

Wisplurkers

031. Dark Echo

“Transformation?” Kylie was horrified.
“What’s that?”

Dalrimple replied: “If the Wisplurker was attached to Matthew, or Matthew’s shadow, it would start to drain him of his energy. And if the creature took your brother’s shadow to eat, then without it, Matthew would slowly disappear — .”

Kylie gasped, “That’s awful.”

“Like the invisible man,” Toby said.

“Will Matt ever come back?” asked Lloyd. He suddenly remembered his friend’s skill at football. With Matt the team had a good chance of winning next term’s inter-schools tournament. Without him they might just as well hand the trophy over to Highfield Grange without playing a single match.

“That depends on whether the Wisplurker has already eaten his shadow, or whether he’s keeping it for later. Some have been known to hoard human’s shadows for weeks.” He paused, unsure if it was a good thing to raise their hopes. Inspector Dalrimple had seen much uncertainty since this whole extraordinary time began.

“You see. If Matthew’s shadow has been eaten, then eventually he will come back. But he’ll not be the same —”. He put his hands up indicating it would be useless to ask him more.

Lloyd Wong narrowed his eyes suspiciously. “How do you know all this and no one else?”

“Because WICID has been formed to combat this menace, so I’ve learnt all I can about the Wisplurkers. I know that if Matthew’s shadow is still intact, and it can be attached to the boy’s clothes in time, then it’s possible he will reappear and be just like he was before. He’ll think he was just asleep and he won’t remember anything else.” He paused and studied the sky.

“If as this young man has said, he found a bus ticket that can prove Alf Grimley caught a bus days after he supposedly disappeared. That means he may or may not be OK. I’ve heard nothing. There’s been no report of him, or his wife, being seen recently or my department would have been informed immediately.”

Toby had been listening closely. This was fantastic. This was thrilling. Wisplurkers that ate shadows and changed people – into what? Ghosts? Zombies? Ghouls?

Lloyd had a thought. It made him glance nervously around. Were there any dark places that could be

hiding one of these creatures? The sun was behind the cloud and the sky had changed almost instantly to a dull grey. No shadows were being cast along the ground or from what remained of the building.

“How many are there?”

The inspector pursed his lips. “Thousands I suppose. However many unanswered calls there were left in the telephone cables. Although many will have been lost in the fire. I have been trying to contain the ones we know about. That’s why I had Jones Services board up the windows at the Grimleys’. Something tells me the old couple’ll not want to go back to their place. Not now.”

“What about Matthew?” Kylie was getting worried, and angry, at the time wasted. “We’ve got to do something, to get his shadow back in time, like you said. But how do we do that?”

“It’s not going to be easy.”

“Is there anything these Wisplurker thingys don’t like?” asked Toby.

“They have two enemies. The first is The Dull – .”

“What’s that?”

“This.” He spread his arms wide. “This is what they call The Dull. Look around, there are no shadows being cast. When there is no light, no sun, lamps or even moonlight then there are no shadows. If the Wisplurkers are caught out in The Dull then like your shadows, they simply disappear and become Non beings.”

“Wow”, Toby and Lloyd said together.

“And the second are the Yelloweyes’ main enemies, the Redeye —.” This was becoming complicated, but the inspector tried to explain.

“It’s a case of evolution, and the survival of the fittest.”

Toby looked confused, but Lloyd nodded.

“Like humans evolved from apes?” asked Lloyd. “Remember Tobe, we learnt about that in junior school ages ago.”

“Yeah! Oh yeah! ‘Course.”

Toby couldn’t remember. It was probably one of those days when he was flicking bits of screwed up toilet paper at Lucy Evans sitting in the row in front.

“Mmm sort of.” The inspector was answering Lloyd’s question. “But it’s more than that.”

“So these Redeye are something more — ?” asked Kylie interested, even though she was so concerned about the fate of her twin.

“Exactly. More advanced. One step further on the evolution ladder. Whereas the Yelloweyes are an intelligent species, the Redeyes are quick-witted and cleverer. They are not just extremely intelligent and inventive, but also cunningly wicked. They spend their time capturing the lesser Yelloweye Wisplurkers, intending to wipe them all out. There is no room in their world for anything that isn’t perfect.” He sounded angry to the point of being obsessive. “That’s why they must be stopped.”

“So let me get this right,” said Lloydie, “If these Yelloweyes are dangerous to human, because they eat our shadows, then the Redeye are on our side. Aren’t they, inspector?”

The inspector sighed deeply. “If only it was that simple.”

“What do the Redeye do to them?” Toby had to ask. “These Yelloweyes. What do they do to them?”

Toby’s eyes lit up with ghoulish delight.

Kylie pursed her lips and glared at him. “Toby Dodd you’re horrible. You would have to know all the gory details.”

But far from answering Toby, the inspector shook his head. “There are things you shouldn’t know. I --- I’d rather not say too much to you young-uns. It’s --- it’s too terrible. I hope you never meet the really evil Redeye from the Dark Echo”.

Kylie shuddered but the boys, their eyes bright, mouthed ‘Dark Echo’

“Wow.”

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Wisplurkers. By Maggie C.

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