered.

“Too late!” Jezebel cried out. “Look out, duck!” Lylac looked up just in time to see a flame shooting straight toward them. As they both ducked, Lylac raised her arms to protect her from the dragon that would

soon come down on her. Why had she come here? She would never see her mother and father again! What had she been thinking? It was much too late to run home now!

The fiery dragon flew just above the ground, barely skimming the surface of the volcanic rock just beneath it. But it did not burn them to ashes. To Lylac's surprise, it stopped in front of them. Neither dared to look up. Lylac feared that if she looked into the dragon's eyes, it would snatch her up and swallow her whole!

“Please forgive us for trespassing into your home! We meant no harm! I don't want to be a dragon's meal!” Cried out Jezebel. They both heard the dragon giggle, like a girl about Lylac's age.

“Dragon? All but one of the dragons are to the south, a long, long journey from here. I am no dragon, but thank you for the compliment.” Amazed that they were both not eaten, they looked up and saw the most beautiful Unicorn. Its mane was like flowing fire and its hooves burned the ground. As they stared at it, it curiously watched them in return. When they looked up, it whinnied in delight and reared up. Coming down with a heavy thud, laughing.

“Hi, my name is Ember. I haven't seen you two before. What's your names? Lylac was mesmerized by Ember's beautiful dark eyes, which, at the center of each of each was a small flame.

“Hello,” Lylac said, trying to calm down. My name is Lylac, and this is Jezebel. We thought you were a dragon. Ember snorted.

“I wish. But I am a Unicorn, just like you” She pointed her horn at

Jezebel. "You and I are cousins!" Jezebel laughed nervously.

"We are alike, except you are on fire, and I am not." Ember laughed.

"Yep. That's why I don't come to near. I don't want to hurt you. You both are very brave to enter this mountain. It's a volcano. By the way, why are you here?" Lylac pointed to the ceiling of the cave.

"We wanted to learn how the mountain makes those clouds." Ember giggled.

"You don't want to see that. It's much too dangerous for you both. They're not clouds, but smoke and ash. Like a campfire, this mountain burns, and the smoke and ash rises, flowing out of the top. If you go into the heart of the volcano, the heat would make you weak, and you would never have the strength to escape. It would not be good. The volcano isn't making clouds. Now you know." Jezebel snorted.

"Thank you for the warning. I'm glad to meet you, cousin!" Lylac nodded and smiled, pulling out an apple.

"Do you eat these?" Ember nodded, suddenly eager and licked her lips.

"If I eat it fast, it won't burn up. Please, can I have one?"

"Sure!" Lylac tossed the apple to Ember. The flaming Unicorn caught it with her mouth and chewed quickly and swallowed. A steam billowed from Ember's mouth and nostrils, making Jezebel laugh. Now Lylac only had five apples left.

"Oh, that was so good. Thank you! I don't get the chance to eat

apples very often. Oh, but when I do . . .”

The three laughed.

## Chapter 5

### “Bandits Today”

Lylac and Jezebel left Ember's volcanic home with the promise to return.

“It was nice to meet you both”, Ember stated as she reared up and snorted flames.

“It was nice to meet you too”, both Lylac and Jezebel said at the same time, then laughed. Ember walked them both to the entrance, where they first came in. Again, Ember let Lylac get on her back. Jezebel carefully jumped back over the lava stream and let Lylac down.

As they left the volcano, Lylac looked back one last time and waved, but Ember had vanished back into the smoldering mountain. She sighed, happy to have met such a fascinating creature.

Jezebel nudged Lylac, and Lylac put her hand on Jezebel's beautiful mane as the two began walking back the way they had come. On the way home, Lylac began to feel tired and hungry. She pulled out three apples; one for her and two for Jezebel. Now, only two apples remained. They both ate until they were full. As they traveled the road, the sun was directly over them, and felt very hot. So they stopped at a nearby stream to drink.

While they were relaxing in the shade, they suddenly heard men talking; grown up men! At first, their voices were far away, but steadily grew louder and louder. They were getting closer! Their gruff voices filled Lylac with fear. These were men who lived in the wild and had no

law. They were bandits!

“Lylac, can you be brave and trust me right now? I need a favor from you.” Lylac nodded slowly at the Unicorn.

“Yes, I trust you. We are friends,” she said, trying her best to be brave. The talking grew louder and louder. Lylac thought they would appear out of the trees at any moment. She could even hear it when they walked

“Good. Now, reach up and grab my horn, and don’t let go.” Reaching up, Lylac took hold of Jezebel’s horn, just as three large ruffians walked out onto the path.

“I swear I just heard a little girl talking!” one of the Bandits grumped. The other two searched about the area. As they did, Lylac saw one man look right at her. But he did not see her!

“Ah, Bron, you a hearin’ things!”

“No, really, I heard a little girl, so get off me back!” The others shrugged. Just then, one of Lylac’s apples dropped to the ground, then the other! There was a hole in her pocket! She looked up at the Bandits expecting to be discovered, but the three were making their way back into the forest, calling for the others to make a camp. After a long while, Jezebel looked at Lylac and giggled.

