

Becoming a Genie's Daughter

For Azena

By TheSpiralledEye

Flynn's life with his bitter single mother was a constant struggle, leaving him yearning for a real family. A fateful encounter with a Djinn transforms not just his life, but his body as well! Now the Djinn's daughter Flynn finds himself with powers of his own as well as the family he's always dreamed of.

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The cold wind cut right through Flynn as he walked up to his front door and put in the key. Inside, the house was blissfully warm, and there was a mouth-watering scent floating in the air. It had been a hellish day: intense lectures he'd barely been able to follow and a mountain of assignments to add to his to-do list. If he could live on campus rather than commuting two hours each way, maybe it wouldn't be so easy to fall behind, but he could barely afford tuition as it was, let alone rent. So, he had no choice but to continue living at home with his mother.

"Mom, I'm home. What smells so good?" he called, walking into the kitchen to see his mom sitting at the table with a bowl of delicious looking pasta.

As usual, Flynn's mother looked like she'd stepped right out of a magazine. She spent hours every morning doing her hair and makeup, planning her outfits and then ensuring she touched it all up throughout the day. Her pretty face pinched inwards as she saw him, and her eyes darted to his shoes.

"Did you wipe your feet?"

"Yes, mom." Flynn rolled his eyes, "I would never dream of dirtying your perfect carpet. Is there any food left? I'm starving."

"I didn't make enough for you." She shrugged, "You're an adult now, Flynn. You don't need me to baby you."

Flynn groaned.

"I've been doing all my own laundry and housekeeping, and you won't let me cook my own stuff because it'll dirty your perfect kitchen! Would it kill you to occasionally just make a little extra?"

"I did, it's my lunch tomorrow."

"Can't you just make something else for lunch?"

“Can’t *you* just make something yourself for dinner? Just do it in your room, I just polished the benchtops.”

“You want me to cook dinner...in my room.”

“I don’t care what you do, Flynn.” His mother sighed dramatically. “So long as it doesn’t bother me.”

“Everything bothers you,” Flynn muttered.

“What was that?” Her eyes narrowed. “Are you talking back to me? You’re own mother, who worked so hard to put a roof over your head?”

“Oh, here we go...”

“I raised you for twenty years. That’s two more than I was obligated to! You will respect my rules! If you can’t afford to live elsewhere, you must accept that and stop this whining.”

Arguments like this were a daily occurrence; he didn’t know why he ever expected different. Flynn couldn’t even blame my dad for not sticking around long enough for him to remember the man.

“You don’t just...stop being a mom the minute your kid turns eighteen...”

“In my mind, you should, I lost enough years cooking and bathing you, you’re an adult now, you should act like it. It’s not my fault you’re too lazy to afford your own place.”

Flynn bit his lip; there was no point, there was never any point in arguing with her. She was right, and he was wrong. Even if she claimed the sky was red, she would still be right. Flynn remembered the cutting wind outside and decided it was worth braving rather than eating yet another bowl of cup ramen in his room with the mini kettle he’d bought since his mother forbade him from using hers (“You’ll break it!” she claimed). Without another word, he turned and walked back out the door, listening to his mother berate him the entire way out. He’d earn an earful for leaving so ‘rudely’, but that was future Flynn’s problem as far as he was concerned.

He winced at the wind as he stepped back outside; there was a little diner a few blocks away, he could get a decent meal and stay warm until closing. If he was lucky, his mother would have an early night, and he could get up before she woke in the morning. He was almost there when he heard an odd commotion coming from up the street. A dog jumped right over the fence of the house and came bounding down the street with a tennis ball in its mouth. Flynn chuckled as the dog stopped right in front of him and dropped the ball at his feet, panting with its tongue lolling out the side of its mouth.

“Get tired of your usual playmate, boy?” Flynn grinned, reaching down and giving the dog a rough pat before grabbing the tennis ball.

The act was so inconsequential; how was Flynn to know it would be the thing that changed his life forever? His fingers closed around the ball, and suddenly, a woman was in

front of him. She didn't step from out of his vision or appear in a puff of smoke; one moment, it was just Flynn and the dog; the next, there was a woman standing bent over in front of him as though she were about to grab the ball; it was like a jump cut out of a film and somehow, the lack of fanfare made it even more startling. Flynn stumbled back, and the woman blinked in surprise before straightening out with a sigh.

"Why did you have to grab that ball in particular, Robin?" she said, sounding irritated yet fond at the same time. She petted the dog on the head and then turned her attention to Flynn, who was still trying to figure out where the hell she came from. His eyes looked her up and down, taking in the fine curvaceous figure and full red lips framed by dark hair; for a woman the same age as his mother, she looked gorgeous!

"I used to have a whole song and dance about this, but frankly, I can't be bothered these days." She sighed, "I am the Djinn, Jamila. As you have touched my vessel, I am bound to grant you three wishes; what is it that I can do for you?"

Flynn's mouth opened and closed a few times in shock, his brow knitting together in confusion. Even that little speech rounded rote like she'd said it a thousand times.

"Uh, sure..." he said slowly, this lady was clearly off her rocker. "Nice as that is, I might just be going." he took a few awkward steps around her, only for the woman to grab his arm and yank him back with surprising strength.

"Look, I have to follow you around until I grant the wishes. Neither of us wants that, so if you could just ask for fame and fortune like every other person would in this position, that would be great." Jamila replied, sounding tired.

"Uhhh..." Flynn's mind was whittling, trying to figure out how to sidestep this whole awkward interaction, and Jamilla rolled her eyes.

After a quick glance around to ensure nobody was watching, she clicked her fingers, and red began to creep across her body. It was fast; the whole change took less than a minute, and Flynn took a step back as her entire form melted into red smoke; she still looked like a beautiful woman, but her body was incorporeal and constantly shifting at the edge. Her eyes glowed with amusement, and then, just as quickly as she'd changed, she was back to looking normal.

"Believe me now?" She smirked. "Wishes, please."

