



Deleted Scenes

Welcome to the deleted scenes. These are a selection of sequences either dropped to speed the story up or changed. Please don't read these unless you've read the novel!!

Enjoy!

John

Contents

Alternative Opening	3
Different version of Kyle’s encounter with Jack Merrick	3
Kyle tries to sell the ring	4
Amber talks to Jake about Sophie	5
Tom and his father at party	6
Tom and his Dad find Marcus version 1	6
Tom and his Dad find Marcus version 2	8
Alternative Tom / Malvane confrontation	9
Sean tells Kyle about Merrick’s arrest	10
Chamberlain has a mysterious visitor	10
Tom faces his dark nature at the old house- alternative version	12

Alternative Opening

(The opening sequence is always something that has about 100 drafts! This one was atmospheric but in the end I felt it was wasting time and stalling the introduction proper)

At dusk on a hillside in May, somewhere in the wild space between villages and towns, sat a barn whose occupants were currently unsettled. A dozen horses neighed and whinnied, stamped their hooves and pushed against wooden fences. Though housed in an open sided barn they seemed well aware of a swelling movement above them and with each wave of cold air this anxious behaviour only grew. One by one the horses broke free crashing through the fences and racing out from underneath the relative safety of the wooden covering galloping across the field beyond as if in a race. It was as if they knew something was about to happen.

Overhead a cloud suddenly stopped in the sky. Defying the swirling winds around it started to move on its own course, against the tide that drove the others in a different direction. This cloud was now heading downwards, swooping like a fighter aircraft towards the ragged barn from which the panicking horses had just escaped. A sudden barrage of large, round hailstones shot from the underside of the cloud like pellets ripping into the wooden structure sending splinters flying into the air. These were no ordinary hailstones for each glowed orange as if something hot was wrapped inside the icy exterior. Their impact easily caused the ageing timber to catch light. Bold orange flames glowed brightly in the grey pallor of the evening as the barn soon listed and fell, its structure fatally compromised by the conflagration. The horses meanwhile kept racing away headed across fields as if they might never stop.

Local farmers would debate the reasons for this fire for a long time afterwards. The police would investigate with forensic intensity turning over embers and examining fragments for weeks. As for the horses they would never be persuaded to enter that particular field again. Yet nobody ever knew what caused the fire at Chambers' Farm. As they went about their business in subsequent weeks nobody even noticed the occasional errant cloud moving about as if it were controlled by someone or something.

Different version of Kyle's encounter with Jack Merrick

(In early versions Jack was after Kyle for money he owed him but I wanted to have a minimum of material set in the school this time so it changed later on. I also felt this wasn't a serious enough threat to warrant Kyle's later actions. Surely he'd just ask Jake to sort out Jack?)

Twenty minutes later, Kyle was crossing the field when an older boy intercepted him. Tall with a crew cut and a bulky physique, this was Jack Merrick. He seemed to have taken on the role of school bully as it seemed there had to be at least one. In his final year he seemed not to spend any time studying and all his time intimidating people.

Kyle tried to wave him aside, "Not now Jack, I'm not in the mood OK."

"Oh Ok I'll just go away until you are in the mood."

Jack looked for a moment as if he would do just that before he turned, grabbed Kyle and pushed him over into the muddy grass.

“You’ve been avoiding me and that’s not a good idea cos I always know where to find you. I wondered if you’d forgotten about your debt.”

Kyle stood up, wiping mud off his uniform, “No I haven’t forgotten. But it’s not easy you know, getting that sort of cash.”

“See, that’s not my problem is it. You wanted the games.”

“You said I could pay back in instalments. My folks put money into my account each month.”

“That was three months ago and you’ve paid nothing and now I want my money back – with interest.”

“Yeah but you got them illegally anyway.”

“Doesn’t matter. We had an agreement. You could always have said No.”

“I could just tell the police.”

Jack sniffed the air, “This is how it goes down. You tell anyone- and I mean anyone- and I beat you like an egg. You pay me all you owe by nine o clock on Monday morning or I beat you like an egg. You remember Humpty Dumpty from infants school? That will be you. In pieces. Am I clear?”

“What if I just let you do that?”

“You are such a wimp. Nine on Monday, OK?”

Kyle nodded as Jack walked away in his confident manner.