“You can let go of my horn now. They are gone.”

“Oh, sorry,” Lylac said. “Hey, how did you do that?” Jezebel looked at the apples on the ground and licked her lips, making Lylac grin from ear to ear.

“I get one, you get one. Then we have to get back. If my mother finds me gone, she will tell my father, and then I’ll be in it deep.” The Unicorn crunch and munched, until the apple was gone.

“In it deep? What’s that mean?”

“It means he’ll call out the guards to find me. Then I won’t be able to go with you anymore. He will fix the wall.” Lylac shook her head.

“Well, get on my back and I’ll take you home right now.”

“And we can go again tomorrow?” Lylac asked.

“Yep. I’m going to keep an eye on these Bandits . . . and two ears as well.” Lylac rolled her eyes dramatically, then pulled her self up onto Jezebel’s back.

“Don’t you sleep?” The question made Lylac snicker, but only quiet.

“Silly, Unicorns don’t sleep.” Lylac grabbed onto the Unicorn’s mane as she began walking slowly so they made very little noise. After a while, Jezebel began to move faster, then faster, then even faster!

“You okay?” the Unicorn shouted.

“Yes, yes and yes,” Lylac yelled. “I’m getting good at this! Woohooooooooo!” In no time at all, they both stood just inside the garden wall. Quickly, they covered it over.

They played for a while, drinking from the stream now and then, and eating apples. When the sun began to go down over the wall, Lylac’s mother called for her.

“See you tomorrow,” Jezebel said.

“I hope so,” Lylac replied, then hugged her very own Unicorn friend goodbye and goodnight. “Be careful of those Bandits.” The Unicorn laughed and rolled her eyes, though Lylac did not see it.

“I will, I promise. Tomorrow will be the beginning of another adventure. Breaking away, Lylac ran back through the garden, waving goodbye to Jezebel. Looking back she saw the Unicorn rearing up.

Lylac went to sleep that night with a grin she could not remove.

## Chapter 6

### “Bandit Talk”

The next morning found Lylac out happily playing by the stream. It was not the stream she was actually interested in, but a Unicorn named Jezebel.

“Jezebel, where are you?” she called, but not too loud. She did not want anyone else hearing. It might create suspicion, and she did not want her friend to be discovered. If that happened, she might not be able to play with her anymore.

Lylac had not been playing for long when she heard the vines by the back wall behind to rustle. Quickly, she hid behind the largest tree she could find and waited. When Jezebel came through, she was going to jump out and give her a huge surprise!

Once the hanging vines and leaves were pulled apart, she saw her friend come through and shake the leaves and dust off her entire body. Placing a hand over her mouth, Lylac stopped herself from laughing and waited for the perfect opportunity to scare the Unicorn.

“Lylac, Lylac are you here? I need to talk to you. Lylac?” The serious tone of Jezebel’s voice made Lylac give up on the thought of scaring her. Stepping out from behind the tree, Lylac picked two apples.

“What’s the matter?” she said, throwing Jezebel one. Catching the apple, Jezebel dropped it.

“Lylac, remember those bandits we saw yesterday? I overheard them talking about sneaking in and robbing the castle!” Lylac’s eyes

widened as she swallowed.

“What are we going to do?” As they both thought about it, they finished eating. Then, both continued to think in silence. Lylac was the first to speak.

“If I tell my mother and father, they will fix the wall. Then I might not see you again.” The Unicorn snorted softly.

“Then we need to deal with these Bushranger all by ourselves. We just need a plan.” Lylac looked at how brave Jezebel was being. Jezebel laughed and stood. “I have a bit of magic that could send them running, if we can get lucky enough. What do you say, you up to visiting a Dragon?” Lylac instantly nodded, then shook her head.

“A Dragon! We’ll be eaten, stomped, toasted, and every other terrible thing that can possibly happen!” Jezebel snorted and stomped.

“Not all dragons are bad, Lylac.” Seeing that Jezebel had just made a big joke, she shrugged.

“Sure, let’s go see a Dragon. But I’ll have to stay in the castle until dark. Then, when the moon rises over the back wall, I’ll sneak out. I hope you know what you are doing, Jezebel.” The Unicorn shook its head, stood and walked back to the opening in the wall. Lylac walked with her, all in wonder about their plans for tonight.

Before leaving, they both played for a long while. Soon, the sun went down, not quite touching the mountains. As the Unicorn left, Jezebel turned to her.

“Trust me when I say, you are going to love this!” Lylac laughed at

how brave her friend was.

“And I will bring lots of apples!” Lylac stated, as if they already had those Bandits on the run.

## Chapter 7

### “Sneaking out”

She spent all day in the castle, helping her mother clean and fold all the laundry. When asked why she was not outside playing, Lylac just shrugged.

“Mom,” she said, “I want to be with you today.” Her mother laughed, scooped Lylac up and threw her on the bed. As Lylac rolled to a stop, she jumped up and began bouncing on the springy mattress. Her mother laughed and clap her hands.

