

STILL THERE

Written by

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**EXT. OLD OAK PARK - DAY**

Four eleven-year-olds run around Old Oak Park, a local playground dropped on a few acres of land in the middle of a quiet suburban neighborhood.

DAVID POLANSKI, boyish looking but hiding it behind long emo hair, runs with a stick raised in the air.

DAVID

Come on! We're running out of time.

LUCAS JOHNSON, awkwardly tall and therefore lacking in coordination, is right behind Hazel, but he stumbles a bit, causing...

CASEY BLOOMBERG, a short fuse with a booming voice, to bump into him.

CASEY

Ugh, LUCAS!

LUCAS

Sorry! My shoe lace is untied.

HAZEL FARROW, strong both in body and manner, runs past the others, TWO sticks in her hands

HAZEL

Let's go, the trolls are coming!

Hazel stops and waits for the others to catch up. They all stand around the OLD OAK TREE - the name sake for the park and a giant tree that's hundreds of years old.

**INTERCUT:**

**EXT. BATTLE FIELD - DAY (FANTASY)**

The Old Oak Tree is still the same, but the children are in FULL BATTLE GEAR, their sticks now SWORDS and other weapons, whatever they can IMAGINE.

The sky is covered in clouds, smoke comes from FIREBALLS flying overhead, and standing opposite our young heroes is an ARMY OF GHOULISH CREATURES.

Casey parries an attack, sending a creature flying backward.

Lucas dodges out of the way of a fireball. Casey helps him up.

They're surrounded by creatures. With a mutual nod, they stand back to back and begin fighting around the circle, always watching each other's backs.

A TROLL appears, swiping the creatures in its path with a giant battle axe.

It spots Casey and Lucas and raises the axe above its head to strike, but freezes. Its eyes roll backward and falls to the ground

On its back stands Hazel, wearing thick armor, her two blades sticking out of the troll's neck.

CASEY

Show off.

HAZEL

You're welcome.

LUCAS

Where did David go?

There's a loud BOOM and the three run toward it. David is standing next to a pile of the creatures, his WAND smoking.

DAVID

That should be the last of them.

HAZEL

Right. Time to end this.

The four of them approach a huge ivy covered stone. Out of it comes THE SHADOW, their main enemy. The Shadow is an amorphous black smoke, menacing and large.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

This is it, this is what we've been training for.

DAVID

After this, we'll never need to pick up a sword again.

#### **EXT. OLD OAK PARK - DAY (REALITY)**

CASEY

Wait, do you really mean that? Like we can't play this game anymore after we defeat the Shadow?

DAVID

It's not just a game Casey...

CASEY

I know I know but I mean...

LUCAS

Guys come on not right now!

HAZEL

Look out!

**EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY (FANTASY)**

They all scream and duck to the side, falling to the ground as a fireball whizzes overhead.

LUCAS

Focus people!

HAZEL

Yeah, ok, we need to destroy it with all the power we have!

Another fireball flies over their heads coming from the opposite direction, but misses the Shadow by a few yards to the right.

They turn around, and Hazel's sister LUCY, 6, young and indignant, stands there in her own armor with a giant wolf at her side.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Lucy! What are you doing here?

LUCY

I came to help! I brought Cooper with me, too.

HAZEL

We don't need your help, besides, you died last week so you shouldn't even be here.

LUCY

I came back to life.

HAZEL

You can't just come back to life!  
Go home Lucy.

LUCY

No! Mom said I could play with you.  
She said you have to let me.

## EXT. OLD OAK PARK - DAY (REALITY)

HAZEL

You can play with us after we kill  
the Shadow, ok?

LUCY

But I brought Cooper to help!

Cooper, a golden retriever, goes over to the giant old Oak tree that gives the park its name, and pees on it.

HAZEL

Cooper! No! Lucy get him out of  
here!

LUCY

But...

HAZEL

Now!

LUCAS

Lucy, if we all die today, who's  
going to protect the neighborhood?  
We need you to stay behind. It's a  
tactical maneuver.

LUCY

Fine.

Lucy pouts and grabs Cooper by the collar and drags him back toward the house.

CASEY

You know, she could have played  
with us, I wouldn't have cared.

HAZEL

Not today. Today it has to just be  
us.

DAVID

She's got a point. Besides, we  
don't want Lucy to get hurt if  
things turn ugly.

The four friends stare down a fence covered in English Ivy.

The ivy is thick, though only takes up a small portion of the fence, pouring down toward the ground. It's abnormally dark in the shadows of its leaves.

CASEY

Can we all agree for a sec that we aren't just imagining that there's like bad energy coming from this stuff?

DAVID

Duh, it's evil.

LUCAS

Yeah for sure.