Flynn couldn't believe it, a real life Djinn! He could wish for anything he wanted! All at once, his mind went blank; there were so many options that it was hard to narrow them down to just one. It was like being told to think of a joke on the spot. Not to mention, he knew the stories, or at least the reputation, of Djinn. They were tricksters, almost always evil and wouldn't hesitate to turn this into a monkey paw scenario, he had to think carefully. If only his mind hadn't been so fried from the tiring day, maybe he would have been able to think more

clearly. Jamilla was tapping her foot impatiently as his silence dragged on, and Flynn's decision paralysis only got stronger.

"Mom? Where are you?" A voice called. A young girl, maybe a middle schooler, stepped out onto the path from the same garden where the dog had appeared.

"Over here, darling," Jamilla called, her face morphing from irritation to warm and welcoming in an instant. "This young man got to the ball before I could. So I have to grant him some wishes."

"Oh, that's annoying." The girl pouted. "Can you wish quickly, please? Mom was about to make dinner, and I'm starving!"

"Why don't we get takeaway instead, I can't be bothered cooking anymore."

"Oh, yay! What kind?"

"You pick." Jamilla smiled sweetly, giving the girl a little boop on the nose. "You're the one who aced a maths quiz, you deserve a treat."

Flynn's heart ached to watch the encounter; it was so warm and domestic that he totally forgot that a second ago, Jamilla had been made up of smoke and offering him his heart's desire. Jealousy bloomed in his gut, thinking back to how similar and yet starkly different this scene was to the talk with his own mother only a few minutes ago.

"You're lucky." He told the girl. "I wish I could have a mother like yours."

Jamilla's head snapped to attention, and Flynn winced, all of a sudden realising what a foolish choice of words that had been.

"Odd, but acceptable." Jamilla mused before waving her hand dramatically through the air.

"No, wait-!"

But it was too late; Flynn could already feel the magic seeping into his pores, or at least, that's what he assumed the strange tingling sensation was. It burrowed deep, seeping through his skin into muscle and then bone. He could feel his inner organs rearranging, which was strange enough, but then he felt the shape of his body start to shift as well.

"What are you doing? Uuhhhh, Oh God, this f-feels so weird!"

His chest felt tight, then a pressure formed somewhere above his ribs but below his skin and began to push out. With each breath he took, he watched as his chest expanded, almost like his panicked gasps were inflating it. Two round breasts began to grow outwards, their nipples visible through his shirt for a moment before it too began to change. Going from a regular old t-shirt to a strapless top that showed off his midriff. Almost like a bandage that covered his modesty, except that it was fringed with golden tassels.

"Wha-what do tits and a boob tube have to do with my wish?!"

"Magic works in mysterious ways, dearie." Jamilla giggled before gently pushing her daughter away. "This isn't for your eyes, sweetie."

Flynn didn't have the luxury of watching her go. He was too occupied with his new set of tits and the fact that the same pressure he'd felt in his chest was now spreading out of his ass. His butt cheeks turned peachy while his jeans turned into a pair of loose-fitting silk pants, cuffed at his ankles with those same golden tassels. He was strangely glad; at least the loose fabric hid his now plump and sweet butt from the world. The tits were bad enough!

His thighs thickened, his other limbs thinned, and his shoulders took on a gentle slope before rich dark brown hair finally began to spill from his skull. His fingers threaded through it in a panic, and Flynn watched his nails neaten into little half-moons right before his eyes. His eyes opened and closed in disbelief, growing progressively heavier and hooded as his lashes grew. Flynn stared in fascination, watching his hands turn soft and supple, but then, to his shock and slight horror, his skin began to change colour as well! His skin darkened, taking on a deep forest green that spread all over his body.

"Wahhh!" He cried, waving his hands back and forth as if the green would somehow fly off if he moved fast enough.

It did not, if anything, made his form more indistinct. In fact, it was almost smokey like Jamilla's had been a few moments ago. He stumbled, spinning around on his toes, trying to make sense of what was happening to his body. His face was changing, and there was an odd pressure between his legs. It was only when he suddenly felt an absence there that he realised his cock had disappeared entirely. The tingling sense of magic drained away, though not entirely. Flynn could feel it inside him now; it wasn't active, but it was as if he'd gained a new muscle. He just didn't know quite how to use it yet. He was left gasping, standing there in the middle of the street with a sighing Jamilla.

"This...this isn't remotely what I asked for!" He cried, "What have you done to me! I'm green!"

"You're a Djinn, sweetheart."

"Don't you 'sweetheart' me, I wish to be changed back to the way I was!" Flynn yelled, crossing his arms over his chest in a huff and wincing as his arms crushed against his new tits, he wasn't used to them being there.

"Sorry, but once you became a Djinn the other two wishes became forfeit. Djinn can't grant the wishes of other Djinn. It's the law."

"So break it!"

"Magic laws can't be broken, sweetheart. That's just how it is. Same as me being unable to resist granting a wish that's been made of me by the person who holds my vessel." She reached out and plucked the tennis ball off the ground where Flynn had dropped it during his panic.

"Come inside before somebody sees you." She continued, taking Flynn by the wrist and leading him up to the house where the young girl was waiting.

“Ooooooh, green! You look so pretty!” She beamed, bouncing up and down so that her ponytail almost came undone. “I’m blue! See!”

For a brief moment, the girl changed to a smokey blue form and back again, and Jamilla clicked her tongue in disapproval.

“Amira, you know the rules.”

“No transforming outside.” Amira rolled her eyes, “but she’s transformed!”

“She doesn’t know any better yet.”

“Um, she is actually a he and also has a name!” Flynn snapped, ripping his wrist out of Jamilla’s hand. “And he would like to know how the hell wishing for a better mother got him transformed into a green babe in a boob tube!”

“Language.” Jamilla scolded as Amira giggled. “That is no way to talk in front of your little sister.”

“Sister!?” Flynn and Amira both cried, the latter in delight and the former in shock.

