

Make Your Own Magic

Isabelle woke up on the cozy warm left side of her bed—the right side was freezing.

She was just laying there when she realized that it was way too early for her to be up. The sunlight was barely reaching the far wall of her room. Then Isabelle heard footsteps coming out from the hallway.

“Time to get up, Izzy!” her mom called. “It’s time for school!”

Then Isabelle remembered—moving from Vancouver meant that she would start at a brand-new school—and it was going to be right with everybody else. That was the perk to moving right when school begins. She stretched her legs, then her arms, then threw back the blankets.

She shuffled sleepily towards her closet and pulled out her pristine school uniform (red polo and khakis with a navy quarterzip jacket), then her new blue Gazelle Adidas. The world was still slightly blurry, so she put on her gold-rimmed glasses.

They were Isabelle’s favorite. They had little rhinestones on the edges, so they added the perfect amount of sparkle to her vision.

She pulled on her clothes, then walked out of her still-not-unpacked room, down the stairs, and onto the main floor.

Rowan, Isabelle's little brother, was already digging into his bowl of Frosted Flakes in the kitchen.

“Hi, Izzy!” he chirped, his chin dripping with milk.

“Don’t talk with your mouth full,” was Isabelle’s only response.

Rowan was in third grade, and he was about the cutest eight year old on the planet, with his curly black hair, blue eyes, and outgoing personality.

Isabelle plopped herself down on the other side of the chair and slid over the milk and cereal. She poured out some cereal and milk into a pink bowl.

After finishing her cereal, she curled her black hair and finished getting ready.

Then she walked out the door.

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Upon arrival, Isabelle noticed two things:

Number one, she was early. Nobody besides a few adults (probably teachers) and her were there.

Number two, the school looked way too fancy for a junior high. It had a modern edge to it, with glass doors and sharp edges. Inside, the floors were polished and gleaming. Isabelle hadn't gone too far into the building when a lady with short brown hair approached her.

"Hey Isabelle!" she exclaimed. Isabelle knew her from orientation. She was the principal.

"Hey," Isabelle said.

"How early did you wake up this morning?" The principal—Ms. Rylie—asked. Her smile was gone, replaced by a look of genuine surprise.

"Um..." Isabelle thought about it. She hadn't woken up that early—but Ms. Rylie was clearly asking because of how early Isabelle was. But then again, she had forgotten to look at a clock before she went. "I guess I got a good start."

“Okay,” Ms. Rylie shrugged. “I guess you’ll have to stay outside for the time-being, because it’s only 7:40. So just hang around, all right?”

“Okay, that works fine,” Isabelle responded.

7:40? School started at 8:00, so Isabelle wasn’t that early. But it would probably be another ten minutes before any other kids showed up. That gave her time to prepare.

Isabelle had meeting new people down to a science. And most of it was just making a good first impression. You had to act like you knew what you were doing—and with how much Isabelle’s family moved around, that was easy.

Her dad was part of some traveling work force. So far, Isabelle had been to a lot of places. Vancouver, Tokyo, Sydney, you name it.

Isabelle had just enough time to script what she was going to say to the first person she met, when another girl walked over. She was probably the first person there, other than Isabelle.

“Hey!” the girl said, waving. “I see you’ve joined my Get To School Really Early group—nice! I’ve already got two members, even though it’s the first day of school!”

She put out her hand. “I’m McKenna. It’s nice to meet you.”

Isabelle’s script was erased out of her mind. She didn’t expect this type of outgoing person to be the first kid she met. So she just adjusted her glasses and shook McKenna’s hand.

“I’m Isabelle.”

McKenna smiled. “Thanks for joining my club.”

She then started asking a few questions—where was Isabelle from, what her favorites were—the usual. They were getting along just fine when a teacher walked by—and he was muttering incomprehensibly under his breath.

“Who’s that?” Isabelle asked, after he was out of earshot.

McKenna shrugged. “He’s the science teacher. I’ve heard he can be quite deranged sometimes—my older sister told me about it.”

She tossed her long blonde hair.

“Hm,” Isabelle said. “He seems deranged today, then.”

After a few minutes of them talking, lots of other kids were either dropped off by their parents or just walked towards the building without an adult, like Isabelle had done. Suddenly, the bell on the speakers rang and everybody flooded into the building, trying to get to their classes on time.

“What class are you going to?” Isabelle asked again. She was going to have lots of questions today, that’s for sure.

“Math,” McKenna grumbled. “I hate math. But what about you?”