Kyle tries to sell the ring

(This was cut for page count reasons as it isn’t essential but its one of those things that I like to think did happen.)

The shop sign said “Anything Valued” and Kyle looked hopeful as he entered Sambourne’s Collectables. Inside the shop had the musty air of a place whose items were rarely disturbed. Shelves and shelves of porcelain, imitation silver, faded furniture and dusty mirrors jostled for space on overcrowded display units. An elderly couple were sifting through small pottery pigs. Kyle headed past them quickly, his stealth attracting the attention of the shopkeeper, Jacob Sambourne, who glared at him over half -moon glasses.

Kyle was staring at trays of trinkets and jewellery when Sambourne sidled up behind him.

“Interested in anything?” he asked in a low voice that suggested he might be an undercover spy.

“Actually,” replied Kyle, “I want to sell you something. Something really good, better than all this stuff.”

“Really now? Well what is it then, this amazing item?”

Kyle reached inside his pocket and produced the shield ring holding it out on his palm.

The owner raised an eyebrow, “Well it is an interesting piece I must say. I would guess seventeenth century?”

Kyle shrugged, “Don’t ask me mate. I just found it at the bottom of a drawer.”

“I can give you...twenty pounds for it.”

“Twenty? Is that all? It must be worth hundreds.”

“You’re an expert are you son? Listen its basic metal, design wise a rather crude shield and that terrible signature is un-readable. I’ll give you thirty. No more.”

Kyle looked resigned, “Ok then...”

Yet as he made to hand it over a pulse of static shot from the ring hitting Sambourne squarely in the chest causing him to fall backwards crashing into a shelf behind spilling several plates on the floor.

Kyle meanwhile called out in pain as strange metal tentacles emerged from the ring burying themselves into his skin. He apologised as Sambourne righted himself and hurried from the shop running out into the road and not stopping until he was round the next corner. When he finally stopped and checked his hand, the ring’s talons had disappeared and it was just an ordinary object once again.

Amber talks to Jake about Sophie

(This was in an early version and cut because it felt too soon for this development and it padded out the action too much)

At the Tyrrell’s house plates and dishes were being carried from the table as Professor Tyrell talked to Sophie. Amber joined Jake in the kitchen.

“Ok?” he asked as she put the plates on the sink.

“Yeah. Are you doing the washing up then?”

“Oh yeah, who else!”

“She really likes you, you know, Sophie.”

“Does she? I hadn’t noticed.”

“Oh really. Even your father’s noticed.”

“Why, what did he say?”

“Nothing, I can just tell.”

“Are you ok with it?”

Amber shrugged, “Nothing to do with me is it?”

“It is though. I feel like I treated you badly.”

She looked at him quizzically, “Is that really Jake Tyrell in there?”

“I mean it.”

“Listen Jake, you probably did treat me badly- you did dump me. *Twice!* In the end it doesn’t matter does it? What matters is things like we did today, helping people, helping the world. The rest is just...gossip...”

“Yeah but *you* have to be happy too.”

“I am happy!”

“Really? Sometimes I notice you staring ahead like you’re thinking the deepest thing ever and when I ask you just say you’re OK.”

“Jake, you are my best friend and you always will be and that’s good.”

“It’s looking stormy again,” he said as he returned to the dishes.

Amber stared out of the window.

“I wonder if they’re real clouds or not.”

Tom and his father at party

(I liked this but it padded out the party stuff too much and I thought the photo was a bit too corny)

His father showed up and sat next to him.

“Everything alright?”

“Why do you keep asking me that?,” Tom snapped, “Just because you know about the stone doesn’t mean I’m in danger every second of the day.”

“I was just asking. What’s got into you?”

“Nothing. It’s just that anything could be happening back in Rooksbourne and we’re sitting here drinking lemonade and talking about nothing.”

“You can’t be on duty all the time, I know that. Once I leave work that is where all that stuff stays. You need to do the same.”

Mrs Allenby emerged onto the patio and spotted them.

“Not a word to Mum,” muttered Tom,

She sat next to them.

“I’ve spent the last half hour listening to Frank talking about golf. I need a change!”

“No golf here.”

“This is nice,” said Tom’s Mum, “The three of us here, enjoying ourselves, no work.”