“Magic moves in mysterious ways.” Jamilla smiled fondly, “You wanted a mother like me, a relationship like the one I have with Amira. So my magic made you my daughter, and of course, that means becoming a Djinn.”

“That is some fucking bullshit!” Flynn gaped. “I mean, if people’s wishes can get twisted up so easily, it’s a wonder anybody ever gets what they want!”

“Language!!” Jamilla scolded again, more sternly this time. “Do not swear in front of your sister!”

“She’s not my-” Flynn was about to say sister but then realised Amira was looking at him with wide eyes, tears were already building there, and he just sighed and let the sentence die. It wasn’t this girl’s fault her mom’s magic turned him into a freak. She already looked so excited at the concept of having a sister too. He didn’t want to crush her. Even if he was having the absolute day from hell. The three of them stepped inside before Jamilla stopped in shock for a moment.

“Your vessel!” she cried, “Quick, we have to figure out what item your soul is bonded to, what do you sense?”

“I don’t know?” Flynn shrugged, he was still trying to deal with the whole green skin issue.

“Quick, I need you to focus, close your eyes and feel a tug in your mind.”

The last thing he wanted to do was listen to Jamilla right now, but her face was surprisingly serious and...worried? He did as he was told, focusing on that magic feeling still bubbling beneath the surface of his skin. She was right, there was an odd mental tug leading him out the door.

“It’s out on the street, I think? No, wait, it’s moving?”

“Shit, somebody must have picked it up. That can't be, you would have been summoned if that was the case.” Jamilla muttered, and Flynn opened one eye.

“Language.” He said cheekily, and Amira giggled.

A second later, the same dog came running back into the house, and the tugging sensation came with it.

“I think it's the dog.” He blinked, and Jamilla's jaw dropped.

“That can't be—wait, unless...is it this?”

She reached down and unhooked the leather collar from the dog's neck and removed the small silver diamond pendant with a little star engraved into it in place of the dog's name. Flynn's mind tugged toward it.

“Yes, that's it.”

“A dog tag? At least it's not the type with his name or address engraved in it.” Amira shrugged, “That could be awkward.”

Jamilla passed him the little metal star, and the moment it touched his skin, a warm feeling settled over him—a feeling of comfort and home, like all was right in the world.

“A djinn is bound to an item at birth,” Jamilla said seriously. “Most of the time, it's the closest object, so a mother will hold the chosen vessel while she gives birth. You seem to have bonded to the tag as the closest item, we're lucky, if you'd ended up bound to a rock or something, it would be much easier to lose.”

“I thought Djinn came out of lamps,” Flynn replied dumbly, closing his fingers around the tag.

“Some Djinn are old fashioned and like to keep to tradition, but it's old hat now.” She waved.

“My vessel is a ring!” Amira smiled proudly, showing him the little silver band on her finger. “Mom was smart, it's pretty unlikely any human will get their hands on it since I never take it off.”

Flynn turned to Jamilla and raised an eyebrow.

“And yours...is a tennis ball?”

“My mother was eccentric and a fan of the game.’ Jamilla sighed, “It's gotten me into all sorts of trouble. Especially since Amira wouldn't stop begging for a dog.”

Amira blushed and grinned awkwardly while giving the dog a pat.

“Robin just wanted to play, how was he to know the ball you keep in the cupboard was off limits?”

“Maybe if you trained him.”

“Uh, speaking of training.” Flynn raised a hand, “How do, y'know, magic myself back to looking normal?”

He waved a hand over his green female body, and Amira giggled.

“That’s easy, you can do it without thinking!”

“Well, clearly I can’t, or I’d be me again by now.”

“I’ll figure it out.” He sighed, trying in vain to focus on that strange, bubbly, magic feeling, but nothing happened.

“Here, sweetheart, let me teach you.” Jamilla said gently, taking him by the hand and leading him over to a little mirror hanging on the wall. “It’s easier to close your eyes the first few times.”

“Okay...” Flynn obeyed, refocusing at the same time.

“Now, focus inward and push the magic out; focus on the idea of ‘humanity’.” Jamilla instructed, holding his shoulders in support. “There! You did it!”

Flynn blinked his eyes open in surprise; that seemed too easy. When he looked in the mirror, the green skin was gone, as was the smoke, but it was still a woman looking back at him. A beautiful woman with dark brown hair and olive skin and warm eyes hooded with dark lashes, but a woman nonetheless.

“That’s not me,” Flynn said.

“It is now, you’re my daughter, thanks to the wish.”

“Aren’t Djinn, like, shapeshifters? Can I at least make myself look like I used to?”

“Of course, but only temporarily and...well, it’s a bit more complicated than just hiding your true nature.”

Flynn swallowed and looked down at his chest, taking in the extra weight and watching his new breasts rise and fall. Jamilla squeezed his shoulders, and he winced.

“It’s alright to be upset, I know this is a lot to take in all at once. Jamilla, why don’t you go and start tidying up the study? There are some boxes in the hall you can use to store things for now.”

Flynn cocked his head to the side in shock; he couldn’t remember the last time he got words of gentle encouragement like that.

“Spare room?”

“Well, you need your own bedroom, of course,” Jamilla said matter of factly. “It’s a good thing we have a spare room in the house!”

“You’re cleaning out your study to be my bedroom? Just like that?” Flynn gaped, and Jamilla gave him a funny look. “Did you expect to be sleeping on the floor? It’s not like I can send you back to your old life. Reality has shifted.”

“So my old mother...isn’t my mother anymore? She doesn’t know me at all?”

“No,” Jamilla said, looking guilty. “Sorry about that. Really, I can’t help how my magic gets out of hand sometimes.”