HAZEL

It's creepy.

LUCAS

I still think we should try to tell someone about this...

DAVID

No, we swore an oath as Knights of the Old Oak that we would protect our neighborhood in secret, so as not to involve the civilians in this war.

CASEY

And we don't want him to think we're crazy.

DAVID

That too.

HAZEL

Whatever. Everyone, wands out!

They each pull a shorter stick that they've each decorated with pipe cleaners and clay out from their pockets.

DAVID

Swords at the ready! Remember, we can't let it escape and terrorize another neighborhood. We cannot fail.

**EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY (FANTASY)**

They raise their swords and wands in the air.

HAZEL

Together on three; one, two...  
CHARGE!

ALL  
For Park and Home!

The four ATTACK The Shadow, David and Hazel pushing the Shadow back while Lucas and Casey flank it. Slowly, they make ground towards the ivy stone.

DAVID  
Come on! We're almost there!

Lucas is suddenly thrown backwards by The Shadow. He makes a gagging noise and then dramatically dies.

CASEY  
No! Lucas is dead!

DAVID  
We'll honor him by fulfilling our duty, now come on!

The remaining three push the Shadow back to the point where it's in a small ball.

HAZEL  
You two, don't let it escape. I'll finish the job.

CASEY  
Why do you get to?

HAZEL  
Because I was the one to discover it growing in our world, so I've felt its darkness the longest.

DAVID  
Whatever just hurry up! We can't hold it much longer.

With a mighty cry, David stabs The Shadow with both his wand and sword and twists.

**EXT. OLD OAK PARK - DAY (REALITY)**

Hazel STABS the ivy, twisting her stick and ripping it up, tearing most of it off the fence.

Casey and David stomp on it and hit it with their sticks.

**EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY (FANTASY)**

David, Casey, and Hazel fly backwards as the Shadow explodes with a bright flash. They lie there, exhausted.

Hazel rolls over onto her stomach, and sees a WHITE FLOWER growing a few feet away.

HAZEL

I can't believe it, but I found the Flower of Life.

She gets up and plucks the delicate white flower from the ground and crawls over to Lucas.

**EXT. OLD OAK PARK - DAY**

Hazel is holding a white dandelion. She blows the seeds at Lucas.

HAZEL (CONT.D)

Come back from the dead!

Lucas comes back to life with some dramatic gasps. They all sit silently after that for a few beats.

DAVID

We did it.

CASEY

So, does that mean the game's over?

HAZEL

(Annoyed)

Casey...

CASEY

I'm serious! You said that we can't play anymore because we're going into junior high! So was this the last day we could play this game?

LUCAS

Yup. We've done it, we've defeated the Shadow. Now we don't have to fight it anymore.

DAVID

YOU didn't do anything, Lucas. You just died.

LUCAS

I died for the cause. You didn't need to resurrect me, Hazel.

HAZEL

Hey, the Flower of Life just showed up, I didn't ask for it to.

LUCAS

Whatever. It's not like I was really needed anyway. You guys seemed to be doing all the work anyway.

DAVID

We just step up. It's not our fault you guys let us.

HAZEL

If you don't like it then you don't have to play anymore.

CASEY

That's not fair.

LUCAS

It doesn't even matter! We're done with this game anyway.

A few beats of silence follow.

HAZEL

(Quietly )

Do you really just think of this as a game? I thought it was a bit more...

LUCAS

More?

HAZEL

I don't know, like we were really making a difference or something. Like we were actually Knights.

DAVID

I guess it felt that way at times, yeah. But it was just us getting really into it.

HAZEL

Yeah, you're right...

DAVID

It's as real as you believe it is.  
I for one hope that the Shadow  
never returns, but it might one  
day.

CASEY

(Mumbled)

If we want it to.

DAVID

No, not just if we want it to,  
it'll return by itself!

HAZEL

When it does we can play this game  
again. But in the meantime, why  
don't we play Pokémon, if you guys  
would want to.

CASEY

Right, we still have two weeks  
until school, why did we defeat the  
Shadow today?

DAVID

(Shrugs)

It just was the right day.

LUCAS

I like the Pokémon idea. My mom  
said that I could get a new deck  
before school starts, so we can  
trade them.

HAZEL

Good! Because I lost all my cards  
on the bus last year...

DAVID

Ugh, fine, Pokémon is cool.

CASEY

We can go over to my house now to  
play Pokémon Stadium.

LUCAS

Yes!

DAVID

Ok, why not.

Before Hazel can respond, a bell rings from one of the houses  
around the park.

HAZEL

I guess that means I gotta go. I'll see you guys later!