“Let’s get a photo- Tom, ask Jenny Clark to take one.”

Tom reluctantly stood up and crossed to where a middle aged woman was laughing very loudly and asked her to take a photo of the family which she did. She was one of those people who fussed over simple things and fiddled with his phone for ages.

As he was posing for the snap Tom stared up at the sky. It was dark now and the stars were out like a net of tiny lights. He managed a smile as she finally took the shot before handing the phone back.

“So,” said his Mum, “What were we talking about?”

Tom and his father exchanged glances before the latter named a random topic and his parents started chatting away as they often did about nothing very much at all. He had recently been thinking that he and Melissa could be like that in thirty years time chatting away about anything and decided that might not be such a bad thing after all.

Tom and his Dad find Marcus version 1

(This scene went through several iterations as I tried to work out what happened with and to Marcus.)

Tom started to hear sounds as if a machine of some sort was working. They passed the glass tank containing the cloud – and Tom had to hurry his father along as he was staring at it in amazement- and then headed for the control room.

This is where they found Marcus and he had been busy. He had connected a metal box to the console by a series of glowing wires and was now using a physical console. He was also wearing a pair of headphones.

He looked up expectantly, “You have the Earthstone?”

“Er there’s been a bit of a problem with that as it goes. It got swapped for this piece of junk.”

“Let me see,” said Marcus who grabbed the fake stone.

“Can you get it to work?”

“It’s a poorly made copy. No connections, no way of using it. It’s useless!” Marcus visibly slumped, “That was my last hope to save the machine.”

“How do you mean?”

“Malvane is too powerful now. He’s taken over the organic console.”

“Is there anything you can do?”

Marcus looked at them seriously, “There’s one thing I can do. Destroy everything.”

Mr Allenby said, “That’s a bit drastic isn’t it? Is there no way to save it. From what Tom tells me this is something millions of people might benefit from.”

“Yeah and millions of people will be killed if Malvane gets his way. I can sense him now, his thoughts, his ambition. He doesn’t just want the clouds - he wants to control all weather...”

Tom and his father helped Marcus run cables through into the other room without really knowing his plan.

“Are you just going to blow everything up?” asked Tom.

“I’m going to remove the elemental core of the machine. It’s what I call a Micro Sun, a super-heated sphere that draws from the energy in the mountain. Once it is exposed to the air it will expand and then explode.”

“You can set a timer?” asked Mr Allenby.

Marcus shook his head, “No. I need to do it myself. Anyone else would be repelled but I need to remove it with my own hands.”

“How long will you have to get away?”

Marcus smiled sadly, “How much time will I have? About ten seconds I’d guess.”

Tom realised what this meant.

“You’ll be killed?”

“Well I’ve already been officially dead for two and a half years!”

A thought suddenly struck Tom’s father.

“Are there any plans, blueprints for all of this?”

“Yes, they’ll be destroyed as well.”

“Why not let us take them? We could try and get the machine rebuilt.”

“I suppose...”

“Where are they?”

“In the crew room, third drawer down in the filing cabinet. You’ve got about fifteen minutes before I remove the core.”

“Are you sure there’s no other way?”

Marcus shook his head sadly, “No other way.”

“I’m sorry,” said Mr Allenby.

“Tom,” said Marcus, “Give me that fake stone. I’ll replace it where the core should be; it could stop Malvane realising what I’ve done.”

Tom handed over the imitation Earthstone.

Marcus smiled weakly at them, “Hurry....I can’t wait much longer to remove the core..”

They heard a loud belching of steam from the other room where the cloud machine was. Dials were now spinning around and glass faces started to crack.

As his father waited at the door Tom said to Marcus,

“I’m sorry we can’t help you.”

Marcus smiled weakly, “You already have.”

Tom and his Dad find Marcus version 2

(Another version, this time with Marcus stuck in the crystal cave. There were several other versions too!)

..The crystal cavern which Malvane had been using as a lair. Tom recognised it from Amber's description. There was no sign of Malvane at the moment but Marcus was here, hanging from crystals on the far wall groaning in pain. They hurried over and slowly managed to get him down though he almost crumpled once released and they had to leave him sitting on the floor.

"You should still be in hospital," said Mr Allenby.