“Higher, Lylac! Higher!” What a wonderful time she was having! She truly wished it would never end!

Yet, as every day goes, the day gave way to the evening, which was chased away by the night.

After a day with mother, Lylac went to her room and got ready for bed. Her mother and father said their goodnights, gave her kisses, then closed Lylac’s door. After the door shut, Lylac snuck out of bed, grabbed two extra pillows and carefully put them under her blankets, making it look like it was her sleeping.

Quickly, she got dressed, grabbed an empty pillow case, and opened her window so she could see the moon when it came up over the wall. Once Lylac saw the tip of the moon, she climbed out her window and shut it tight.

Carefully, she climbed down and carefully made her way to the back wall. As she stopped near the stream, under the apple trees, Lylac

was suddenly aware of just how different her favorite place to play was at night. It was dark, and there were scary sounds all around her.

“Jezebel? Are you there?” Lylac was relieved to hear her friend answer.

“You are like a scared rabbit,” the Unicorn laughed, poking fun at her.

“Well, it’s dark, and I can’t see very much. Tell me, what’s the plan?”

“Get as many apples as you can, then come out here. I have to keep an eye on those nasty Bandits. One of them walked right by the opening earlier. I think he’s looking for a way in.” Well, Lylac didn’t like the sound of that.

As quickly as she could, she filled the pillow case with apples until she could barely carry it out through the hanging ivy and the wall. Once out onto the path, she set the apples down and carefully rearranged the lengthy vines to cover the entrance. She then grabbed the apples and open the top. Reaching in, she grabbed two and gave them to her friend.

“Thank you, thank you,” Jezebel said as she ferociously chewed them up and swallowed them, cores and all. She then looked both ways, suddenly suspicious.

“What is it?” Lylac whispered, looking both ways as well.

“Those Bandits are going to find a way in. They have been splitting up and searching for a way. I have an idea, but it’s going to take a lot of bravery on your part.” Wide-eyed, Lylac grabbed an apple

and began eating it.

“I’m brave. We went into the fire mountain. I can do anything.”  
Jezebel snorted softly.

“Lylac, Ember told me there was a dragon.” Lylac shook her head.

“She did?”

“Yep,” Jezebel replied. “Lylac, she said dragon’s were mean, which means she knows about dragons. If there was no dragon, she would have simply said so, don’t you think?” Lylac was suddenly nervous about the way Jezebel was thinking.

“Ummm, Jezebel, what are you planning?” The Unicorn looked at the apples and lowered herself.

“Come on, let’s go pay Ember a visit,” she said in a hushed voice as Lylac climbed up on the Unicorn’s back. Jezebel grabbed the apples and began walking down the path

Within a few minutes, Jezebel was carefully running. The thing was, her hooves were not making any noise, which Lylac though rather curious. The thing was, she did not ask because Jezebel was carrying the apples.

They ran the entire way without one Bandit seeing them, which surprised Lylac.

Soon they were standing before the stream of lava, just as they did before. This time, Lylac stayed on Jezebel.

“Do it again, Jezebel, jump!” Rearing up, the Unicorn raced forward and jumped the lava steam, careful not to knock Lylac off her

back. Then again, Lylac was beginning to get really good at riding.

Once on the other side, Jezebel set the apples down and shook her head.

“Yuk, cloth does not taste anything like apple!” Both of them laughed and laughed, until a fire up the tunnel began to speed toward them.

“I hope that’s Ember,” Lylac said, suddenly very nervous. The Unicorn watched as the fire approached.

“I hope so too,” Ember replied. Closer and closer came the flames. When they stopped, the fire died down to reveal Ember, who reared up and laughed.

“I was hoping you would come! And you did!” Lylac laughed and clapped for joy, then nearly hugged the fiery Unicorn. Instead, she retrieved an apple and gave it to her.

“Oh, thank you so much!” Ember stated happily, then chewed it up quickly as it sputtered and steamed in her mouth. “What are you two doing here? Lylac, isn’t it your bedtime? You are going to get into some real trouble if you are caught. You really should go home.” Lylac looked at Jezebel, as if asking for help.

“Oh,” Jezebel said, eyeing the bag of apples hungrily, “we actually came to ask for your help in a matter of urgent importance.” Jezebel looked at Lylac and laughed. “That sounded very important. Did I do good?” Lylac snickered mischievously, placing a hand over her mouth.

“You are a funny, wonderful, Unicorn.” Ember gave them both a

curious look.

“What is so important, that you would sneak out and come here of all places? Do you two realize you will be in huge trouble if you wake the Dragon?” Jezebel gave Lylac a smug, know-it-all-look.

“Told you there was a dragon here.” Lylac shrugged.

“I stand corrected.” Jezebel snorted and turned to ember.

“Bandits are in the area, and are looking for a way into Lylac’s castle. I can think of nothing better than a Dragon as an ally to chase the Bandits away.” Ember shook her head, a sudden look of fear in her eyes.