Flynn thought back to all the times his mother made him feel guilty over the years, giving up a room in “her” house for all his “junk”. How, if she were here, she’d just be telling

him to drink a cup of concrete, harden up and get over things. Hell, she probably wouldn't have taken the time to teach him that simple spell to appear human. She would have rolled her eyes and told him to figure it out by himself, the same way she had when he tried to ask for help with anything. Subconsciously, his hands went to his ear and felt along the tiny scar there; he'd gotten it falling off his bike as a kid when his mother refused to help him learn. It wasn't large, but the tiny bit of raised skin had always bothered him; how hard would it have been for her to hold the seat once or twice? But no, all she'd done was pat herself on the back for even wasting money on such an expensive, unnecessary toy and yell at him for not using it enough.

"Oh, sweetheart, it's alright," Jamilla said gently, squeezing his shoulders again. "I'll train you up, and if you're really that upset, you can change reality if you want. I really am sorry for taking you away from your mother."

Flynn wiped his eyes and took a deep breath.

"Don't be."

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"This is going to be so amazing, I have always wanted a big sister. We can go shopping and talk about boys and stuff. Well, I can do that once I meet a boy who isn't gross." Amira grinned, stacking the last of the boxes in the hall.

"Uh, sure." Flynn shrugged. "Maybe."

The girl seemed to have forgotten that not too long ago, he had been a boy! He had no idea how to live up to her expectations of a doting big sister.

"Sorry, it's so boring!" Amira blushed, shoving the last of the boxes out into the hall.

"But you can decorate it however you want, maybe with rock posters and uh, like a makeup table and stuff. That's what older sisters always have in their room on TV."

Thanks to magic, the former study had only taken an hour to clear out. The room was now spartan, with just a desk in the corner and a chest of drawers still half-filled with paper and office supplies.

"Mom can help you decorate it tomorrow, maybe? So it's less boring."

"It must be nice to snap your fingers and make whatever you want." Flynn smiled, imagining how easy decorating would be without the tedious trips to IKEA.

"I can't do that, Djinn don't actually have that many powers when we're not granting wishes." Amira shoved one of the boxes with her toe. "It would be nice if we could make whatever we wanted, though...."

That was news to Flynn; he wanted to know more, but Jamilla's voice interrupted them.

“Girls! Dinner!”

“Yay! I’m starving!”

Flynn followed Amira back downstairs, taking in his new home as he went. From what he could tell, it was a relatively normal-looking house. He wasn’t sure what he was expecting: ornate carpets, oil lamps, hanging silks, maybe? But instead, everything seemed fairly pedestrian, except for the tropical potted plants that seemed to be growing just fine despite the chill in the air. They stepped back out into the kitchen to see Jamilla opening several pizza boxes, and Flynn’s hunger came back in full force.

“Which piece can I have?” He asked eagerly, and Amira giggled.

“Whatever one you want! Which is your favourite type? I like mushrooms personally.” She helped herself to the biggest slice of the supreme pizza and began munching away.

“I can have as much as I like?” Flynn gaped.

“Of course, just don’t give yourself a stomach ache,” Jamilla replied.

Flynn grabbed a piece from each pizza in awe and chowed down, excited to be able to switch between flavours at his leisure rather than finishing all of a single piece before being allowed to ask for another.

“Now, tomorrow we start your training,” Jamilla announced. “You’re an adult, so you’re quite behind on magic training, not to mention Djinn law. I will teach you, but don’t get frustrated if you don’t get it straight away, alright?”

Flynn nodded, and Amira took over the conversation, talking about some TV show she’d been watching. The sun was fully set behind the clouds now, and he finally had a moment to breathe after picking up the tennis ball. He thought about his mother and the cold room that had been waiting for him only a few hours ago. Now, he was sitting in a proper home with two people who had shown him more kindness than she ever had, eating a hot meal and learning about magic. It felt surreal. On some level, he tried to feel upset; Jamilla had turned his life upside down after all, he had every right to be angry. But knowing what he’d left behind, he just couldn’t muster the effort.

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“Morning!”

Flyn jolted awake as Amira landed on the mattress next to him. He flailed in surprise and then winced at the dull pain in his chest; sleeping on his stomach was going to be a lot less comfortable now that he had such a full chest.

“Mom said not to wake you, but I just had to. I didn’t want to go to school without saying hi!” Amira grinned. “I can’t wait to tell everybody about my big sister now that I have

one, but then I realised I don't know anything about you, so can you, like, tell me some stuff so I can brag? Can you drive? Are you a genius? Can you do any cool tricks?"

"Cool tricks?" Flynn groaned, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. "What am I, a dog?"

Amira threw back her head and laughed.

"Oh, you're funny! I'll tell them that!"

"Amira! Stop bothering your sister, and hurry up! The bus will be here any minute, and by any minute, I mean it's coming up the street!"

"Oops! Gotta go." She threw her arms around Flynn before he could do anything to stop it. The hug was brief but warm, leaving his stomach churning; he couldn't remember the last time somebody had hugged him. He didn't get a chance to return the gesture before Amira pulled away and started dashing for the door.

"I'll see ya after school!" She called before running out the door.

Flynn had enough time to stumble out of bed and down the stairs to see Jamilla kissing her daughter on the forehead before she ran out the door to the waiting bus. Flynn felt a smile form on his lips; if nothing else, Amira was a sweet kid.

"Alrighty then, I guess we can get started now that you're up," Jamilla said as she turned to him.

"It's almost eight, you let me sleep in?"

"Yesterday was hard for you, and today won't be much easier. You needed all the rest you could get." Jamilla replied. "Now, come, let's start with something basic, like getting dressed."

"I know how to get dressed." Flynn flushed, suddenly realising that he wasn't wearing a bra and had no idea how to put one on. Jamilla had lent him a pair of soft, flannel pyjamas for the night, which thankfully hid his nipples, but a shirt wouldn't be so forgiving.

"Our shapeshifting abilities can spread to the items closest to us. It's not much but it does make picking an outfit a lot easier!" Jamilla grinned. "I want you to focus on your magic and then on the outfit you want to make. Start simple, the fewer buttons and seams, the better."

"Are my clothes going to...disappear?"

"Yes, of course."

"I think I will practise this in my room then."

"If that's what makes you comfortable, but I'm a mother, sweetheart! I've seen it all."