Marcus' reply came in between deep breaths, "I had to make sure Malvane wasn't still alive and he is. I think the mountain brought him back."

"What were you trying to do?"

"I thought if I could switch off the weather machine he'd never be able to use it. But he used me instead."

"You mean he's controlling the clouds now?" asked Tom, "That makes sense cos they're going wild out there."

"Its not just that- he wants to control all weather- across the world. You have to stop him."

"Er well there's a bit of a hitch at the minute- I don't have the Earthstone."

"Why?"

"Long story but it's on its way- we just have to wait a bit."

Marcus shook his head, "No time, no time...Malvane is already in control. The Earthstone was my second to last chance."

"Second to last?"

"There is one thing we can do- destroy everything."

"Look, the real Earthstone will be here, my friends are bringing it now."

"And by the time they get here Malvane will cut them down with whatever he's got inside the clouds. They'll never make it in here. It's up to us...well now it's up to you."

"Listen," said Mr Allenby, "We haven't exactly come armed with explosives and even if we had surely this machine –from what Tom has told me- needs to be preserved. It could help millions of people."

"Millions will die if Malvane uses it."

"So what's you plan?" asked Tom.

"Did Amber tell you about the Micro Sun?"

"Yeah she said it was very dangerous."

"It's contained inside its tank but if it was released it would expand and explode taking the base, the machine and the clouds with it. And Malvane as well."

"How do we release it?"

"You don't. Malvane's too focussed to bother about me. I can release the tank from here- this cave is packed with elemental crystals. I should be able to draw on that power the same way Malvane infiltrated the base in the first place. I can release the Micro Sun- you need to distract Malvane. Once I begin to use these crystals he'll realise what I'm doing and try to stop me. You have to keep him occupied for about a minute."

"OK. I have an idea..."

"Tom this sounds very dangerous..." began his father but Tom was in no mood to hear what he had to say.

"I'm in charge now Dad, this is my world, yeah?"

His father nodded in agreement before turning to Marcus,

“Do you have any plans, blueprints of the machine?”

“No plans- but there is a sapphire blue crystal on the console. Inside it is the elemental pattern for everything I have created.”

“Can it be removed?”

“Yes but once I release the Micro Sun there won't be much time.”

“We'll just have to be quick then!”

Tom said; “I'm sorry we can't help you.”

Marcus managed a short smile.

“Don't worry- I've been officially dead for two and a half years anyway!”

Alternative Tom / Malvane confrontation

(Another awkward scene to get right, this is an earlier version of the moments when Tom and his Dad are trying to get out of the mountain)

“Now I will control the weather machine and the mountain and soon enough everything. I will build more machines and my new race will control all of the planet's weather.”

“No you won't.”

Malvane looked victorious, “And what can you do? You do not have your magic stone. You are just a child like any other and I will now destroy you.”

Once again Tom faced the crystal spear with no defence and for a moment he wondered if this really was the end for him. Had he cheated death too many times already?

Then there was a sudden movement and Mr Allenby threw himself at Malvane sending him sideways where he hit his head on a rock nearby and was momentarily stunned causing him to drop the plans which scattered in the draughts of the tunnels.

Tom looked over at his father who seemed alright.

“I'm getting the hang of this!” he said.

“Get out of here, Dad” he shouted as his father made to come over and help him.

“Just go – I'll get the plans.”

“Are you sure?”

“Go! I'll be ten seconds.”

Tom's father nodded and turned to make the short distance out of the mountain. Tom knelt down to pick up the plans but just as he picked up one, two, three pieces of paper more of them rolled down the tunnel. The mountain was shaking harder now and with that motion came blasts of cold air that blew the plans into the distance, dividing them. Tom watched for a moment as the sides of paper rolled and tumbled away from him and he knew there was no time to retrieve them. There was nothing he could do- the plans were lost. Why hadn't Marcus made an electronic copy?

Tom turned around and then noticed immediately – Malvane was gone too.

Heart pounding he rushed to follow heading for the exit.

Sean tells Kyle about Merrick's arrest

(Whenever I read things back and realise there is too much exposition, stuff has to go. This wasn't really essential as the reader knows it anyway so it got cut)

“Good news!” he said, “That guy you were hiding from, Merrick- he's been arrested.”

“What?”