“Also math,” Isabelle replied. She was suddenly feeling happy about herself, because she was really good at math. She didn’t want to tell McKenna that, though, because that would just set back their new friendship. “Do you know where the math classroom is?”

“Yeah. It’s in the right corner of the top floor—I can help you, if you really want to be on time to the torture chamber.”

“That’s fine,” Isabelle laughed, amused at McKenna’s grumblings.

They traveled up the stairs, talking about books the whole way. The math teacher was standing at the door, holding up a deck of cards like a shadow man. Isabelle would know. She’d been to New Orleans.

He addressed McKenna as an old friend, and she gave a little ‘sup’ in return, but it was very forced. She then grabbed one of the cards and shuffled into the classroom.

The math teacher—oh, wait, Isabelle didn't know his name!—turned towards her. He did remind her of a shadow man. He wore a top hat and a vest, and was very thin and tall. He had dark eyes and brown hair. He looked like he was in his mid-forties. But one big difference between him and a shadow man was that he was smiling, and wasn't wearing any voodoo necklaces.

He smiled wider. "Hello, I don't think I know your name."

Isabelle took a card. "Isabelle. What's yours?"

"Okay! I hope I remember that. It is the first day here, so I might be scrambling a bit. My name's Mr. Martinez."

"Okay. and... That's fine if you don't remember my name. I can tell you anytime," Isabelle said, smiling.

She walked into the classroom.

Amazingly, it was almost silent. There were group tables instead of desks, so it was even more amazing that everybody was being quiet.

Isabelle sat down at a table where McKenna was sitting. McKenna sighed and handed Isabelle a math workbook.

"Just do the first problems in the book," she whispered. "Mr. Martinez'll start calling on people to answer them soon."

The questions were fraction multiplication—Isabelle's favorite.

A) $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{3}$

B) $\frac{2}{5} \times \frac{3}{8}$

Then... darkness. The power had gone out. It was still dark outside, so it was darker than it would have been in the middle of the day.

Then Isabelle's glasses shocked her.

It wasn't like a prick of static electricity. Miniature lightning bolts streaked across the lenses and that was the last thing she saw.

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Isabelle woke up at the same spot on the same desk, but her face was plastered to the desk, and her glasses weren't on.

Everybody was looking at her.

She peeled her face away from the desk. "Glad the power's back, huh?" Isabelle gave a little laugh—for her own reassurance, and for other people to know she was just fine.

"Isabelle," Mr. Martinez said, "the power was never out." His voice wasn't ominous, or frustrated. Just patient.

"Oh," Isabelle blushed, trying to think of a way to pass off what she had seen as a hallucination or a dream. "I must have...dozed off, then." She reached for her glasses and put them on. They shocked her again.

"Meraki!" Isabelle muttered—this was a word that, in Greek, meant soul, creation, or love—but Isabelle used it as "for the love!"

"Well, class," Mr. Martinez announced. "On with the lesson!"

All Isabelle could see was glitter as she put her glasses on, but maybe that was just a side effect from the zipper-glasses.

The rest of the day was a blur of glitter. Her glasses were almost opaque with a shimmer! Isabelle asked the science teacher about them, but he just muttered an “IDK dawg” so that was a fail.

When she got home, her little brother was already home, and he was still on full hype from school and friends.

“HI IZZY!!! WHATCHA DOING?? LET’S PLAY A GAME!!!”

“Wow.” Isabelle said—then she hurried up the stairs into her room. She fished out a chocolate bar and bit into it. A small, sweet consolation prize for her taxing day.

She took off her glasses, put them on her dresser and said, “Sleep...” then she collapsed on her bed and fell asleep.

She slept for the rest of the evening all the way to 6:00 in the morning. She woke up to her mom putting a hand on her forehead.

“Good, you’re awake,” she sighed. “Do you feel sick, sweetie?”

Isabelle raised her eyebrows. “I’m fine. I just...um... had P.E. fourth period, okay? Just a little tired. But I had a good rest. I’m fine.”

Isabelle put her glasses on—then realized that the sparkles were gone.

Her mom still looked concerned. “Okay. I won’t make you go to school—but please call me if you start to feel bad, okay?”

“Okay!” Isabelle responded. She was trying to act perfectly normal—even though her first day of school was almost exactly opposite.

Isabelle’s mom walked out of her room.

Isabelle took out a new uniform (navy polo, khakis, red quarterzip) and put on her socks. She stepped on a stray lego that Rowan must have put in her room—who knows why—and said, “Meraki!” and slipped. When she opened her eyes again, the sparkles were back.

