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Bastion jumped with fright as he turned, leaping back onto the desk where his buttocks hit the crystal ball, sending it rolling along the top of the desk to drop off the other side. There was a loud thud and crack as it hit the stone, but Bastion was too busy scrambling back across the desk, trying to place distance between him and whoever had just spoken.

Which apparently wasn't anyone, because there was no one behind him. Just more bookshelves.

"That's a shame. That one was actually quite rare."

Again, Bastion jumped and peered around the room desperately trying to find the source of the voice.

"Who's there?"

"Over here son."

Bastion scanned the room quickly before finding it. There, leaning against one of the bookshelves was a large mirror, over six feet tall and wide with golden gilt frame. It looked expensive and heavy, the kind of thing found in someone's McMansion. Yet, this was not what Bastion was focused on. His eyes were drawn to the figure that now stood in the mirror, an impossible reflection of someone that wasn't there.

"What is this?"

The figure in the mirror waited quietly as Bastion extracted himself from the desk and slowly walked towards the mirror. He didn't get too close, however, not quite sure what he was seeing. Except, the man in the mirror looked remarkably like his father. He wore a suit, similar to what Bastion remembered him always wearing. But, this couldn't be his father. His father was dead.

"Dad?" Bastion asked, his voice quiet, a slight tremor creeping into

his voice.

The reflected man smiled and nodded. "Yes Bastion. I'm really here."

Bastion took a short step closer and waved his hand in the space in front of the mirror, trying to detect any kind of trick. He could now see a faint reflection of himself through the man in the mirror. It was slightly unnerving to see the double-image of himself mixed with a man who wasn't there.

"How is this possible? How can you be there... here?"

"I know this will all be quite shocking son, but it's really me."

Bastion's heart was beating harder and he had to swallow down an unexpected lump in his throat.

"I don't understand what's going on here. Are you being projected from somewhere? Where are you?"

His father shook his head. "I am here son, but I'm not being projected or anything like that. At least not in the sense that you mean." His father paused for a second. "I'm dead son."

The words hung in the air for a moment between, an awful stated truth that, for a moment, Bastion had thought might not be true.

"You're dead."

"Yes."

"But, you're here."

His father smiled. "This is all going to sound quite unbelievable, I know. I wish I could have introduced you to all this in a much better way, but..." his father took a deep breath. "Yes, I am really dead. But, also yes, I am really here and talking to you."

"I don't get it. How?" Bastion took a step closer and peered at his father. His familiar hair that was parted in the exact same spot it was always parted. Same crinkle around his eyes. The same suit he would always wear.

Maybe someone was playing some kind of nasty trick and they were all waiting to jump out and laugh.

"The spell son. The words you read on the paper, along with the ring and you wearing it, initiated a spell I had been waiting for for many years. It brought me back. Well," he shrugged as he looked around at the mirror in which he stood, "almost back."

"Spell? What do you mean spell? This is seriously making no sense. Is this some kind of sick trick? Is someone watching this right now having a good laugh?" Bastion looked around to see if he could find any kind of camera or projector or something that would show this for

the illusion that it was.

"Son, please, take a seat and I'll try and explain."

Bastion folded his arms and stared at the projection of his father.

His father gave a sad smile. "Okay. This is harder than I thought. I'm what you might think of as a wizard, or something like that. It's not exactly right, but it's probably the easiest thing to describe right now."

"A wizard."

"Someone who practices a type of magic. And before I was-, before I died I prepared a spell that would bring me back from where I was so that I could communicate with you and try guide you through what's happening. Looking at you know, I realise things took longer than expected. Given that you are here now, I assume that the law firm has been in contact and gave you the ring and the keys."

"What took longer? What are you talking about?" Bastion ran his hands through his hair.

"How old are you son?"

Bastion squinted at the mirror. "Why?"

"It's just a question. I just want to know how long it's been."

"You can't tell?"

His father shook his head. "Where I was... time moves differently. And you're much older than I expected."

"How old did you expect me to be? How long before you planned to make contact with your son?"

Bastion heard the accusation in his tone and he felt guilty at the look on his father's face, but the emotions he was feeling had taken him by surprise.

"I'm sorry son. I had thought it would be much sooner than this. Normally the Lumination takes place around the time of puberty but by the looks of it that didn't happen."

"Lumination? You're making no sense! My father's dead, killed by my mother twelve years ago and now you're saying that you are my father come back from the dead as a result of some magical spell?"

His father looked sad and Bastion felt bad for the attack of words he was throwing out. But, none of this made sense, not to mention it all being impossible.

"Twelve years," his father said quietly. "That means you're twenty-one?"

Bastion nodded in silence.

"Twelve years." His father sounded like he was in disbelief. "I had hoped that this would have happened probably about eight or nine

years ago. It would have made this much easier." His father looked at him. "I'm sorry son. This was not the plan."

Bastion took a breath. "So, you're really dead."

His father nodded.

"This isn't just some crazy trick or I'm not going crazy."

"You're not crazy son. I'm really here."

Bastion thought about this for a moment. "So, explain what this illumination thing is."

"Lumination. It's what we call the period of time when a person's magic wakens, which normally happens around the age of puberty, but for you it looks like it took much longer to manifest which is unusual. I wonder..." his father stopped.

