

# The Young Wind

On the side of a mountain, stood an old stone house. Inside the wood burner hissed as the fire crackled and flames flickered. Smoke was being drawn up the chimney by the strong wind that blew overhead. In the warmth of the room a story was being read and as the words floated up and joined the smoke, the young wind heard that the story was about an old wind from long ago that was in competition with the sun. The young wind wrapped itself around the house and swirled listening to the story, reaching into the cracks and under the door to hear the story better. "Strange things those humans, they don't know what it's like to be a wind... the fun to be had – rushing over the field, tickling the tops – making the grass giggle, dashing through the trees, racing over the hill, accelerating downhill, occasionally taking out an unsuspecting walker! It's a shame that no one sees me – only what I do: drying clothes, playing tug with kites, blowing over dustbins, chasing newspaper down the street, and spreading the leaves – so carefully raked together by those humans! Oh, the trouble I was in last time I blew that fence down, and again after the brawl with the wind from the next winditch – We'd had a huge fight and damaged trees... it was put down to youth, and I was given stern talking to. Still I've been so good for ages and have over the last year learnt many things, holding leaves in the air twirling them slowly to the ground, how to move just one grain of sand, and how to create huge crashing waves and throw them down onto the beach. Still no one would really know who it is – I could get up to all sorts of mischief."

The story had got to the part where the sun was winning, and even though the dispute was long since settled, the young wind was enraged. He puffed himself up, and blew down the chimney – just enough to cause the wood burner's doors to rattle and open, for the fire to flare and send sparks dancing. As the humans jumped, the young wind laughed to himself, and in the same moment – the curtains sucked the windows and doors shuddered against their frames. The young wind was being pulled by a greater force, like he was being dragged back by the tail.

Outside the house, the wind had dropped. It was eerily still and quiet, like a space vacuum in time. The young wind found itself face to face with the North Wind – The Wind of all Winds, known for its harsh and bitter temper – but who had learnt the control. The

control that allows humans to reach for stars on the clear winter nights, and that cradles a single snowflake gently, wafting to the ground.

The young wind knew he was in trouble...again. The North wind spoke., not with the roar the young one expected, but gently. "You have a great gift. You will only ever be recognised for your actions – They display who you are." The North wind continued; "Your hard work and efforts have not gone unnoticed. You are able to deliver the iciest chill that shivers bones, or the warm and gentle brush of a cheek, like the caress of a loved one. The choice is yours. Your humour, and the affinity you have developed with the humans will serve you well in your new role." The young wind looked up, as the North Wind spoke again. "You will join the Winds of Change, blow well and with confidence."