“You do not want to meet this Dragon. He is not nice.” Lylac grabbed another apple and gave it to Ember, who, once again, devoured it. After finishing it, she look at the two.

“Well, if you both are determined to meet the Dragon, I will take you to him. Beware the deals he makes with you. He is both cunning and sly. Follow me.” Lylac snatched up the bag of apples and followed Jezebel and Ember into a tunnel that steadily became hotter and hotter and hotter as made their way deeper into the mountain of fire.

## Chapter 8

### “Into the Tunnels”

They followed Ember into some tunnels which branched off this way and that. As they traveled through tunnel after tunnel, the air became hot, until finally, Lylac thought she could take no more of the heat coming from ahead.

“Look,” Jezebel said, “do you see the fiery light up ahead?” Lylac strained her eyes and quickly saw what the Unicorn was seeing.

“Yes. Where does that lead, Ember?” Ember turned.

“Shhh, we are getting close to its lair. We need to be very quiet, or we could disturb it’s rest, and that could be very bad.” Jezebel looked at Lylac, rather nervous.

“Maybe we should turn back, Lylac. I hear Dragons are very temperamental, and become angry very easy. Ember looked at the Unicorn, agreeing.

“You are right Ember, but we have come so far to turn back now. I’ll bet the Dragon knows we are already here.” A sudden rumbling shook the ground and tunnel, scaring all three of them.

“Is it going to eat us?” Lylac asked. Ember shrugged.

“I hope not.” Ember pointed at the bag of apples. “You did bring a lot of apples. Maybe it likes those, and would accept them as a gift - well, all but five.” Lylac looked confused.

“All but five?”

“Sure! Two for me, two for Jezebel and one for you.” Lylac did not

think that was very funny, considering the pickle they were in.

“Do you think Dragons like apples?” Lylac asked, trembling with fright as the cave about her shook like an earthquake. Jezebel snorted.

“I doubt it. I think Dragons like little princesses.”

“Ember! Just because it’s a Dragon, doesn’t mean it eats people!” Ember laughed, thinking her joke was funny, but Lylac saw nothing funny about Ember’s joke in the least.

“Ember, I want to go home. The Dragon is probably a wonderful creature, but I’m scared.

“Yes, but Lylac, I heard the bandits talking about taking everything in your castle. And, Lylac, do you know what Bandits do when they take everything? They take the King and Queen, put them on a ship, and sail them across the sea. They get rid of them for good.” Lylac began to tear up.

“You didn’t say what they would do with me. I’m more afraid of the Bandits. I don’t want to lose my Mother and Father. I don’t know what to do!” Ember looked at the bag of apples hungrily.

“We have to go on now. I’m sure the dragon knows we are here. If we leave now, we would offend it. And, Lylac, you never want to offend a Dragon, ever, ever.” Jezebel shook its head and reared up.

“We could fight our way out, and then, somehow, beat the Bandits at their own game.” Ember began laughing at the Unicorn.

“Fight the Dragon? Fight it? What do you think makes the clouds and fire come out the top of the mountain? Where do you think the heat

comes from. You know, the heat that is making you both sweat? It's the Dragon. You can't outrun it, you don't want to make it mad. Now, the only way is to keep going. Are you going to be a big chicken now, or finish what you started? Oh, and by the way, Dragons do not like cowards, just so you know. However, they do like bravery. So, get yourselves some courageous and let's move on."

## Chapter 9

### “Lake of Fire”

As they carefully and quietly moved through the tunnel, Lylac noticed it began to steadily slope downward. Also, the air was becoming muggy and less dry, which was very odd. Even so, it was hot and very uncomfortable. Ember turned and motioned them to be very quiet, then continue down the tunnel, past two openings, then straight on until it stopped. Once they all stopped, Ember looked at the bag of apples.

“I think you better get ready to give the Dragon some of those. Oh, and the Dragon better like apples, or you are going to be in big, big, BIG trouble.” Backing up, Ember motioned Lylac to the edge of the tunnel. Lylac moved up to the ledge, noticing it dropped off into a lake of smoking water!

“The lake is lava!” Lylac cried as she looked at the smoke coming off the water. “What am I supposed to do now?” Ember shivered.

“It’s not actually lava, Lylac. It’s the lake the Dragon sleeps in. Every time it rains, the water runs down the side of the mountain and fills the lake. It just looks like lava, because the red of the Dragon’s body makes it look that way. In fact, if you get into the water, its warm, not hot. He is always sleeping unless someone wakes him up.”

“But look at the smoke coming off the water?”

“Silly, that is steam. Remember those clouds you saw?” Lylac nodded.

“Yes.”

“The steam you see here, goes up through the top of the mountain to form clouds. It’s not smoke. You see, he makes the clouds that rain on your apple trees and gardens. So, without this Dragon, you would spend a LOT more work making things grow. You see, this Dragon keeps your vegetables, fruits and other foods growing year round. You should be grateful.

“Ember, you said to speak his name, and he would come up from the water. What is his name?” Ember closed her eyes for a moment. After concentrating, Ember wrote a single word with her horn that floated in the air before Lylac.