"Wonder what?"

His father waved it off, whatever *it* was. "It's nothing. Either way it's woken up. And here you are. You no doubt would have experienced something strange and the ring, which I had attuned to you when you were young sensed the change and signalled to the Firm that now was the time to give you access."

"So, you've just been waiting this whole time. You prepared all of this, the ring, the letter, knowing that I would come here?"

His father gave a slight shrug of his shoulders. "I had hoped. I didn't know exactly, but I took certain precautions that it would only be you who would be able sit in that chair and see that envelope."

"What do you mean precautions?"

"Well, the ring was only attuned to you and your magical signature, meaning it would only work for you. When your magic awoke, the ring was activated which sent The Firm to you. Then, once you got here, only you with that ring would have been able to open the doors and enter this space."

"Only me?"

His father nodded.

"What would have happened if someone else tried to enter?"

His father gave a small smile. "Without the ring, nothing. They would just not have been able to open the doors. With the ring, I'd assumed they would know something about the magic and their greeting would have been less than welcome. The door would have opened, but not on any place they would want to be."

Bastion was shaking his head. This was all too much. Magic rings. Spells that brought the living back from the dead. It was something out of the latest movie, or something from a crazy asylum.

“And what about mum? What happened there?”

His father frowned and closed his mouth.

Quietly, hesitantly he said, “Your mother... well, that was an accident.”

“An accident! She murdered you. And since then she’s been locked in an insane asylum, barely able to string two words together. What kind of accident is that?”

“You’ve seen your mother?” His father looked at him.

“Yeah, every month for the past few years. Not that it does much good because all she does is stare at me as though I’m a stranger.” Bastion cut himself off before he let anymore of the growing emotions out. He needed to calm down. In fact, what he needed was a drink, a good long cold amber drink.

His father watched him for a moment. The silence hung thick and heavy in the room, and weight that Bastion felt pressing upon his shoulders and he suddenly felt exhausted. He walked over and flopped himself into the chair and rubbed his eyes, trying to make some kind of sense out of all this.

“I’m sorry son. It’s not what we wanted for you.” His father said softly.

Bastion shrugged. “Yeah well, it is what it is right?”

There was another pause. Then Bastion said, “And yeah, I’m twenty-one.”

His father smiled.

“So, tell me about this Lumination or whatever, and what exactly are you, am I?”

His father peered across the room from the mirror to where his son sat.

“Well, the Lumination is when your magic I guess is released. It’s similar to how your body goes through changes at puberty. For those born with The All Light of sufficient strength in them, at puberty that also becomes manifest.”

“The All Light?”

“It’s what we call the power or what others would call magic.”

“Who’s we?”

“Well, there have been a number of names through the years. Some call us The Children, but nowadays we are simply referred to as the Solarii - Children of the Sun.”

“The Solarii.” The word felt unfamiliar on Bastion’s tongue.

“Yes. Humans who are able to harness the power of the sun to do

things other humans cannot.”

“You’re talking about magic.”

“I suppose. Yes, that’s what it has been called by many. I prefer to simply think of it as another type of power or force, like electricity, or heat, or gravity. Something natural that certain people can access.”

Bastion thought about this for a moment, tossing it around in his head and looking at it from all sides, trying to fit it into his world, his life. But, it felt too different. Square pegs in round holes, and all that.

“And you and mum were Solarii.”

His father pursed his lips. “Well, that’s where things get a little complicated. I’m Solarii yes. But, your mother is of a different kind. She is what is known as a Lunarii. Child of the Moon. Her kind draw their power from the moon.”

“Is that why she... you know.”

“No,” his father shook his head, and Bastion thought there was a flash of anger in his eyes, “that was something else.”

“What?”

“It’s complicated son. There’s a lot yet that needs to be explained, a lot you need to learn about before you’ll be able to understand.”

“Understand what? That you’re some kind of magical human called Solarii. My mother is some other kind of magical human called Lunarii. Right? Oh, and you’re also dead, but you’re not and you’re here talking to me from a mirror, and yeah, what’s that all about?”

“I know it’s a lot. There’s a lot for me to explain which is why it would have been easier for me to explain things to you when you were younger, when you had time to grow and learn these things, when-“

“When what? When I still believed in fairytales? When I hadn’t been growing up alone for twelve years? When this would have made any kind of sense? Well, that didn’t happen did it. No, instead you were died, mum was locked up, and I was alone!”

Bastion bit off his words, leaving them to hang in the silence. He hadn’t expected to feel such a strong feelings, yet there they were, bubbling in his gut, pulsing in his chest, and he wasn’t sure that he could turn them off right now.

“I think maybe I should go. This is all just... I dunno. It’s a lot.”

Bastion stood and headed for the door, needing to get out of this strange room, and the misty image of his father in that mirror.

“Son, wait. I-“

Bastion was already walking. “I just need to get some air, have a think.”

He quickly headed out the door, shutting it behind him, closing off the strange room and the sound of his father's protests. He ran up the stairs, pushing the cabinet back in place, then was out through the store to the front door, where he quickly locked up.

With eyes shut, he leaned back and took a deep breath.

"All right. There's some sense in all this," he said to himself, trying to convince himself, but he could feel that it was gonna take more than that to make sense of all this.

Pulling out his phone he summoned another Uber.