

PROLOGUE

12 and a Half Years Ago

Pattern looked at the small mini-Shallan and buzzed. Human beings were so... strange. Why did they start so small? The mini-Shallan looked with large green eyes at him and a small hand reached up to try and grab him. Pattern buzzed and moved out of reach of the small being.

Shallan walked into the room. She laughed when she saw him with the mini-Shallan. "You're with her again! I thought you would investigate some lies with your time like you told me you were going to do! I still don't understand why you are so fascinated by her!"

"Mmmmm, and I do not understand why you are not."

"Because... well... she is just a baby."

"Mmmm. Well I think she is strange, she is like you but not. Why does she repeatedly cough and sneeze. I notice you do it sometimes but she does it so much, I do not understand."

"She is sick. She coughs because she is very ill. We were thinking to take her to the night watcher."

"Mmmmm. I do not think that would be wise... Mmmmmm. Yes that could heal her but at what cost?"

"I don't know, Pattern, come with me I think it would be best we go open the gate, there are people waiting."

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A few hours later Pattern snuck back into the room that held mini-Shallan. She cooed and Pattern landed on the small child's chest and allowed the child to look at him. She giggled. "Shallan is a very interesting person," Pattern buzzed. "You should be glad to be a miniature version of her."

Of course mini-Shallan only stared at him and so he started to leave. Just then Shallan walked into the room laughing.

"Oh Pattern," Shallan raised her safe hand to her face. When she lowered it she walked over and watched Pattern.

"Mmmm. Why are you watching me?"

"Because you are intriguing and I am still a scholar, I want to see what you do."

"I have just been watching her reactions when I change or when I touch her. She seems to enjoy me but her enjoyment is always short lived for she coughs and feels what you call pain."

Shallan winced. "Pattern, tonight we will go tomorrow night to the Night Watcher after she is diagnosed. If it is what I think it is we will go, it is the only way and you will not change my mind."

Pattern buzzed reluctantly. He noticed *seven* other spren in the room, not emotion spren but Life spren and wind spren. "I am not the only spren intrigued by her." Shallan looked up and a confused expression replaced her amused one.

Pattern did not understand. He was intrigued in Mini-shallan not only because she was strange, but there was something... so different with her. He was compelled to stay near, to protect her. More and more spren gathered and Pattern was growing anxious, he wasn't sure why though.

"Pattern, why are there so many spren in here?" There were so many spren in the room it was like a convulsing sea of lights. The variety of spren in the room was shocking.

"They are intrigued in her in the same way and for the same reason I am, but stronger." Pattern said buzzing as he finally understood."

"What?"

"I do not understand why." Pattern buzzed and started chasing the spren. Eventually the room cleared out.

"Where is Adolin?"

"Mmmmm, why are you asking me?"

"Because I can."

"I think he is in your rooms waiting for you."

Shallan left the room.

"Mini-Shallan?" Pattern asked. The baby of course, only cooed and giggled. Pattern buzzed and left the room. He chased after Shallan.

"Hello, Pattern." Shallan said

"Are you not going to get Mini-Shallan diagnosed?"

"Yes. I am going to get Adolin, then go get the surgeon. They will come to her and diagnose her. Then we will know if she will be okay."

"Mmmmm, yes, I understand."

They walked into Shallan and Adolin's rooms. "Hello, Shallan." Adolin said.

"Come, our poor girl's finally getting diagnosed."

"Really? Okay, let's go."

Adolin, Pattern, and Shallan walked into the room with all of the baby's stuff. The surgeon was already there and was tickling the child. He noticed the group standing in the room. "Shall we begin?" He asked.

"Well, she has been coughing and sneezing a whole lot. She dry-heaves and often won't sleep. Wounds appear on her arms, but despite persistent antiseptic we put on her everyday, rotspren still are there."

"Hmm. Based on what I can see she has Petishesh-cumbre. I'm sorry."

Shallan sighed. It was worse than she thought. *Rot Plague* that's what it meant. There was no cure as of now. "Thank you, sir." Shallan said sadly. The surgeon took this as a dismissal and left the group in the room.