“It was on the news. He's a really big cheese it turns out. Has some sort of operation around the country not just Rooksbourne and that area. He's been charged with all kinds and the police won't give him bail cos they reckon he'd leave the country. So I can take you back if you like.”

Kyle shook his head, “No, no way. I don't want to go back.”

“He's history. You'll be safe now. They're rounding up his whole gang.”

“Yeah but his kids are still in our school.”

“It was his son who shopped him to the cops apparently!”

“Really?”

“Yep. So do you want to go back?”

“No. There's other stuff I need to keep away from.”

“What other stuff?”

“Just leave it will you Sean!”

“Ok, if you say so...”

Chamberlain has a mysterious visitor

(This was eventually replaced by the mysterious figure who helps Chamberlain after the battle. I used the name Elias Bream in a different context in the final novel)

A high rise office block towering over London had an air of business efficiency with its sliding doors, security badges that opened doors as their wearer approached them and at the entrance an atrium housed an elaborately presented water display which changed colour every so often. Most people who entered assumed it was lighting, if they even considered it, yet a closer examination would confirm that there were no lights in or around the display at all. Just how did the water change colour?

Amidst the flurry of people milling to and fro in this large shiny floored area, a tall black man with a neat beard and closely cropped hair passed through unnoticed. This was partly because he was wearing a smart business suit so he looked exactly like the kind of person who would visit the place. It was also partly because instead of entering through one of the six revolving glass doors like everyone else he simply popped into existence just inside. Everyone was so preoccupied and busy that they missed it.

Once arrived he strode confidently towards a series of lifts facing each other in a passage just off the atrium. The security guards did not seem to check on individuals creating a relaxed atmosphere though the observant visitor would notice they were armed. With security passes sent out in advance to anyone with an appointment it was assumed that whoever was here should be here.

The man joined several others in the nearest lift until one by one his fellow passengers stepped out at different floors. The last to leave- a middle aged woman carrying a large folder – glanced at him for a moment as she stepped outside the doors which closed before she turned away. He was now alone in the lift and her expression seemed to suggest that it was unusual for someone she did not know to be travelling any higher.

Finally the lift pinged and a clear voice announced in both English, Chinese and Russian that this was the Executive Floor. The man stepped out into a featureless corridor containing several doors and at the far end a curved landing with stairs either side. At its centre was a set of double doors. Standing either side of those doors were two security guards whose weapons were most definitely not hidden and who raised them as the man approached.

“Name and ID reference, please,” shouted one.

Then as the guards bristled and unlocked the safety catch on their weapons the man seemed to fade away. He was no longer there and they looked at each other for a moment with puzzled expressions before engaging their safety catches and resuming their vigil as if nothing had happened.

Magnus Chamberlain was a powerful man. His richly tailored charcoal grey suit and the modern stylised office he inhabited were small signs of that. He was starting over the afternoon City when he became aware that someone was in his office. Sunlight shining weakly on the curved window was enough to show him that.

Without turning round he said, “Good afternoon. I wasn’t expecting anyone.”

“No,” replied the visitor crisply, “I don’t expect you were.”

“Least of all a phantom!” added Chamberlain as he turned slowly, “I take it you are a custodian?”

“That’s correct. Well inside I am anyway. Having to use a human appearance to talk to people is rather uncomfortable.”

“Don’t tell me- you like to remain discreet.”

The man smiled slightly and sat down on the chair opposite the large desk without being invited. Instead he gestured at Chamberlain’s own chair.

“Please sit down Mr Chamberlain.”

“Call me Magnus,” replied Chamberlain as he sat, “What can I do for you?”

“Something very important as it happens. How much do you know about us?”

“As much – or as little- as anyone does. Isn’t that the way you prefer it?”

“People often talk about us as if we are all the same you know. The Custodians do this or they say that. But we’re just like you. We have different opinions, different ideas, different philosophies. Some of us act quite independently. I sense that you are similar when it comes to your business world.”

“I like to get ahead and stay there, yeah. How else would I afford a place like this? But you didn’t materialise in here to discuss office furnishings did you Mr...what should I call you?”

The question was ignored.

“I came here to offer you something which you may be able to use both to your and my advantage.”