Flynn's face burned as he rushed back upstairs and locked the door behind him; what a freeing feeling it was even to have a lock. The last thing he wanted was his new mother bursting in on him if he got this wrong. He focused on what Jamilla had said and tried to make a simple shirt and jeans, the magic flowed outwards, and he felt fabric smoothing

over his skin, shaping to his body and cupping the curve of his ass. He opened his eyes in wonder, watching the outfit swirl and remake itself to suit his new body.

“Yes!” He pumped a fist in the air as the jeans formed perfectly around him. Showing off the curve of his new legs and his tight ass. He jumped with glee only to realise, to his embarrassment, that he was completely topless. His tits jiggled a little as he moved, and he groaned. He’d been so focused on trying to make some pants he forgot about the shirt, and now he had no fabric left to transform!

It took a bit of focus, but he managed to turn part of his jeans into a bra and shirt at the expense of turning the pants into a tight-fitting skirt. It felt a little weird to be walking around in a skirt, but it was quite freeing. Still, his eyes refused to leave the flood as he self-consciously stepped back downstairs to show Jamilla.

“Oh! Wonderful! You did so well for your first time!” She praised. “Well done, sweetheart!”

The praise made him blush for entirely new reasons, and he soaked it up like a flower starved of sunlight.

“Now, it’s time for us to do the less fun part, making you documents and a new identity.”

“New identity?” The smile fell from his face.

“Yes, I may have changed reality, but you still need to pick a name and reorganise everything, are you studying? Do I need to get you re-enrolled under your new name and make up a high school record?”

“You can do all that?” Flynn’s eyes went wide. “I get to pick a new name?”

He’d never liked Flynn, but when he’d broached the topic of changing it once he turned eighteen a few years ago, he’d gotten an earful about being ungrateful and swiftly tossed the idea. There were so many options he wasn’t even sure where to begin.

“Yes and no,” Jamilla replied, not noticing the wonder in Flynn’s face. “I can do some of it, but my husband is much more skilled at this kind of magic than I am. He’ll organise the rest when he returns from his business trip tonight.

Flynn felt like he’d been punched in the gut. Suddenly, all of the excitement about a new name fled. Husband, Jamilla had a husband, and if she was his new mother, that meant, for the first time in his life, he was going to have a *father*.

“Does he know about me?” he croaked, his mouth had gone dry.

“Not yet, Djinn are immune to reality-warping magic, or at least. They remember the original reality unless told.”

“S-so your husband is going to come home to a brand new, twenty year old daughter?” Flynn could feel his chest starting to heave. What was he supposed to do? He

wanted to make a good impression, what did women do for their fathers? Would he even want another daughter, especially one twice his other child's age?

"Sweetheart, are you alright?"

Flynn panicked to find Jamilla standing right in front of him; he hadn't even heard her stand up.

"Yeah, I just...I've never had a dad before. Will he want me to call him that?"

"Only if you want to." Jamilla smiled, placing a soft hand on his cheek. "Same with me. You can call me Jamilla or mom if you like."

Flynn swallowed.

"I... don't think I am quite ready to do that."

"That's fine. Now, why don't we focus on a name, Hm?"

"Okay." Flynn nodded, glad for the distraction.

He and Jamilla looked through multiple websites and even her old baby book, looking for the perfect one. His excitement returned as he scanned possible options; he wanted this to be perfect. He had an opportunity here to start a whole new life, and he wanted the perfect name to go with it. He was scanning through a list of Arabic names since Jamilla had mentioned they were the most common among Djinn when he saw it.

"Farah..." he whispered, "Meaning happiness or joy."

"A lovely name to be sure." Jamilla said, "What do you think?"

"I think it's exactly what I want."

"Wonderful!"

She clapped her hands together just as the sound of the front door opening echoed down the hall. Flynn was on edge instantly; it was too early for Amira to be home from school; this had to be Jamilla's husband.

"Kareem!" She greeted as a man holding a briefcase stepped into the living room.

He was tall, with olive skin, a five o'clock shadow and a strong jaw. Flynn watched awkwardly as Jamilla got up and gave him a quick kiss.

"It's good to be home. I swore that plane would never land," he joked before turning and noticing Flynn with a friendly smile. "Who's this?"

"I..."

"This is Farah." Jamilla said slowly, "It's a bit of a long story-"

"A story you can tell," Flynn said quickly, getting to his feet. "I need some air."

"Sweetheart-!"

"Bye!"

Flynn pushed past before anybody could stop him and stepped outside, power walking for several blocks until it was clear neither of them were following. His heart beat rapidly in his chest. The last two days had been so much; he didn't even know how to start

processing it all. He wandered, focusing on the comforting presence of his own magic. Without realising it, he found himself standing in front of his old house, his former mother's perfectly maintained garden in full bloom under the spring sky. Yesterday's cool rain had fed the flowers, and they were vibrant. His mother spent hours in this garden. It was her pride and joy. The rose bushes that framed it looked marvellous, except for the single bud that stubbornly refused to bloom. Curiously, Flynn reached out and tapped it, letting the magic flow from his fingertips into the blossom and watching it bloom before his eyes.

"Wow," he breathed, "I did that..."

What else would he be capable of now?

"Ah, so nice to see a young person interested in flowers these days, rather than technology."

Flynn nearly jumped out of his skin in shock; he'd been so enthralled with his new magic that he hadn't noticed his former mother approaching from the other side of the bush.

"What a lovely young lady you are." She smiled. "To take time to enjoy nature."

"Uh, yes." He stammered awkwardly. His mother didn't have a single shred of recognition in her eyes. She really had no idea it was him. Curiosity burned in him, and before he could think better, he asked,

"Do you have any children?"

"Sadly, no." She sighed, "I always wanted a daughter, but it never happened."

"Oh...what about a son?"

"Men." His mother's face turned bitter. "Useless creatures, you're better off on your own, my dear, mark my words! The last thing a woman needs in her life is a man!"