"Well?" Adolin asked

"We're taking her to the night watcher, next chance we get that we can get there." Shallan said stubbornly. Adolin didn't fight so she didn't push further.

"Why don't you get some rest, I will stay with her tonight, we have to prepare tomorrow."

Shallan nodded and the group split up and Pattern followed Shallan into her room for the night.

Followed

Ashiana climbed. The tree was very tall, but the large yellow fruit near the top motivated her. She found footholds, though there weren't many. She took a break on a branch, but then kept climbing. She was just about to reach it when a feminine voice broke the silence.

"Hello!" The voice said. Ashiana spun and accidentally let go of the tree. *I was so close!* She fell to the ground landing on her back.

"Who are you and how did you climb the tree without me noticing?"

"I didn't climb." The voice came from above.

"How did you not climb?" Ashiana asked as she stood up.

"Like this." This time it was right behind her. Ashiana spun to find a woman, about twenty years old behind her. She had short white hair that was pink at the bottom. Her eyes were a bright magenta and she wore strange clothing. Her safehand was *not* covered. Neither was Ashiana's. The strangest thing about the woman is that she didn't stand on the ground, but instead a couple feet off the ground.

Ashiana jumped. "How? What? Who?"

"How, I am not human. I'm Allenthella. You?" She said.

"Um. I don't want to tell you my name. You're-"

"A stranger? Strange? Impossible? So are you."

"Um. I'm perfectly normal." Ashiana said.

"Well, your name?"

Ashiana sighed "I- I'm Ashiana." The words felt strange in her mouth, she hadn't introduced herself in a long while. Ashiana started to walk towards the tree to begin climbing again. Allenthella followed.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm climbing to get food." Ashiana said. Allenthella walked upward as if on invisible stairs.

"What kind?"

"Edible." Ashiana said simply. She genuinely didn't know what kind.

"Um, are you sure that is safe to eat?" Allenthella asked, "Most people can't eat those."

"It's better than what the voidbringer gave-" Ashiana cut herself off *I don't even know her!*

"Voidbringer?"

"I'm not saying anything more." Ashiana reached out and grabbed the fruit and started climbing back down. Allenthella slowly went down with her.

"Ok then."

"Why are you following me?"

"Because of the other people following you." She said simply.

"Who?" Ashiana looked alarmed.

"Oh, nobody." She said as Ashiana reached the bottom and began eating. "So, about the voidbringer..."

"Ugh, do you have to be so nosey?" Ashiana was exasperated.

"It's important, you're important, and- and I can't say much more than that."

"I was kidnapped when I was little."

"By the so called voidbringer." Allenthella said skeptically.

"It looked like a void and it brought darkness with it... and that feeling." Ashiana shivered.

"Okay, describe it."

"Will you please leave me alone?" Ashiana asked annoyed.

"No. So, description?"

Ashiana groaned. "She was dark, like a shadow or like smoke. She always changed but looked the same. Her form was distinct but her hair was always wild. She had a face with no eyes or nose." She said finally.

"Not a Voidbringer. One of the unmade." Allenthella said distantly.

"And that is?"

"A very powerful dark spren. I'm surprised you're not dead. She must have been fascinated by you."

"If you're not gonna leave me alone, what are you going to do?"

"Follow you."

"Well, I doubt I will be very interesting and you will get bored really fast."

"I don't think you know how interesting you are."

"Whatever." Ashiana said.

Allenthella walked around Ashiana, not touching the ground. "Why are you so annoyed that I'm following you when you're followed all the time?"

"What do you mean all the time?" Ashiana asked. "You are the first to decide to follow me!"

"Nope." Allenthella gestured towards a group of windspren and Ashiana's tattered dress.

"The windspren and my dress are following me?" Ashiana asked skeptically.

"No."

"No? Then what is following me? What next? The trees?"

"Spren."

"Spren don't follow people."

"Yes they do." Allenthella said.

"You're crazy."

"Nope, you're just uninformed. The spren are following you." Allenthella said, earning an annoyed groan from Ashiana. She finished her fruit silently. Then one of the wind spren from before tugged on Ashiana's hair. It giggled and darted away.

"Hey!" she called out.

"Well. Now what?" Allenthella asked.