“Wait...” Isabelle said to herself. “Meraki!”

The glasses didn’t change.

“Um...murcats! Meerkat! Sleep! Goodnight!”

The sparkles disappeared at goodnight.

“Meraki! Sleep!”

The sparkles went on and off immediately.

Woah. This was from the power outage, Isabelle thought. It has to be. But...they’re kind of useless. Who wants to see sparkles for a whole day?

Maybe they had an alternative purpose. Invisibility? No, that would be a cloak or something. X-ray vision? Maybe...

“There must be another key word to trigger it,” Isabelle whispered to herself. “Hm. Activate! Trigger! See-through!” The glasses didn’t change. “Meraki!” The inside of the lenses turned glittery.

What if it’s like a magical VR? Isabelle asked herself. Like...the sparkles are the home screen? What would I do with a magical VR?

“View! Sight!”

Nothing on those two. Maybe...rainbow something?

Isabelle could hear her mom coming up the stairs again. “Izzy! Are you okay there?”

Suddenly, she knew. Rainbow and sight.

“Spectra!”

The glasses transformed into a pen. Then it floated to a piece of paper on her new desk and wrote in shimmering ink,

On: Meraki

Off: Sleep

Activate: Spectra

Then the golden pen grew right back into a pair of glasses. Isabelle got up, got her glasses, and put them on.

“Meraki!” she said, and the glasses turned shimmery. “Spectra!”

The lenses changed again. It was still shimmery, but the sparkles had shape. There were words there, and images. It was all some computer-like thing. Isabelle suspected that spies would have something of the sort.

Isabelle thought about it. *If these glasses stay on my head, they will do what I want them to do. Otherwise, they'll turn into what they want to turn into. What can I do with this...?*

Isabelle willed her glasses to zoom into one of her boxes. They obliged. Then she asked them to float off of her head, then turn into a gold cube. They did the exact thing. But once it was off of her head, it turned into a cube and dropped on the floor.

“Oh my gosh,” Isabelle breathed. “I have magical glasses!”

At school, Isabelle didn't mention her glasses. She just went about her day. But the glasses were active, so they would give her glittery answers to all of the questions that the teachers asked.

McKenna didn't question it either, but at the end of the day, Isabelle spilled about it.

She freaked out. "Magical item—you have a magical—glasses—wow!" She held out her wrist, which was holding an intricate silver watch. "This watch..." she said, "Has magical powers too. On the glass—see that little thing? I can ask it questions and it tells me the answers! It gives me extra information about people—that's how I met you! And sometimes, it even pulls me in specific directions that I need to go."

"Do you think mine could do that?" Isabelle asked.

"Yep!" McKenna answered, without any hesitation. "Here, I'll tell you a secret. There's a whole organization of these kinds of items—something you're attached to. I'm part of it. You can be part of it too! My parents are involved. Maybe" —she gasped— "your parents—what if your parents are involved?"

"That would be..." Isabelle trailed off, not knowing how to answer.

"Revolutionary!" McKenna finished. "I'm serious, Isabelle! You should join the club!"

"Join the Cool Items Club?" Isabelle asked, smiling.

"Yes!" McKenna exclaimed. "We would go on lots of cool adventures and awesome things like that."

"I'm in," Isabelle said.

She walked home with McKenna, so she could explain the whole thing to her parents.

At the front door, McKenna whispered to Isabelle, "You can do this."

They walked in, and Isabelle approached her mom, who was working at the kitchen, probably making some pizza or calzones, judging by the pepperoni and mozzarella.

"Mom?" Isabelle asked. "I need to talk to you."

"Yes, sweetheart?" her mom replied.

“There’s this...group. I’ve got some...really...special glasses, and I’m qualified to join. Are you okay with that? My friend McKenna is doing it too!”

Isabelle’s mom turned around. “Yeah, you can join.” She had a look of resigned happiness on her face, and she smiled. “I’ve been in this group since I was twelve, too. My earring is my special item.”

“Really?” Isabelle asked. “Does Dad know?”

“Yes,” her mom sighed. “That’s why he goes all over the world. That’s why he’s never here. His jacket pulls him away.”

“So...let’s get started!” McKenna announced. “I’m ready to get adventuring!”

Isabelle still didn’t know about her glasses, but she knew it would be pretty cool if she joined. It would be amazing.

“Yeah, I’m in.”

THE END