

“In the Attic”

By: Joellen

For ages she sits in the attic. Surrounding shadows make her grimy and worn. Her only light comes through a small gap, in view of a swaying tree branch. She watches it transform. Small green buds unfurl and the scent of flowers wafts on the breeze. The laughter of gleeful children floats into her prison.

The new leaves wilt as the sweltering sun overhead parches the grass and dries the land. Inside the attic it remains chilly and dark.

Then the days start to shorten, as the leaves shrivel and die. The honking of geese fills the sky as they fly overhead. Children gut pumpkins readily in the gloom. The sky darkens, and ghouls and goblins start to creep up the path led by the eerie glow of jack-o-lanterns.

Then the night is over, the land becomes bare and desolate, sparse of any plants or animals. Darkness takes over.....Then a miracle occurs. Small white flakes of snow spiral toward the ground in a wondrous dance to the melody of the wind. These sparkling bits transform the land into a magical forest of glittering ice. Inside the attic she gazes at its splendor.

She dozes in the harsh cold when the car door slams, signaling the arrival of her kingdom. She smiles, freedom. Downstairs a thump echoes, and the smell of pine wafts toward her as the attic door opens and light shines on her. She is carried downstairs and lifted from her dark prison by a young girl. This girl speaks her name so tenderly that her heart fills with joy, her curls regain their luster and her lank wing feathers shine in the glow of her candle. The little girl sets her on top of her emerald kingdom. Surrounded by twinkling lights, she listens to the crackling of grease and the clink of plates as the family dines on a feast. Then night falls once more and she rests in the comfortable glow of the hearth fire, protecting her realm from the shadows.

Morning comes and the family unwraps presents. She watches them examine trinkets with her heart full of love, but in her stomach an icy chill is growing. It is all over too soon. She is stolen away from her kingdom and dumped back in her shadowy prison. She sighs as she leaves the warmth of the house and is carried back to the bitterly cold attic. Night falls again, but this time it is frightening. Tears like diamonds roll down her cheeks as she gazes at the cheerless moon.

Buds unfurl and she smells the sweet scent of snap dragons sailing on the breeze. The swaying branch shakes off the snow and animals venture out as the seasons restart their continuous cycle. Before long she will be able to protect her kingdom once more.