*Scouldron*

“Lylac, do not say his name until Jezebel and I are gone. The Dragon only likes to speak to one person at a time. And, since you have the bag of apples, and you want to talk to the him, it would be best if we went up into the tunnel and waited for you. Don’t worry, we won’t leave you.” Lylac’s eyes widened.

“What if the Dragon doesn’t like me?” she asked. Jezebel snorted and stomped a hoof, giving Lylac a serious look.

“Remember why you are doing this, Lylac. Your mother, your father, and all your people are in danger. Have courage for them. You are a princess, and it is your duty to help protect your kingdom. Do you understand why you are here?” Lylac felt suddenly embarrassed.

“Thank you, Jezebel. I know what to do now. Those Bandits are

not going to get away with anything. I'm ready. Go.” Both Ember and Jezebel gave Lylac a look of approval, turned, and walked away back up the tunnel.

Finding herself alone, she turned back to the lake. Taking in a deep breath, Lylac closed her eyes for a moment, finding her bravery.

“Scouldron,” she whispered.

## Chapter 10

### “Scouldron”

The moment, Lylac spoke the Dragon’s name, the entire lake rippled, as if a tiny earthquake had shook the water. This scared her badly, and it made her think to run. But, she did not.

Before she decided one way or the other, the huge head of a horned fire-breathing Dragon rose up out of the water, looking at her with its slanted eyes of fire as steaming water poured off its head.

“Who called my name!” the Dragon roared as it looked down on Lylac. Now Lylac had only heard of dragons in fairy tale books her mother read to her when she would go to bed. In those books some of the dragons were mean and terrible. But, some were nice, but stern. Some were even grumpy and disliked being bothered. There were others that would eat a kingdom, people, buildings and all!

Lylac raised her hand, then lowered it, thinking it was silly to raise her hand when she was the only one there.

“Are you the kind of Dragon that eats people, or apples?” Lylac asked, not knowing what else to say. Giving her a strange look, the Dragon slowly moved close to Lylac, towering over her. Lowering down into the lake of red water, the Dragon came eye to eye with her. Sniffing her, the Dragon shook its great head.

“I know your scent. You are the Daughter of the King. Why have you come to me?” The Dragon waited for a response, as if it had all the time in the world. And, as you know, Dragons live a very, very, very

long time.

“You know my dad?” The Dragon chuckled.

“Yes, and I was there when they showed you off to the kingdom when you were born.” Now, answer my question, little Princess.” Lylac looked at the bag of apples. Reaching down, she picked them up.

“I’ve come to ask you for help. There are Bandits looking to get inside my castle, and I don’t know what to do about it. Jezebel, Ember and I thought you might be able to give us some advice to get rid of them. If they get into the castle, they will steal everything. They might even do more than steal. I’m really afraid.” Opening up the top of the pillow case, Lylac pulled out the biggest apple she could find. It looked like a pea compared to the size of the Dragon’s mouth

“Do you like apples? That’s all I brought this time.” Looking down into the open sack, the Dragon licked its mouth.

“Ohhh, those are perfect. Lylac, to answer your question, no, I don’t eat people. I may chew them once or twice, but never swallow.” The Dragon gave Lylac a look of disgust, making her laugh.

“Now, I’m not saying I’ll do it for the bribe of all but five of those apples, but it is quite tempting, your offer.” Lylac’s eyes suddenly lit up.

“You were listening to us the whole time?” The Dragon laughed.

“Yes, I heard every word.”

“I can bring corn, squash, apples, grapes, tomatoes, pumpkins and a who lot more, if you like! I will do it just because you are nice, not because I need your help. I can bring a whole bunch more tomorrow

night if you like.” The enthusiasm on Lylac’s face caused the Dragon to laugh with delight.

“I’ll make you a deal, Dragon Charmer. I’ll help you chase away those Bandits if you come and talk to me once in a while. I was there at your birth, and now I am speaking to you as a child, a child who has snuck out against the wishes of her parents. Just think if something happened to you, what would your mother and father think? What would they do? If those Bandits caught you, and knew who you were, your entire kingdom would be in big trouble. The ransom alone, would cost your parents everything. Do you understand me, young lady?”

Lylac tried to be brave, but as the Dragon scolded her, tears slipped from her eyes.

“I had to come. They will find the crack in the back wall of the garden. That’s how they will get past the guards, Scouldron.”

“And why did you not tell your father about this opening?” Lylac looked back up the cave.

“Because, then I would not be able to get out and see my friends. And, Scouldron, they are Unicorns with magical powers. They are very valuable, and not just because they have magical powers. They are my friends, and I like them. I get lonely to play with someone other than who I imagine.” Lylac reached into the sack and began throwing apples into the Scouldron’s mouth until only five remained.

“Sorry there are no more, Scouldron, but, I can bring more.” Scouldron thought for a moment, savoring the juice as he sucked on the

fruit in his mouth. After a while, he swallowed.