"Even a son?" He whispered.

"Sons, why bother when they will inevitably grow up to be just like their fathers, disappointments." His former mother clipped the rosebud he'd just bloomed without even realising as she snapped the shears angrily at the bush. "Why do you say that? Knocked up, are you? I suppose it's a boy; based on how you're talking, he'll ruin your life! Mark my words!"

Flynn felt a bitter taste spread over his tongue; even now, his mother was a bitter, rude witch of a woman. To his delight, he realised he didn't feel a single shred of guilt, turning his back on her without another word. Walking back toward Jamilla's house, his heart felt lighter; within those walls was comfort. It was home. Even after only a single day, that place had become more welcoming to him than the house he'd grown up in. As he walked up the garden path, he saw Jamilla in the window, looking both worried and relieved as she spotted him. In a second, she was at the front door with her arms wrapped around him, and Flynn felt a lump form in his throat. Flynn melted into the hug, feeling all the maternal warmth seep into his skin. That sense of home only got stronger.

"I'm so sorry, sweetheart. I pushed too much on you too fast, didn't I?" Jamilla said as she pulled back. "Us Djinn are so flexible, we go with the flow, and I should have known it would take you more time to adjust."

"No, it's okay." He cleared his throat. "Thanks for giving me some space, I should probably go say hello to...Kareem?"

"Yes, that's his name. Come on."

Gently, Jamilla led Flynn back into the living room, where Kareem was standing awkwardly. He had that same concerned look in his eye that Jamilla had.

"Ah, Farah." He smiled. "We were both worried. Oh, sorry. Do you still prefer Flynn inside the house? I can call you that if you'd prefer."

"Farah is fine." He smiled. "Sorry for just appearing in your life all of a sudden, I bet you weren't expecting a new daughter when you got back."

Kareem chuckled.

"No, I can't say that was on my bingo card, but, it's not an unpleasant surprise."

"It's not?" His voice caught in his throat.

"Us Djinn go with the flow. Besides, it was my wife whose magic made you, and from what she had told me, you're a delightful young woman who I am sure I can be proud to call daughter."

The casual, easy acceptance made Flynn's knees wobble, he felt almost dizzy with relief.

"Now, I am the paperwork whiz. Do you want me to make you up anything besides the essentials? College applications?"

Flynn thought back to his college degree, the one that was so stressful. He didn't even like business. He'd just done it because his mother thought men without a degree were layabouts. The truth was, he had no idea what he wanted to do with his life; only that for one, he had the choice to follow his own heart rather than his overbearing mother's will. He shook his head.

"No, just the basics for now. I think I want to spend some time finding myself before I go and get an expensive degree. Besides, I have a lot to learn about, being a Djinn and all."

Jamilla beamed, and Kareem nodded.

"Smart girl, take things slow. Once Jamilla has taught you the basics, I'd be happy to help you specialise your magic if you want."

Flynn got the distinct impression that Kareem was offering to do the Djinn equivalent of tossing a football in the backyard with him; the realisation made a warm fuzzy feeling settle in his chest.

"That would be great. How are you going to make my new documents? Magic Amira said you can't just conjure things up."

Kareem chuckled. "You let me worry about that for now, I think you've been shocked enough for one day. Focus on your foundational skills with Jamilla for now."

"Speaking of basics, would you like to learn a few parlour tricks, Flynn?" Jamilla grinned, clicking her fingers and instantly lighting every candle in the house.

"Yeah!" He smiled, "But...from now on, you can call me Farah."

~

Time seemed to fly; days turned into weeks, then months, and Farah felt like she was caught in a whirlwind. The first few weeks had been dedicated to lessons with Jamilla, learning the basics of magic as well as the laws of the Djinn and their history. Even after a dozen history lessons, she wasn't sure she quite understood the history of Shaitan and how the Djinn were created, only that obeying their laws were paramount, lest they bring their creator down on them. No revealing their nature to humans, no magic in public places without plausible deniability and most importantly, any human who touches a Djinn's vessel must have their three wishes granted.

"So make sure to keep this safe." Jamilla had warned, holding up the little star pendant that Farah was tethered to. "You are so young and inexperienced. The last thing you need is to be compelled into wish granting. Even an experienced Djinn like me can have things go haywire. You're proof of that."

Amira had been right; when not granting wishes, her powers were relatively limited; aside from shape-shifting, she'd managed to turn herself invisible for a brief window of time and then into smoke, but that was about it. Her dreams of conjuring up whatever she pleased with the click of a finger were dashed. Outside of the occasional little spark of magic like the one that made the flower bloom, the power set was quite limited. The only other power she was yet to master was the one that made Kareem so powerful: possession.

"You can take over somebody's body?" She gaped when Kareem came home one night with an envelope of documents.

"Yes, it makes getting fake documents authenticated much easier." He chuckled. "No black market driver's licence or birth certificate here. These are all the genuine articles, courtesy of a few minutes of borrowed time from some pencil pushers."

"It's a difficult skill, though," Jamilla warned, "And if you don't do it right, you can end up stuck. Don't go trying it any time soon, even I struggle to possess a human for more than a few minutes."

"I wish I could do it." Amira pouted, "Then I could get myself straight A's without having to do fractions."

"There are worse things in life than fractions, Amira." Farah giggled.

“Easy for you to say. You don’t have to do them.”

Farah found herself settling into her new family dynamic faster than she could have ever dreamed. How many times had she wished for this as a boy? For fun family movie nights and words of gentle encouragement when she made a mistake? Even having a little sister turned out to be fun even if she could be a little irritating at times. Even being female was starting to feel normal!

She woke one morning to the quiet sound of muffled giggles echoing about the room. Farah smiled softly, keeping her eyes closed and pretending to be asleep while she listened to the sound of tiptoeing footsteps across her floor, Amira. Slowly, she cracked an eye and watched as tiny divots appeared in the carpet as an invisible tween snuck across the room. Farah waited until she was close before bolting upright and reaching forward, managing to grab the little Djinn around the middle in a bear hug. Instantly, she was visible again, giggling as Farah tickled her down the sides.