Chamberlain returned the man’s hard stare, “You’re bargaining with me, right? Am I right? You have something you can’t do yourself and you want me to do it for you.”

“Very perceptive Mr Chamberlain. I can sense you don’t trust me.”

“Well someone I can trust calls up and makes an appointment. Someone I don’t trust floats in here unannounced like a ghost. I hope you didn’t kill any guards. The insurance on security guards has gone through the roof lately because they keep on getting killed.”

“I’m not that kind I can assure you. Your guards are fine- very efficient system you have here. What I have to offer you is- and I use this word deliberately- unique.”

“Show me then,” said Chamberlain sitting back in his chair.

The man reached inside his patent black leather case and pulled out a box which he placed on the desk. It was roughly the same size as the packaging a new phone might arrive in only it was made of a metallic substance. He reached over and tapped it twice with his right forefinger and the lid began to open. The more it revealed, the wider Chamberlain’s eyes opened until he was leaning across the desk staring at the object inside.

“Well, well, well. Now I am impressed!”

“Good. Then we can talk business? By the way you can call me Bream. Elias Bream.”

They shook hands over the open box.

“Good then, Mr Bream, let’s talk business.”

Tom faces his dark nature at the old house- alternative version

(This is after the funeral and the first version I tried involved an octopus like creature that came from Tom’s earlier childhood imagination similarly to the creatures generated in The Spectres of Winter. Later on I felt it would be more emotional and powerful if his dark nature manifested itself as his father)

Tom backed off against the far wall as his heightened senses could not work out what exactly was happening. The shape became clearer and more solid and it became apparent it was floating in mid air. It was roughly the shape of an octopus and like that creature had suckers along its tentacles but these fizzled with some form of energy. The creature’s eyes were initially closed but slowly they began to open and Tom felt the heat of a strange energy he could not understand. Whatever this thing was he sensed it was more powerful than anything he had encountered before and it was then he realised he could not move at all. Yet somehow he did not want to.

Tom stared at the octopus like creature before him. Though it looked so powerful and its electric appendages floated as if in water it did not make any sort of move. Its large eyes seemed to stare at him.

“What are you?” Tom asked.

He wasn’t sure whether this thing could speak but it did so, in a low, gurgling sort of voice that sounded strangely familiar.

“You do not know me?”

“I think I’d know if I’d seen a floating octopus before.”

“Think carefully, search your memories,” said the strange voice.

“Memories? Are you related to that woman in the hat?”

“Your memories of years ago.”

Tom could not be bothered with such vague references.

“So if you’re going to kill me you may as well get on with it. I can’t stop you and I don’t care if you do anyway.”

“I am not intending to kill you.”

“Why not? That’s the usual thing isn’t it? I’m too tired to save the world again.”

“If I killed you I would also die.”

“You’ve lost me and you know what, I’m not in the mood.”

“I am your anger and fear and regret, your lost chances, your mistakes and your bad options.”

“You are a giant octopus, that’s what I’m seeing.”

“You made me like this; years ago I was your monster. At least the one you imagined.”

“I still don’t understand.”

“You drew a picture of this and now I have become that picture. The weapon for your rage.”

“I honestly don’t...”

Then Tom did remember. When he was about ten he’d drawn a picture of a giant monster for a school project. The class had been told to draw a strange creature based on something from the natural world and he’d drawn a large octopus. He’d argued with the teacher about it as the latter felt it was just a picture of an octopus but he’d told her it was more than that, it was a super-octopus! Something about the picture made it stand out and he’d kept it for a long time afterwards.

“So...I drew you and now you’re here?”

“Elemental energy is powerful...”

“Wait, wait, I’ve seen this before, there was a kid who died at school years back and his ghost or whatever you want to call it came back and used drawings to create real monsters.”

“You created me and I am here to do as you bid.”

“What can you do?”

“I can do anything and everything. I could crush Kyle Marshall if you wish it.”

“I don’t even know where he is.”

“Distance is no object. I can travel across the world. He can be gone in an instant. Then consider other wishes.”

“I don’t know...”

“The Earthstone limits you. I have no limits. You see me in this form but I can become anything....”

The giant octopus started to shimmer, its shape altering to become that of his father.

“I can be this,” it said in the same throaty voice yet through his father’s mouth.

