



## 5. Pin

Although meanwhile they were advancing more rapidly, darkness enveloped them for the second time before they were able to leave the forest. Just when Tinka went a couple of steps ahead in order to find another suitable refuge for the night, some round and glowing object came right at her at lightning speed. Full of panic, she tried to turn around and get away. But the assailant's celerity was far more superior to hers.

Antonius and Isabell, still carrying the letterling, turned with a start. Tinka, who could be but a few metres ahead, had suddenly given off a piercing scream. „We have to look for her right away!“, Isabell whispered aghast. Antonius only nodded, equally shocked. Quickly but carefully they put down the letterling in order to rush to Tinka's aid. Tinka's screams wouldn't end. She cursed and shrieked and screamed, as if in a battle. Antonius had to hold on to Isabell, who kept shouting her friend's name, mindlessly running through the woods to find her.

„Isabell, wait! We absolutely must not lose each other!“

In spite of the cool night air, beads of sweat trickled down Antonius' forehead for fear for Tinka. Meanwhile, the pitch black night had enveloped them, so their eyes could only wander around helplessly, not standing the ghost of a chance in the dark. Their only guide were these small, glowing creatures, they had already marvelled at the night before. Only their madly dancing gleams of light enabled Isabell and Antonius to find their friend unexpectedly quickly. In the meantime, the screaming had died down. Fearing that something dreadful might have happened to her friend, Isabell's heart beat so fast, that she thought her chest might burst any minute. When they finally beheld Tinka, they stopped in their way, utterly befuddled. Apparently completely relaxed, Tinka sat on the forest soil, resting on her hands, legs outstretched, staring at one of those scintillating beings, that hovered in the air right in front of her face. It was the size of a tennis ball, had two beautiful, wildly fluttering wings and returned Tinka's looks with his tiny black eyes. Tinka's face and chest were evenly illuminated by that gleaming creature. Even though the terror she had endured was still all over her, she seemed completely unharmed. The two of them were having a conversation. Isabell and Antonius still stood petrified, listening to this chat in disbelief.

„...have no business herrrrre anyway!“ the creature was just informing Tinka with a certain rigour.

„How did you get herrre in the firrszt place, if I may aszk?“ it enquired next. The glowing creature had such a comical manner of speaking, that Isabell couldn't help laughing with relief.

„Well... we... er...“, Tinka was stuttering, still slightly confused.

„I mean, I... or rather we... were asked by Arthur, the chairman of the Senat, to come to Grammaton in order to help your country in an emergency.“

„Nooo, rrreally?“ now the creature seemed deeply impressed. „In that case – you muszt be rrreally imporrnt! You don't say..! What a prrrivilege to meet you! Splendid! Splendid! Rrreally – absolutely terrrific!“

The flying lightball tilted slightly forward, indicating a bow, and turned into a faint shade of pink that quickly paled again and became shiny white.

Tinka smiled in the light of this gesture.

„And what isz the dearr lady'sz name?“

„My name is Tinka“, she answered genially. Apparently she already trusted her new acquaintance, talking to him calmly.

„And who are you?“

„Ooooooh, prray parrdon me! Of coursze I have to intrrroduce myself! They call me Pin. I am a Stellino. It is an honourr! But who are yourr frriendsz?“

Only now Tinka became conscious of her friend and of the antiquarian. She had been so distracted, that she hadn't noticed their presence.

„Ah, yes. This is Antonius, an antiquarian and the proprietor of a beautiful shop and that is my best friend Isabell. Antonius helped us to get here.“, Tinka replied, pointing at her two companions.

Right away, Pin whirred off towards the two, who still stood dumbfounded, yet amused in the dark. He stopped in front of their faces in order to illuminate them, then welcomed them in an exuberant manner.

„Hi, Pin!“ Isabell said, smiling at him. „Nice to meet you.“

„Good evening, Pin“, Antonius also greeted the creature. He seemed infinitely relieved, that no harm had come to Tinka.

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