“How did you know!” Amira laughed, “I was gonna surprise you awake!”

“You’re not as sneaky as you think, little sis.” Farah sighed, giving her a boop on the nose. “I’m getting used to your tricks.”

“Well then, I just have to make new ones! Don’t I?” Amira declared proudly.

“So, what’s happening today?” Farah asked, and Amira instantly clammed up.

“What do you mean?”

“You always come and wake me up early when you’re excited about something, so what’s happening? Movie? Take away dinner? A friend’s birthday?”

“Nothing! I can surprise you for no reason!” Amira said quickly, far too quickly.

“Uh-huh?” Farah nodded, not believing her for a second. “Well, it must have something to do with me, or you wouldn’t be so flighty all of a sudden.”

“No, it’s nothing to do with you!”

“Oh, so something *is* happening.”

Amira slapped her hands over her mouth and pouted in annoyance.

“Just get up, you sleep too much.”

“You’ll start sleeping in yourself too, kid.”

“I am not a kid, I’m twelve, thank you very much.”

“Anyway, I was up late last night practising my magic, I haven’t had all my life like you.” Farah swung her legs over the side of the bed and got to her feet to stretch.

“You know…” Amira said quietly, “You don’t have to practise so much, you’re already pretty good.”

“But I can always get better, I can’t have you outdoing me at invisibility, can I?” Farah teased, disappearing with a snap of her fingers. It was the sort of thing that usually delighted

Amira, whose favourite game was invisible hide and seek. Today, though she didn't leap to her feet to try to find her sister, instead she sat on the bed looking pensive.

"Hey," Farah blinked back into existence and sat back down. "What's wrong?"

"I just don't want you to practise so much." Amira replied.

"If you want me to spend more time with you, I can cut down a bit but there is more to this, isn't there?"

Amira looked away for a moment and wrung her hands together.

"If you get strong enough, will you change things back to the way they were? Being a boy and...and not being my sister?"

Oh.

Farah's chest ached a little; to be perfectly honest, she hadn't thought about changing back into her old self. She certainly had no desire to go back to living with her other mother. Amira was still refusing to look at her, and Farah felt a sense of affection bloom in her chest; she knew the girl was fond of her, but she didn't realise quite how attached she'd grown.

"Amira, I am never changing back." Farah whispered, "I promise."

"Really?" Her tears were instantly dried as a massive smile split across her face. "You really, truly promise?"

"I do." Farah squeezed her arm. "Now come on, you're going to be late for school."

~

Amira's spirits were lifted, and by the time Farah had gotten dressed and walked downstairs for breakfast, she was her usual self. Nobody could have guessed she was on the verge of tears ten minutes ago.

"The bus isn't running today, could you walk Amira to school?" Jamilla asked, and she rummaged around in the fridge. "I have something I need to get done."

"Oh yes, please!" Amira bounced on her toes. "Let's go, let's go right now!"

"Okay, something is definitely happening, since when are you excited to go to school?"

Amira didn't answer, but Farah caught a glimpse of a cheeky smile on her face as they headed for the front door. As they walked, Farah couldn't help but turn her head to look over at her former mother's house. It looked immaculate as always, and there was the woman herself, slowly working away at her garden without a care in the world. It was immature, but Farah couldn't help but feel a little bitter at how good both their lives were. She was happier now, but a part of her wishes her mother was miserable or missed her. Even though it made no sense for a woman to miss a child she technically never had.

“Wow, look at those flowers!” Amira gasped, “I’m going to get one for my teacher! Maybe then she’ll go easy on me for forgetting that homework!”

“Amira, no!” Farah hissed, but it was too late. The little girl was across the street, plucking a rose from the bushes before she could stop her. The girl smiled, smelling the flower with a grin, completely oblivious to the furious woman stalking toward her.

“How dare you!” She screeched, “What sort of degenerate child are you? To go picking flowers that don’t belong to you?”

“I...I...” Amira stammered, taken aback by the sudden yelling.

“Well? Aren’t you even going to apologise, you little wretch?”

“I’m s-sorry! There were so many, and they were so pretty I didn’t think anybody would mind me taking just one.”

“Clearly, your mother never taught you any manners then. Kids these days just take what they want without thinking. It’s downright rude! Give it back right now!”

Farah felt rage boil under her skin; she’d never been brave enough to stand up to her mother before. Not for her own sake, but for Amira, she would do anything.

“There is no need to yell, she’s just a kid,” Farah spoke up, stepping between the two. “She made a mistake and she’s sorry, but the bushes are in full bloom, it’s not that noticeable.”

“It’s the principle! Clearly, this little brat needs to be taught some manners! I bet this isn’t the first thing she’s helped herself to, I’m right aren’t I? She’s a little thief!”

“No, I’m not!” Amira wailed, “I swear it! I’m sorry, I just wanted a flower!”

“Those crocodile tears aren’t fooling me-”

“Enough!”

Farah rose herself up and glared at the woman who used to be her mother with hatred.

“You nasty, vile woman! How dare you berate her like that for an honest mistake!” Farah shoved the thorny rose into the woman’s chest. “Take your flower! I hope it looks after you in your old age because nobody else is going to!”

Before she could say another word, Farah grabbed Amira by the hand and stalked away, not bothering to look back.

“That woman is scary...” Amira whispered as they walked. “I’m sorry.”

“You shouldn’t take things, even flowers, without asking.” Farah conceded. “But she had no right to talk to you like that.”

“I should have asked...”

“She wouldn’t have given it to you anyway,” Farah rolled her eyes. “I know that woman; she’s impossible to please. Don’t let her get to you.”

“Okay...Farah?”

“Yeah.”

“Thank you, for standing up for me.”

They stopped, and Farah smiled down at her.

“Of course, that’s what big sisters do.”

Amira flung her arms around Farah’s middle and hugged her close.