“Don’t do that!” shouted Tom, “Please don’t do that.”

The creature changed back to be the giant octopus once again.

“I could bring your father back....”

This time it spoke in a quieter, more persuasive tone.

“I couldn’t do that even with the Earthstone...”

“I told you that I am more powerful than any trinket. I can call on the energy of the Earth itself.”

“I’ve seen someone brought back to life using elemental energy”

“So you know it can be done.”

“Why would you do it though?”

“Because I am literally drawn from you. I want him back as much as you do.”

“Oh my days, we just buried him two hours ago. Now you’re saying he can come back. How does that work exactly?”

“You said you have seen it happen..”

“Yeah but that was moments after the person died. This is like two and a half weeks now. I don’t want him to come back as some sort of zombie.”

“He will be as restored as Amber is.”

It made sense didn’t it? Amber had been brought back to life. That kid from the school had made old drawings into really dangerous ice skeletons. So, why couldn’t a drawing brought to life in a house obviously brimming with elemental energy cause his father to return? It was the one thing he wanted more than anything.

“OK. Show me.”

The creature gave little away, it’s rubbery skin and enormously powerful eyes watching him impassively. Then it made an odd slurping noise and said,

“First you must do something for me.”

“Are we bargaining now?”

“You do not have anything without payment.”

“You’re supposed to be my creation, my drawing. Aren’t you supposed to do what I say?”

“I also have some of your spirit and the world does not function in that way. I can sense you do not trust me so I will give you an opportunity...”

The creature shimmered again and for a second time the image of his father appeared as three dimensionally as he had ever been.

“You can have me back Tom just as we were, just as you’ve seen in this house.”

“And what do you want from me? What’s your payment?”

The image shifted again to become the slithering sea creature which somehow floated in the air. It gargled a throaty laugh.

“I want the Earthstone. I know you reject it now. Let me take it from your hands...”

Tom did not reply right away because somewhere at the back of his mind was the thought that this sounded like a good deal. He’d get his father back and get rid of the Earthstone and they could go back to a normal life. He could be like any fifteen year old, worried about exams, girls, bullies or whatever. He wouldn’t have to save the world every once and again, risking his life and putting family and friends in danger. He could forget about elemental energy, custodians and even Rooksbourne. He could be with his family living in London being mostly happy and always normal. Wouldn’t that just be fantastic?

“Give me your answer...” said the creature, its tentacles waving about in the air.

“Alright...” began Tom as he lifted the Earthstone from round his neck and over his head.

Then something occurred to him.

“But one question- what will you do with it? I mean you said I created you, how is me giving you the stone meaning I don’t actually really still have it? And you said you were more powerful than the Earthstone.”

“Once it is mine I will become real. I will no longer be drawn from your darker nature. I will be sentient and free. I can leave the confines of this house. We will both have what we deeply wish.”

“Yeah but what will you do with it? What do you wish?”

Tom sensed the creature was becoming impatient. It's odd gurgling noises had become more frequent and its slimy exterior seemed more active.

"Is that your concern?"

"It is if the normal life you're promising me is going to be interrupted by something you do. I may want to get rid of the stone but that doesn't mean I'm stupid enough to hand it over to some creature I don't really know. What does a giant floating octopus want anyhow?"

"I have offered you what you wish- why will you not just take it? I sensed your grief, your sorrow. It can all be gone..."

"Ok bring my Dad here first- before I give you the Earthstone."

"Alas that is impossible. I require the Earthstone to bring him to you."

The longer the dialogue lasted the less Tom trusted this being even if it was something he had originally created.

"Nah, I think you're having me on. You see I tried to save him with the stone but it didn't do anything at all. Now you're telling me you can bring him back two weeks after he died. You are full of it! And I reckon if I gave it to you, not only would you not bring back my Dad but you want something I would never let you have."

As soon as he said that the entire creature seemed to shift slightly; in the way a piece of video might flicker if its source was interrupted.

"Give me the Earthstone!" it roared, static flying from its arms.

"Come and get it, slimy!"

The interference intensified as the giant octopus glided towards him. Tom held onto the Earthstone tightly and as he focussed on dismissing this apparition it flickered and vanished into nothing. Tiny particles of static hung in the air for a few seconds before disintegrating into dust. It was all more trickery.