“The apples of your father’s garden are the best in the land. Do you know why? Before you answer, I’ll give you a clue, a riddle:

Pruned without hand,  
Roots that drink deep  
By water, trees stand,  
No simple upkeep

Not cared for by day,  
Only tended by night  
Their magical way,  
Children so bright

No thistles no weeds,  
no creepers which bite  
They see to such needs,  
Pruned in moonlight

They live in the stream, the ocean and lake  
When moon is waxed full in the heavens so far  
Not showing themselves, for secrecy’s sake  
Moonbeams reveal, the gardeners they are

Lylac's thought about Scouldron's riddle, but could only guess that he was talking about the trees in her playground garden.

"Scouldron, are they Elves?"

"No," Scouldron answered, rather pleased with himself. "Now Lylac, you need to go home and go to bed. Tomorrow afternoon, Jezebel will come for you. I need you to be outside the wall on the path when Jezebel comes, do you understand?" Lylac nodded. At a wave of Scouldron's great paw, Lylac grabbed the sack and headed up the tunnel, but not before waving goodbye to her new friend.

Before saying goodbye to Ember, Lylac gave her two of the five apples, which she devoured at once. Then, once Lylac and Jezebel were back at the wall, beyond which was the palace garden, before saying goodbye, Lylac gave two apples to Jezebel, then ate one herself.

Lylac then gave her a big huge hug, and said goodbye.

"Until tomorrow," Lylac assured Jezebel.

"Until tomorrow," Jezebel said. "By the way, Lylac, what did the Dragon say to you?"

"He said that, tomorrow afternoon, I was to be outside the garden wall, where we are right now. He didn't say why." Jezebel snorted.

"I bet I can guess why," Jezebel stated like a know-it-all. Lylac became curious.

"Why, why?" But Jezebel would say no more. She just laughed, turned, and galloped away at a full run.

Once Jezebel was out of sight, Lylac looked at the wall, then the path she was on. She then looked at the forest on the other side of the path.

Looking up, Lylac saw the clouds move past a full moon. Rather spooked, she quickly slipped in through the wall, covered by the hanging vines.

## Chapter 11

### “Riddles in The Moonlight”

No sooner had Lylac arranged the hanging vines and leaves to cover the way in and out of the garden, she remembered the part of Scouldron’s riddle, and began speaking it out loud.

“Not cared for by day, only tended by night, their magical way, children so bright. No thistles no weeds, creepers which bite, they see to such needs, pruned in moonlight.” Lylac walked over and leaned up against the nearest apple tree by the stream. Looking down, she could barely see its roots, which reached down into the water. The last part of Scouldron’s riddle echoed in her head.

“They live in the stream, the ocean and lake, when moon is waxed full in the heavens so far. Not showing themselves, for secrecy’s sake, moonbeams reveal, the gardeners they are,” she whispered, a chill causing her to shiver.

“I don’t understand, Scouldron. Tended by night? Children so bright? I’m the only child out here right now, and it’s spooky to think I’m all alone.” Stepping as close to the edge of the water as she dared, without falling in, Lylac looked down.

“I don’t do anything out here but play, oh, and meet Unicorns and a Dragon.” Just as Lylac was about to turn and run back to her bedroom window, she heard the voice of a girl, though she did not know where it came from.

“Sisters, did you hear that? Lylac has Unicorns and a Dragon

friend who talks to her. If she can talk to them, then why can't we talk to her? It's not fair, you know." The voice of the girl sounded like the chiming of the purest silver bells, and lifted her heart to hear it. Lylac could not help but grin as she looked around, suddenly understanding Scouldron's riddle.

"Hello?" Lylac whispered. "Are you the caretakers of this garden?"

"See?" came a very excited voice, "she even heard me talk!" Lylac looked down into the stream and was amazed to see three girls, about the same age as she was, and they were staring right at her. The only reason she saw them was because of the moonlight shining right through them.

"That Dragon's riddle was much too hard for me to understand. The only reason I can see you, is because of the waxed moonlight that shines through you. You are very beautiful." Lylac laughed, still shivering. "Don't worry, I won't tell anyone about you." All three children of water snickered.

"It would not do you any good to tell the whole kingdom, Lylac. Only those who have the gift of magic can see us, even if there is a full moon." Lylac was confused.

"I'm not a witch. I don't know any magic, or wave a wand." All three water children shook their heads and pointed at her, as if she had gone cracked and mad at the same time.

"Well, you see us, don't you?" another Water Child spoke up in triumph. Lylac nodded.

“Well, then you do have the gift, whatever you say otherwise. You can’t argue about it, because it’s true.” Lylac was confused.

“Well, what are my powers?” All three Water Children laughed at her.

“Go ask your Mother, not us. She can tell you. But, don’t tell her we told you. We’ll be in trouble. Now, goodbye!” With that, the Water Children vanished from Lylac’s sight. Looking up, Lylac noticed clouds had passed over the moon.

Sneaking back in through her window, Lylac changed, put the extra pillows away, then snuggled back into her nice warm, cozy bed. Soon, she was fast asleep, dreaming of Bandits, Unicorns, Dragons and Water Children.