Hazel waves to her friends and they wave back, the three of them walking and talking excitedly, the two boys on either side of a rather satisfied looking Casey.

Hazel watches them go with regret. But she still turns around and runs to her house.

**INT. CASEY'S HOUSE-DAY**

Lucas, Casey, and David all enter through the front door way.

CASEY

Mom! We're going to play video games in the basement!

Casey doesn't wait for a response.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Come on.

Lucas and David make to follow her as she opens the basement door when a PING goes off.

Lucas pulls out his flip phone. Cut to a shot of his phone, with a text from his Mom reading "Home now."

LUCAS

Oh, uh, sorry guys, I have to go.

CASEY

(whining)

Why? I thought you said that you were free today?

LUCAS

I know, but I guess I'm not anymore.

DAVID

What's it this time? Bass lesson or math tutoring? Or wait isn't it Tuesday? Maybe you have to go to swim practice?

LUCAS

Shut up. Look, I'll see you guys later, ok?

CASEY

Fine, whatever.

DAVID

You better not bail on our trip to Cedar Point this weekend.

LUCAS

I won't! It's in my schedule, so I won't forget.

DAVID

Ok, see you later.

David and Lucas do a special handshake and Lucas exits the house.

CASEY

Come on, let's go play.

DAVID

Sure.

Casey and David go into the basement.

**INT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - MUD ROOM - DAY**

Hazel enters through the back door of her house, throwing her shoes off into a cluttered mudroom. She then enters into the...

**KITCHEN**

CAMILLE FARROW, Hazel's mother, a woman in her late 30s with a thin wiry frame but a soft face, is setting the kitchen table for five when she sees Hazel enter. She stops what she's doing to regard her messy daughter.

CAMILLE

What were you doing out there?  
Rolling in mud?

HAZEL

I had to, it was part of the game.

CAMILLE

Go change and throw your clothes into the washing machine please. I don't want you tracking more mud into the house.

HAZEL

I'm not that dirty, you're  
overreacting.

CAMILLE

It doesn't matter if I'm  
overreacting or not, when I tell  
you to do something, you do it.

Hazel stomps her foot and goes to the laundry room.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

So, how are the boys?

HAZEL (O.S.)

They're fine. Why?

CAMILLE

Just wondering. Lucas's mom said  
that he really likes playing with  
you. I think she was implying that  
he might have a crush on you.

HAZEL (O.S.)

Mom! Don't make things weird!

CAMILLE

I'm just saying, Hazel. You're a  
pretty girl, why wouldn't he have a  
crush on you?

Hazel re-enters the kitchen in pajamas.

HAZEL

Please stop talking.

CAMILLE

Fine. Tell me about your game  
today. Anything exciting happen?

HAZEL

Well, we can't be Knights of the  
Old Oak anymore. We ended that game  
today.

CAMILLE

Why?

HAZEL

Because you can't play games like  
that anymore once you're in junior  
high, everyone knows that.

CAMILLE

Don't be so quick to grow up,  
Hazel. If you still refuse to wear  
a training bra, then you're still  
young enough to be a Knight.

HAZEL

It doesn't matter, Lucas starts  
tutoring for his advanced math  
class tomorrow and he said that  
he's gonna be really busy until  
school starts, and Casey is going  
out of town with her family.

CAMILLE

I see. So what are you going to do  
the next week before soccer starts?

HAZEL

I don't know.

**EXT. OLD OAK PARK - MR. SACHS'S FENCE - DAY**

The Ivy that was ripped off the fence turns BLACK and starts  
to smoke, shriveling up into dust.

But one leaf floats back UP onto the fence. It reattaches,  
and two small tendrils start to grow from it.

**EXT. OLD OAK PARK-SIDEWALK-NIGHT (12 YEARS LATER)**

LUCY, now 18, walks down the sidewalk, on the phone. She's  
not the little girl she used to be. She's done up, like she's  
just been out.

LUCY

Yeah, it was fine. I'm done with  
high school parties though. No one  
can handle their alcohol AT ALL.

Yeah, I know. Ok, I'm just about  
home. Thanks sis, love you, bye.

Lucy hangs up the phone and checks a text message as she  
walks. She's almost home.

A car's revved engine roars loudly from behind her. Lucy  
doesn't pay attention to it. Headlights come into view as a  
car comes racing down the street. It swerves onto the  
sidewalk.

Lucy turns around just in time to see the CAR barreling toward her. She's too stunned to move. The headlights take over her vision.

When the light clears, Lucy lays on the ground, barely breathing. The car keeps driving.

The SHADOW OF A MAN is illuminated by the street lamp, standing across the street. The man walks over to Lucy. Lucy's eyes look over to him.

Lucy is alone on the sidewalk.

EXCERPT