"Like I said, I'm boring." Ashiana said. "Wait, if spren are following me, why did you point to my dress?"

"Because there's a spren on your dress."

Ashiana looked down. She didn't see anything. Just the messy tattered dress with the- *What was that?* There was a strange twisting pattern on her skirt. It was like a prism of light, that wasn't light and was black. It also seemed to *raise* the surface of her dress as if it was under it. However it was so intricate. Ashiana's eyes widened. "*That* is a spren?"

"Yup."

"But-"

"But spren don't look like that, spren don't follow people?" She finished.

"Exactly."

"This is exactly why I'm following you. You are special." Allenthella said. She then muttered something under her breath too quiet for Ashiana to hear.

"What?"

"Nothing."

"And Windspren still don't follow people."

"Yup."

"Wait- you're agreeing with me?"

"Windspren don't follow people."

"Then... why did you point to a group of them?"

"No reason."

"You are confusing."

"Yup."

"Okay then."

"Talk to them."

"Who?"

"The spren." She said it like it was the most obvious thing in the world

"The spren?" Ashiana asked skeptically.

"Yup."

"Hello spren, you can't comprehend me but Hi!" she said mockingly.

"No. Not like that. You'll figure it out soon. I'm just impatient."

"Well, are you just going to sit there?"

"Yep."

"You're weird."

"And I know it!" Allenthella said, almost proudly.

Ashiana put her hand to her face. "Well."

"What?"

"Nothing." Ashiana said. *Don't have to say anything. Maybe she'll get bored and leave me alone.*

Allenthella hummed not moving from her spot. "I'm trying to be boring! So you will leave me alone!"

Ashiana said after a few minutes, exasperated.

"You could never be boring. Humans are interesting enough, but you, you are fun!"

"Creep."

"Yup, get that a lot." Allenthella said plainly. "So, you going to talk to the spren?"

"No, unlike you I'm not strange." Ashiana said. Just as she said it her skirt began to buzz. It buzzed loudly. The so-called spren slipped down her skirt and onto the ground. Ashiana tried hard to follow it but she lost track of it.

"Ha! Seems like that one disagrees!" Allenthella said laughing.

Ashiana glared at Allenthella, just as that storming windspren came and tugged on her hair. The spren touched it to the wall. It stuck. *Great.* Ashiana thought. Her mop of messy red hair was stuck to the tree. She looked to Allenthella for help but the woman only started laughing.

"Help!" She was struggling against the tree when suddenly her hair unstuck and she fell forward on her face. The windspren started laughing and so did Allenthella. "Stupid spren," Ashiana muttered.

"I wouldn't say things like that if I were you. They will most likely give you a harder time-" The rest was whispered so Ashiana couldn't hear.

"Alright. Fine. I'll not call them stupid. But their spren, I doubt they understood what I said or even paid attention to it."

"You'd be surprised."

"So, why don't you talk to the spren, show me how. Obviously I do it wrong and it doesn't work."
Ashiana said, annoyed.

"No. It has to be you. It will only work with *you*."

"Okay then." Ashiana stood up and started to walk away.

"Where are you going?"

"Away." She kept walking. *Why didn't I think of walking away before?* She thought. She got about 20 yards away when she turned her head to see Allenthella sitting on the air as if on an invisible chair.

"You realize I'm going to follow you. There are things you need to do that you don't yet understand."

"Yeah." Ashiana said reluctantly.

"I think, once you understand a bit more you will want me here.

"Yeah, whatever. I'm tired. Please don't stare at me while I sleep." It had gotten late, so Ashiana layed down and went to sleep.

Ashiana looked around at the strange room. There were a few people in the room. These strange dreams had been happening almost every time she slept now. She was in a room with stone walls that had strange strata patterns. There were chairs all around the room. It looked like a meeting of some sort. Ashiana could walk around unnoticed. She went looking for the woman who was always there. The dreams were always different but the one thing that stayed the same was one woman with red hair. She loved to draw. She found her talking to some grumpy guy leaning against the wall.

"I really think you should do it today, I have to stay here and guard Dalinar." said the man. He had black semi-curly shoulder length hair. He also had brands on his forehead.

"Fine. But you do it tomorrow." She walked off so Ashiana followed.

