

A rush of cold air entered the hut and the stranger, silhouetted against the rising sun, passed inside.

“Good morning,” he said. His voice was quiet and soothing. “I am Percival, the Keeper of Secrets. I am a peaceful man and good friend of the wizard Tobin. Why do you greet me thus, with an arrow pointed at my heart?”

“Now I remember,” said Sim, “Tobin told us about Percival once. I’d forgotten that he lives on this island. He really is a friend.”

Vinny lowered the bow. “Welcome Percival, Keeper of Secrets,” he said. “Please forgive us for this unmerited welcome. We have not heard of such a person as you before. Even the wizard Sim, here, didn’t recognise you at first. Please come in.”

“Ah, Sim,” said Percival while he entered the hut. “You may have forgotten about me, but I know all about you, and I also know your secret.”

“What secret?” asked Sim. “I have no secret.”

“Your secret was revealed to you once, and shall be again,” continued Percival. “And your secret shall yet be revealed to all.”

Sim’s face turned red. “Are you a keeper of secrets, or a riddle-maker?” he asked. “I repeat, I have no secret.”

“So be it,” replied Percival. Then he turned to Perkin and said, “Now little man, I also know your secret, but I will not tell.” Perkin glanced furtively at Vylín and tried to conceal a blush. “Your secret is safe with me, but do not tell another until the time is right, or the secret will not come to pass.” Percival continued to address Perkin. “Where is the glass box that you found at the Veil Falls?” he asked.

Perkin removed the glass box and the Seeround Glass from his jacket pocket.

“Ah, I see you also have the Seeround Glass,” observed the secret-keeper.

“How do you know all these things?” asked Perkin.

“I am a keeper of secrets, but I also have some powers to see things happening far away. However, I can only see things that pertain to the secrets that I keep. The Luchorpan Trevin revealed to me the secret of the glass box and the Seeround Glass. Now turn the box upside down,” he urged. “You will see there’s a small hole in the base of the box.”

Perkin let out a low whistle. “You’re right!” he exclaimed. “I didn’t notice this hole before.”

“Now put the glass key inside the hole and turn it.”

The key fitted the hole perfectly and, as Perkin turned it, he discovered another lid on the base of the box. As the lid opened, a tooth and a piece of paper fell out.

“Oh!” he exclaimed. “But there was nothing inside the box before. Look, it’s made of glass and you can see right through it. Why couldn’t I see the tooth and paper?”

“Because it is made from magic glass, the same kind of glass from which the Seeround Glass is cast,” replied Percival. “Do not be surprised by what you have seen. Now put the Seeround Glass inside the base of the box and lock it.”

“Look, it’s a perfect fit,” said Perkin.

“Now I will tell one more secret before I leave,” said Percival. He turned towards Squire. “This secret is for your ears only, Squire from another Land. Please follow me outside.”

Outside the hut and out of earshot of the others, Percival addressed Squire. “You will be a great king, and Xanatia shall be your queen.”

“Who is Xanatia?” he asked, his face turning red.

“You have seen her once and will know her when you see her again. Do not tell anyone of this secret yet, not even Tobin, or it will not come true. Now I must go. Farewell.”

With that, Percival turned and started walking down the hill. Within seconds, he had disappeared out of sight.

Squire called after him, “Wait... who is she? I don’t remember her.” *Where did he go?* he thought. *King? Xanatia? I hope this hasn’t been another one of those dreams.*