Ch. 1

Trya looked up from the hole she was steadily digging. Her friend Lye was shouting her name and haphazardly waving a trowel and a large green bucket. Trya sighed and stood up, brushing soil off her loose, worn, jeans. "Lye, why can't you walk over here with a wheelbarrow and talk in a normal voice like, oh, I don't know, A NORMAL PERSON? Lye just grinned, showing off her perfect white teeth. "Oh, I'm not a normal human. But you know you love me anyway." Reaching down into her vast bucket, she pulled out a rake. "Here," she said, handing it to Trya.

"Why, exactly, do I need a rake?"

"To clear off the leaves and grass and stuff, nut." Lye said affably, sweeping her long brown hair out of her face. "Elves like neat."

"How do you know? Are you one?"

The simple, teasing question seemed to make Lye nervous. She turned pale pinkish-green, quickly looked down, and started furiously digging. "Just do it!"

Trya shrugged. Her friend sometimes went a little weird like that, but when she did she would usually snap back quickly.

Lye's heart beat faster, much faster. Did she know? She managed to shoot back some reply- she barely heard herself say it- and quickly started digging. There had been more to her words when she said she wasn't a normal human. The truth was, she was indeed an elf.

Ch. 2

Trya squatted down next to her slightly loony friend. Lye had waist-length, light brown hair and a slightly pointed face. She had wide hazel eyes, a tiny, pert, nose, and a mouth that seemed way too small for all the words that streamed out of it. Her delicate features made her seem quiet and soft-spoken, but Trya knew better. Lye had hearing like a bat, but there was a strange thing about her. Trya had never seen her ears. Once, she'd playfully flipped Lye's hair, but Lye had shrieked and pulled away, covering her ears. Trya was so scared she hadn't pressed any further. Also, Lye turned green very often- not just when she was sick- when she blushed, too.

Lye kept her eyes averted from Trya for a while. Not that Trya was ugly- in fact, she was far from it. Trya had narrow but intense green eyes, wavy, almost curly, red hair, a light sprinkling of freckles across her ski-slope nose, and a heart shaped mouth- not at all unpleasant. Lye was just so startled. Ever since Trya had developed a strange little obsession for all things fantasy, Lye had been a bit scared. Did Trya suspect, or- god forbid- know the truth? She had almost figured out a few times- that time she'd almost seen her long, pointy ears, for instance. And that time when Lye couldn't resist turning all the dandelions into pansies, just for fun. Trya had almost seen her whisper a few ancient words, and the grass was dotted with purple.

Trya decided to try to break the sudden ice.

"So, Lye, what do we put in it?"

Lye jumped, scraping her trowel against the side of the hole and releasing a flurry of brown specks. "Oh.. um, first we need the letter."

The two girls had decided to try to catch a glimpse of some elves. Lye had taken charge, ordering this and that, a special letter to the elves, some wildflower seeds, an engraved plaque, and all manner of other things. Lye had decided to bury the plastic tube enclosing the letter and plant flowers over it, then place a sign over it notifying the elves what it was for. It wasn't a trap, as Lye kept insisting, it was a tribute. According to her, elves were too smart to fall for tricks.

Ch. 3

Trya helped Lye cover the tube-enclosed letter in soil. They worked in tepid silence until Lye cleared her throat.

"We should, uhh.. plant the flowers now."

"Ya think?", Trya gasped sarcastically. The hole was three-quarters full. She flicked a bit of mud off of her sleeve. It landed on Lye's nose, who went cross-eyed and threw a weed at Trya. The two girls both started cracking up.

Lye patted the moist, fluffy soil down. She relaxed- the moment of fear had passed. "Plaque!" she barked, trying to hide the shake of relief in her voice.

"Yes, sir!" Trya mockingly saluted her, then bowed, bending almost double, and handing her the beautifully engraved plaque. Trya's dad had engraved the richly colored cherry wood in his workshop. Lye rolled her eyes, jabbing the sharp stake into the freshly dug earth. "We're do-one!" she trilled.

"Chill, Maria!" Trya was making a reference to The Sound of Music. Lye didn't mind, it was like a compliment. That was her favorite movie.

Ch. 4

Lye stared up ate the stars from her bamboo bed. Her nature themed room was an attempt to remind her of the forest where she had been born. It was filled with eco-friendly furniture and overgrown plants, plus a huge skylight provided her with the most possible natural light. But tonight, Lye barely saw her room. She was worried- would her plan work?

Trya was so excited, she couldn't keep her eyes closed. When would the elves see their tribute? What would they think of it? I'll just go to the window and peek at it, she thought. Trya rolled out of her bed, ducking under the soft blue canopy. She walked to the window and almost had a heart attack. Someone was standing at their tribute.

She slipped out the door. Taking extra effort so that her IUggs wouldn't snap twigs or rustle leaves, Trya made her way to the edge of the woods. The slim, shadowy, figure turned- and Trya gasped as she saw it's delicate, pointed, ears. But when she saw it's surprised hazel eyes and mouth open in a surprised "O", Trya let out a startled cry. Lye was holding the glass tube and a shovel. Suddenly, the faint moonlight faded and Trya felt herself falling.

Ch. 5

Trya's lashes fluttered open. All she could see was a white haze. She blinked furiously, and Lye's frightened face came into focus. The previous events filtered back into her foggy mind. Trya turned away. Ughh, she thought. A rare migraine was visiting her. Why hadn't Lye told her the truth? She would have understood. Understood and helped her.

Hot tears pooled behind Lye's eyes once more as Trya turned away form her. Lye had gone on autopilot when her best friend collapsed. In a burst of unusual strength, she had half-dragged, half-carried Trya home. There,s he had phoned her parents and tearfully spilled the complete story. The doctor had made a house visit, which frightened Lye so much she almost lost her dinner. His verdict was positive, but Lye still felt terrible and had sat over Trya all night.

"Tri, I can explain. Please." Her words hung in the air as Trya closed her eyes and buried her face in the Pillowpet© Lye had given her. Then she changed her mind and put it in a different pillow.

" I only told one other person before. She freaked, and we had to move. I still remember that look on her face. It was so.. scared, and.. condescending, and I just-"

Ch. 6

Lye finished talking. There was a moment of expectant silence, then Trya turned around. She threw a pillow at Lye, then hugged her. They were quiet for a long time. Slowly, they both pulled apart and started talking at the same time.

"You could have TOLD ME!" Trya said playfully. Lye looked sheepish, then threw the pillow back at her. That ignited a pillow fight, which was how their parents found them ten minutes later. Trya and Lye looked at each other remorsefully, then broke into laughter.