Then she woke up. Sometimes they seemed short other times extremely long although the time that passed when she dreamt was always the same.

"You were twisting and turning restlessly. You looked like you were trying to walk while laying down." Allenthella said the moment Ashiana opened her eyes.

"I told you not to watch me sleep!"

"I wasn't until you started doing that."

Ashiana sighed. "I just had a weird dream."

"Ooh! Tell me about it."

Ashiana groaned. "Fine. I was in a weird place with weird stone walls. There were people that I'm pretty sure I have never seen in my life. One has red hair and draws a lot. She is always in these dreams. I have them a lot. They say some interesting things, some boring things. Sometimes she seems to talk to nobody."

"Hmm. When do the dreams take place?"

"They always seem to be happening at the same moment I'm dreaming about them, judging by the weird fabrials and the time of day."

"Interesting. It could be possible that- no... not likely."

"What?"

"Nothing." Allenthella said almost to quickly.

"Ooookay, not suspicious at all, well what are you gonna say about it?"

"Just that you should still talk to your spren."

"Anything *else*"

"Actually- yes. Talk to your spren. Listen to them. After that, find the woman in your dreams."

Allenthella seemed to know something. "Oh, and I will be leaving. Bye."

"Wait- no don't leave! I'll be alone and I have questions!" Ashiana couldn't believe she was asking the storming woman to stay.

"I thought," She said smiling, "You wanted me to leave. And now I am I'll come back eventually. Do what I said. Bye!" She literally disappeared.

"No! Don't leave me!" Ashiana screamed.

The windspren came over and took the form of a young woman. It giggled and started imitating Ashiana. *Storming Spren*. Ashiana thought. Ashiana stood up and started to walk away. She climbed a tree and sat there, holding back tears. *I hardly knew the woman, why should I be sad*. The answer came almost immediately after the thought. *She liked me. She was nice and funny, and she was a person. I wasn't alone*. Now she was.

She looked over at the windspren and back at the other one who kept on climbing up part of the tree, then slipping back down. *I'm supposed to talk to them. Maybe Allenthella will come back*. She jumped out of the tree and started examining the spren. The one that was on the tree seemed to raise the surface of the tree in the exact pattern that it was in. It buzzed continuously. The windspren still took the form of a young woman but had stopped imitating her and had started tugging her hair again. "Hey!" Ashiana shouted looking at the spren, annoyed. *How long have they been following me, and how long will they?* The spren giggled and took the form of tumbling leaves and blew away.

"Very funny." Ashiana spat at the windspren that was playing on the wind. She looked over at the weird spren. It was still buzzing. *I doubt I could get a good conversation out of you. No harm in trying*. Ashiana thought.

"Hey you. Spren-thing." Ashiana said to the spren on the tree. It stopped buzzing. "I wanna talk to you." It started buzzing again. Ashiana sighed. "Wow how inteligen of you. I tried. I guess it won't work." It buzzed more loudly and at a higher pitch. "Okay can you stop?" It got quieter. "Good enough."

She walked over to the group of windspren. "Which one of you is the one who has been following me?" A single blue-white spren came out of the group. It giggled. "Hi! Will you give me a conversation?" The spren tugged Ashiana's red hair and giggled and it flew off as a streak of light. *Great. I'm supposed to talk to a buzzing pattern and an annoying windspren who neither of which know how to have a conversation*. She sighed. *Might as well try tomorrow*. She climbed the tree and plucked an orangish red fruit from it. She ate in silence. She then found a comfortable spot and went to sleep.

Buzzes and Teasing

Ashiana looked at the spren who were still doing their usual things. The buzzing was hard to sleep through, but it was manageable. Ashiana slipped down off of the tree and landed quietly on her feet. "You gonna talk today?" She asked looking at the two spren. The only replies she got were the usual buzzes and teasing. *What am I thinking. Am I expecting spren to act like regular people all of the sudden?* She sat down next to the spren that were on opposite sides of her. The windspren kept teasing her. She sighed and just sat. Trying not to be emotional. A single tear rebelliously streamed down her cheek. The spren stopped what they were doing and turned toward her. The windspren took the form of a young woman and walked on the air up by Ashiana's face and examined the tear. She looked confused. The spren lost interest quickly and went back to what they were doing but Ashiana was shocked. *Spren don't do that. They almost seemed to care that I cried. They were confused about what the tear was. Why? Spren are just forces of nature. Even the most thoughtful of spren, forgot things if they learned things and they didn't notice things like a tear.* Ashiana wiped the tear away and smiled at the spren. The windspren was making faces at the other and the weird spren was buzzing loudly. They separated and continued to dance on the air or slide up and down trees. Her day continued like that.