She dreamed she wore purple robes and held a twisted wand in her hand. Not only that, Lylac had those Bandits on the run!

## Chapter 12

### “A Big Surprise”

The next morning, just after sunrise, Lylac was up and cleaning the house with her mother. It wasn't that she only cleaned the house when she wanted something. Lylac actually enjoyed spending time with her mother, no matter what they were doing. Besides, cleaning was easy. She had done it so many times, she could do it all by herself.

After all the cleaning was done, Lylac was about to ask her Mother if she had any magical powers. Then, realizing the time, Lylac decided not to ask until tomorrow. Today, she was supposed to be outside the wall to meet up with Jezebel. After getting into her play clothes, Lylac kissed her mother on the cheek, then ran off to “play”.

Once out back, Lylac looked around to make sure she was alone, then slipped out the back wall to find Jezebel waiting for her.

“You are just in time,” the Unicorn stated, stomping in place. “We have a problem. Those Bandits are walking up the path, and they are halfway to the castle already. What's worse is, there are about a hundred or more!” Lylac's eyes widened.

“What are we going to do?” Lylac asked.

“Well, you tell me, Lylac. Didn't you talk to the Dragon?”

“Well, yes.”

“What did he say?” Lylac thought about the riddle he gave her, and the chiding she'd gotten for being out at night. She shrugged.

“He just said to meet you out here at this time, that's it.” Jezebel

looked surprised.

“That’s all? That’s it?”

“Yes. That’s all Scouldron told me to do.” Jezebel began to pace back and forth, very nervous.

“And he ate all those apples.”

“Well, he did leave two for you, two for Ember, and one for me.” Jezebel’s eyes widened in disbelief.

“You got tricked by a Dragon!” Lylac smiled and rested her hand on Jezebel’s beautiful mane.

“I don’t think he tricked me. I just don’t think we know what he is up to. Trust me, Jezebel, Scouldron is not trying to trick me. If he wanted to eat up all our food, he could just come and take it.” Rolling her eyes, Jezebel looked at Lylac, beginning to agree with her.

“Alright, say the Dragon is not trying to pull a fast one on you, what do we do in the meantime? Those Bandits are marching closer and closer as we just stand here and talk.” Lylac saw Jezebel’s point.

“I have a feeling we are the bait, believe it or not,” Lylac said.

“Oh, I don’t like the sound of that,” Jezebel replied.

“I do,” stated Ember, as she came running up the path, out of breath. “Those Bandits are about, ummm, very close! I could burn em’ to cinders!” Ember stated as a matter of fact, as she got all worked up. Lylac shook her head.

“No, no, no! You can’t do that.”

“Well, why not?” Ember asked.

“Because if you are found out by my mom and dad, I can’t come see you anymore. We have to make a plan, and quick.” Jezebel reared up, then came down with a thud!

“I have an idea! Ember, you need to stay out of sight. I’ll call you when you are needed. And you will be needed. The most important thing is that you stay out of sight, okay?” Ember looked and Jezebel funny.

“Why?”

“Because Lylac is going to be standing on the path here to stop them. She is going to warn them to go away, and never come back, unless they can behave themselves. See, we might just make some friends here. Lylac will use her wand, and warn the Bandits to leave or she will call on a fabled fiery unicorn to come in its wrath of flames!” When she calls, Ember, then you come out and stand by her side.” Ember thought about it, then became excited.

“Oh, I hope they try and do something -“ ”Ember!” Lylac cut in. “You need to play the part of scary. I’ve seen it in the volcano, and twice! Can I count on you?” Ember pranced about for a little bit.

“You sure can. I’ll go hide down the path and around the wall . . . waiting for you to summon me!” And off Ember went, racing down the path until she was out of sight. Lylac looked at Jezebel.

“I think Ember is a little too excited for this. What will you be doing, and where do I get a wand?” Jezebel smirked.

“I’ll be off in the forest, using my magic to make you look very

scary, you know, as witches usually are. And, as for the wand, look behind you at the base of the wall.” Lylac turned and looked, quickly see what looked like a real witches wand.

“Is this real?” She asked. Jezebel shrugged. This morning, I found it right where you just picked it up. Just act like you know what you are doing and I’ll do the rest. Do you trust me?” Lylac laughed quietly.

“Of course I do. Now, get out of sight, before they see you. I can hear them coming.” Quickly, Jezebel ran off the path and into the forest.

Soon, Lylac found herself all alone, suddenly realizing she was about to face more than a hundred Bandits, and with only a pretend wand.

Not long after Jezebel disappeared, the first of the Bandits appeared from up the path, quickly noticing Lylac standing in their way. After all of them had come into view, Lylac cleared her throat, trying to look as sure and brave as she possibly could.

“This is my kingdom, and my castle! What business do you have here in such great numbers?” she called out, thinking that was a good opening line. Even still, she wondered what Jezebel was up to. The Bandits began laughing at her, as the Bandit leader pointed at Lylac.

“Are you threatening us?”