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

~

They walked up to the school only to see an empty playground and closed gates.

“Oh! I forgot! The bus isn’t running because it’s a day off for teachers or something. Whoopsie daisy, guess we better just go home.” Amira said an excited trill in her voice that made Farah roll her eyes fondly.

“I guess, I’m sure nothing strange will have happened in the house since you kept me suspiciously busy.”

Amira stuck her tongue out and turned back toward the house with Farah in tow. She expected something small, perhaps Jamilla had made her yet another traditional Djinn outfit, that was what Amira had been excited about the last time she’d acted like this. What she wasn’t expecting was a dark room. Or what happened when she flicked on the lights.

“Surprise!”

Farah’s jaw dropped. The room was filled with people, some with brightly coloured skin and smokey hair, all smiling at her with excited looks.

“What?”

“It’s a welcoming party!” Amira cried, clearly happy to finally be able to let the cat out of the bag. “To welcome you to the Djinn community! Mom’s been planning it for ages!”

The room was filled with smiling faces, and Farah suddenly felt overwhelmed, the table was laid with all her favourite snacks, and she suddenly remembered all the little questions Jamilla had been asking the last few weeks: her favourite colours, her favourite foods and music. All of them were present now, along with at least a dozen or so Djinn.

“Come on, let’s see your proper form!” One grinned, a musclebound orange Djinn whose bald head was shiny despite his smokey form. He wafted up to Farah with interest, and she blushed.

“Alright…” She let the glamour fade and, for the first time since that first day, turned back into her smokey, green-skinned self. A few of the Djinn clapped, and she smiled nervously.

“Nice! You did good work!”

“What a lovely colour! You don’t often get green Djinn these days!”

“Farah,” Jamilla started, “these are our friends and family members, all the Djinn from this city.”

“There are so many!”

“In a city of hundreds of thousands, a little over two dozen Djinn isn’t much.” Kareem chuckled. “But I suppose it can feel like it when we’re all together. Here, let me introduce you.”

A flurry of names and faces followed; there were Djinn with beards long enough to wrap around their scarf, young Djinn Amira’s age and everybody in between. Some floated about in their true forms while others stayed human. They all shook her hand enthusiastically and a few of the older women even gave her a hug.

“Oh we’ve been so excited to meet you!” A pink Djinn woman said gleefully, “You can just call me Auntie Janet, oh! It’s been so long since we had some new blood around, I must introduce you to my son, Arvin. Ah, where did he go? He’s a nice young Djinn, I am sure you’ll get along!”

“I’m sure we’ll meet him soon!” Jamilla said before quickly steering Farah away and whispering. “Careful, if it were up to her, you’d be engaged to her boy already. She’s desperate for grandbabies.”

Farah’s mind reeled; of course, she could get pregnant now. It was something she’d never had to worry about before. She’d settled into this female body just fine, but that reality check was so swift that it almost knocked the air from her lungs. Luckily, there were plenty of people ready to distract her.

“What’s that face?” A broad, muscular male Djinn asked. “You should be smiling, girl, this is all for you!”

He leaned in so close that Farah felt her eyes sting from the orange smoke wafting off his body. She recognised him as one of the Djinn Kareem had introduced her to at the start of the party, Nazeem.

“I...I’ve never had a party before, sorry. I’m not really sure how to act.” She chuckled awkwardly.

“Never had a party! Not even for your birthday?” Nazeem cried. “That’s criminal. We need to throw you more to make up for the missed ones!”

He threw a thick arm around her shoulder and gave her an almost painfully tight squeeze.

“Jamilla says you are fitting right in! If you want, I can give you a job down at my shop earn a little cash on the side while you figure yourself out, eh?”

“That’s...so nice of you.”

“Of course! We look after family here!”

“Family...” The word put a lump in Farah’s throat.

“Come, I can’t be having that sad face.” Kareem grinned, “We’re going to teach you a Djinn drinking game!”

Farah laughed as he dragged her over to the table with several others, including a pouting Amira who had to be dragged away by her mother. It was a kaleidoscope of colour, new names and faces; It was incredible but overwhelming. Everybody was so accepting of a new Djinn in their midst, even if she used to be a human and a man at that. Djinn really did just go with the flow, like the wind. Maybe she would be better at it one day, but for now, it was still a lot to take in. So she didn’t feel bad about retreating to the back garden for a moment to breathe.

“Are you alright, sweetheart?” Farah turned to see Jamilla following her out with a concerned look on her face.

“Sorry, I didn’t think anybody would miss me so quickly.”

“It’s your party.” Jamilla giggled. “Of course I noticed. Was it too much too soon?”

“No, not at all. This is...amazing,” Farah said, waiting a moment before adding, “Thanks, mom.”

Jamilla swallowed, and Farah couldn’t help but giggle.

“Shuush, you.” Jamilla hissed, “I’m allowed to be emotional about it.”

They didn’t speak for a few moments; instead, they were content to enjoy a quiet moment together with the slight chaos of the party echoing in the background. Farah scuffed at the ground with her shoe, taking in her green skin and the petite little toes she now had.

“My other mother, my first one,” Farah said after a moment, “She wasn’t very nice.”

“I thought that might be the case,” Jamilla admitted.

“But you never said anything?”

“It wasn’t my place, I’d turned your life upside down already. You didn’t owe me anything. You still don’t.”

“That’s not true. I owe you everything.” As she said it, Farah realised just how true those words were. “You’ve given me a home, magic, a community! A...A real family. I just hope that I can live up to it all. I don’t know if I deserve all the kindness you have given me.”

“Oh, sweetheart.” Jamilla wrapped her arms around her. “You are enough as you are, a real mother loves her children unconditionally, so long as they try their best, and you try so hard.”

Farah returned the hug, revelling in the feeling of warmth and safety that only a mother, a real mother, could provide. A second later, the door opened, and a third set of arms joined them and Farah laughed.

“Why are we hugging?” Amira asked innocently.

“Because that’s what moms and daughters do,” Farah replied.