The windspren was examining a little cremling that seemed unable to see her. Now that she looked at it, it was a very strange cremling. It had bright orange stripes on black. It had a strange tail with a weird end. Ashiana picked it up, curious. The windspren, of course darted over and started to look at it too. Ashiana stroked the cremling's back. The cremling clicked loudly. Its tail flicked over and whipped Ashiana's arm. Ashiana yelped and dropped the creature. "Ow!" She exclaimed. She was bleeding. She noticed something violet in the cut. *Poison!* She thought. She began to furiously rub her arm trying to get the poison out. She began to feel dizzy and slumped to the ground. Just hoping she had gotten enough of the poison out.

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Ashiana woke up suddenly a buzz in her ear. *No wait.* She thought, *that's the spren.* She shook herself awake, dizzy. Realizing that the two spren had perched on her arms separating themselves but looking intently at her. "W-what do you want?" She asked her voice somewhat slurred. The windspren just looked at her confused. The other buzzed

"I-I don't understand. I th-think I need to talk to you. Why are you spinning?" The windspren giggled and started to twirl. The other moved and sat right in front of Ashiana. *I think... I was stung... by a venomous cremling. But... I'm alive. It must've not been lethal.* She stood up and brushed herself off, leaning against a tree for support. Her vision cleared and she looked at her arm. There were tiny rotspren marking an infection. She walked over to a little pool of water. She scrubbed at her arm, hoping it would help. It broke her out of her stupor from before. The cold water was filled with crem. She scrubbed off the crem taking the rotspren with it. *Good. Not so bad anymore.*

Just then the wind picked up. *Of course.* She heard thunder coming from the east. Highstorm. Ashiana grabbed a small orange fruit and ran for shelter. She found a small outcropping in a boulder she had used before. She climbed in. The strange spren followed. *Wait,* she thought *Where's the windspren?* She looked around outside and found a group of windspren. She noted the one in the middle was shaped

as a girl and stood out from the rest, who at this point were tumbling leaves. *Of course. Just because she's a weird windspren doesn't change her love for stormwinds.* Ashiana settled in. She sat in the cubby waiting for the storm to pass. Ten minutes passed and the only word that crossed her mind was *Bored*. Never had she been so bored or alone. She just couldn't sit still.

"Hello." She said to the spren, trying to fight the boredom. "Can you talk?" The spren buzzed and then in a perfect replication of her voice.

"Hello." The spren said to her in a perfect replication of her voice. "Can you talk?" Ashiana jumped back.

"Uhhh... that's not supposed to be possible. Can you talk in your own voice? Do you even have a voice?" Ashiana said. It buzzed. *Wow. It replicated my voice and all I can say is do something else. It did something other than buzz!*

"I guess you're not going to do anything else?" Buzzes came as a reply. "Alright then." Ashiana waited out the rest of the storm thinking about what just happened. When the storm ended, She climbed out of her little shelter and ate her fruit. The other spren zipped back and stuck her tongue out at the other spren.

"Hello." She said to the windspren. "How about you. Can you do anything cool?" As a reply the spren made a face and twirled, giggling before continuing to what she was doing. *At least she acknowledges my existence. Maybe someday Allenthella will come back. Maybe she'll realize how these spren are just weird spren. However until then I will talk to them hoping they'll talk back. What the other spren did was promising. Maybe there was hope.* Ashiana curled up and went to sleep.

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Ashiana was in that strange place again. It looked like some boring meeting. She picked out the Redhead who likes to draw and the storm-faced man in the corner. "Shallan will you do the map? Asked one man." *So red-head's name is Shallan? What does he mean do the map?*

"Sure." She said. She seemed to suck in light and breathe it back out and it turned into a map. *Wow.* Ashiana thought.