“I asked you what your business is here, and why do you come with so many - unwashed - vermin!” Wow, Lylac was really getting into this! Looking past the bandits, she saw clouds of billowing smoke coming from the top of the volcano. The dark of the clouds was quickly

spreading, which gave her an idea. Raising her wand, Lylac pointed at the Bandit leader. As she did, he took a small step back.

“I will blot out the sun and cause a plague of darkness to forever follow you. Wherever you go, darkness, and the stench of fire, will be your companion, as your henchmen are now!” Lylac waved the stick in her hand, as if she were a real witch casting a spell. As she did thick clouds began to move overhead, quickly hiding the sun. But the leader of the Bandits laughed.

“That’s the volcano, and it was going to do that anyways. You must be related to the king and queen of this castle. Come on boys, she’s a trickster, and that is all. Let’s nab her up for a random only a King can pay!” But, Lylac held her ground, as ash began to descend upon the Bandits, and only the Bandits.

“I will give you another chance to yield to the laws of my kingdom, or suffer by magic, spells which will plague you until you submit to me as your rightful princess. Only then will I forgive you for the plan you have to pillage and plunder my kingdom!” One of the bandit leader’s henchmen looked up, rather nervous.

“Boss, how does she know about our plans? There’s no way she could know that. Let’s just be on our way. The ash of the volcano is already falling like snow on us, but nowhere else.”

“Silence! the Bandit leader snapped. Remember when we thought we heard something the other night, then last night? She and her friends have been eavesdropping. She’s no witch. Now get her!” Half the

Bandits began to walk toward Lylac, who was now becoming cross with these people.

“I invoke the magic of chaos upon you all!” Lylac shouted, waving her stick at them. Instantly all chaos broke loose. A dozen Bandits began to float upward, spinning and turning, as a few others tripped and fell into sudden knee-deep mud all around them. The remainder of the Bandit leader’s men lost their shoes and swords and they tried to follow their leader.

“What sort of trickery is this?” the Leader growled at Lylac, then ran into the forest, then back up onto the path, coming right at her with alarming speed.

“I call upon fire and flame in the form of a terrible, fabled, fiery unicorn!” Instantly, behind Lylac, there was a rush of hooves, catching the Bandit leader’s attention. Skidding to a stop, he began to back up as a fiery unicorn appeared, racing directly for him with her horn down.

“Ember, stop!” Lylac cried out as the bandit leader fell back to the ground. Ember reared up and came down hard, spreading flames in every direction, a very angry look in her eyes.

“I will destroy him, master! Then I will consume all the others, adding their ashes to the ground! Of course, that will help the plant life. That is what ashes do, right?” Lylac rolled her eyes and nodded.

“Of course it does, unless he and his men can promise to only come into my kingdom peacefully. Sir, as you can see, this kingdom needs no allies to protect its own.” The Bandit leader scrambled

backwards, frantically trying to get out of the heat and flames, which had caught his pant legs on fire.

“We yield, we are sorry. We promise we will never come here again, unless we come as friends. Please, call off your spells. We will leave at once.” Satisfied, Lylac waved her wand. As she did, Ember turned and ran back the way she had come. The thick clouds and volcanic ash lifted as well, and all the Bandits were able to gather their belongings and leave. Each bandit bowed and tipped his hat - if he had one - to Lylac, who gracefully forgave each and every last Bandit.

Looking to the volcano, Lylac saw the scouldron sitting on its top. When waved, the dragon leapt down through the opening and vanished. The other two did not see the Dragon, and she did not tell.

Soon, the three were standing by the opening in the wall, eating a pile of apples. Poking fun and mimicking the faces of the Bandits, the three laughed until they cried. Of course, Ember’s tears went up in steam, which made it even more hilarious.

Soon, Ember and Jezebel said their goodbyes, knowing they had kept the secret of the opening in the castle wall.

As soon as Lylac knew she was alone, she gather up a pillowcase full of apples and took them to the Dragon. Scouldron received the gift gladly.

“So, how did you do against the Bandits?” Lylac told him everything, which made him chuckled.

“Thank you for your help, sir. I really do appreciate it,” Lylac

said, feeling more than grateful.

“You are welcome, and well done, little witch. Well done,”  
Scouldron said as he, once again lowered into the fiery lake.

## Chapter 13

### “Bedtime Story”

That night, Lylac’s Mother came into her room and closed the door. Lylac saw a book in her hand and grew excited! But when her mother began to read, Lylac’s eyes widened in wonder and disbelief . . . for the book she read to Lylac that night was about a little girl, who had discovered some very unusual friends, and a crack in the back garden wall, through which she and her friends had not only had an adventure, but had also saved the kingdom.

As her mother tucked Lylac into bed, she wondered about too many things.

“How did you know, Mother?” Placing the wand in Lylac’s hand, she winked at Lylac, her mother’s eyes twinkling with delight.

“Lylac, don’t lose your wand. One day, you may need it again. Goodnight little witch, I love you.” With that, her mother quietly laughed and shut the door to Lylac’s room.