Ashiana looked over her shoulder and noticed *Allenthella* in the corner. Nobody else seemed to see her. *Was she having a dream too?* She walked over to her. "Hey! Allenthella!" No reply. "You hear me?" Nothing. Ashiana punched her in the shoulder. It *nudged* her. *So she was in the dream. Just refusing to let me know that. Or trying.* "Just talk to me!" Something else caught her attention. There was a strange pattern on Shallan's dress. It looked very similar to one of the spren that had been following her. She walked over and started to look at it. It just sat there. She was turned around and noticed a windspren following Storm-faced man in the corner. *Who would follow him? Not even spren should be able to handle that amount of grumpiness.* The spren turned and *looked* at Ashiana. Not past her like all people did, but straight at her. She smiled and looked back at The grumpy guy.

"Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin, Kaladin!" She said, Pointing at Her. *Wait! It talked! The spren, It actually talked!* Ashiana thought. *Does that mean mine can too?* The spren was in the form of a young woman, in a childlike dress.

The Storm-faced man looked over where the spren was pointing. "What is it?" He asked.

"There's a girl over there!" She said excitedly.

"What? No there isn't There's just a wall where you're pointing."

The spren walked over to her. "That's weird," It said once it got over to Ashiana. "Why can't he see you?"

"Um. Why can you see me? Nobody else can." Ashiana placed her words carefully. *I'm actually having a conversation with a spren!* "And, why can you... remember his name? You're... a spren."

"Silly! I'm not a normal spren. Isn't it obvious?"

"Yes. Well. Uh. Sorry. The spren that follow me don't talk. You follow him right?" She gestured to the Grumpy guy who was giving strange looks to the spren.

"If that's what you want to call it, then yes." She said.

"Ok. Just wondering, why can you see me? Are you dreaming?"

"No. Are you?"

"Yes, I was wondering-"

Ashiana's surroundings began to fade around her. She was waking up. "No, not now!" She was on the cold, stone ground. Her red hair lay in a tangled mess. The Spren doing their usual buzzing and goofing off. She looked around, trying to figure out what to do. *The spren in my dream could talk. Maybe these spren will too.*

"Hi," Ashiana said to the windspren, who turned its head. "Can you talk?"

"Silly!" It said.

"What?"

"Silly!" It repeated.

"What's so silly?"

"Silly! You're silly!"

"You're actually talking!"

"Why wouldn't I?" It zipped off as a streak of blue-white light to go investigate a rockbud. *It's still a spren.* Ashiana thought *Just because some spren was talking like a human doesn't mean any other spren will.*

Ashiana sat down to think about what had happened. A branch snapped above her she jumped up and spun. She looked up into a tree, where she found a strange woman with strange marbled black and red skin. It had thick hair that was nearly like wire. She wore strange long clothing that would drag behind her if she stood on the ground. She leaped down from the tree, which flopped down. She was humming a strange tune. "Who are you?" Ashiana demanded. She picked up a rock, ready to defend herself.

"Oh child. Drop that rock." The creature said, it's voice was melodic, in a way that made Ashiana shiver.

"Why would I?" Ashiana asked defensively.

"Do you not know?" It said to a spiteful, violent rhythm.

"Know what? Know that I have a rock and you don't" Ashiana lunged at the creature, who, in turn, grabbed her with impossible strength and started to glow... dark? It stuck her to a tree.

"Fool girl." It sneered. Then it conversed. With nothing. "Hm. Drind takes interest in you. You are lucky. I will spare you but you are coming with me."

Ashiana was released from the tree but then tied up with rope. *Great* Ashiana thought. She was tugged along.

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Ashiana was brought to a strange place. The creatures *filled* the place. A few were in the sky. Most were on the ground.

For those of you who are reading, I will update very soon. I would now but I have a gap in my timeline. I know what happens in a little but I need an event to happen that will take a while. If it doesn't happen the story can't move on. But the event can't happen for a loooong time. If anyone has Ideas for events that could happen in that time, let me know. I am working as fast as I can. Hope you enjoy it!

-- Emma