

## The Wizard

Why did the wizard go missing? No one knew where he was, of course. No one, except me. I am Hedge, the wizard's personal assistant. I am the one who fetches the potions, and answers the door, and delivers the messages. But, not anymore. Not since the wizard disappeared. It all started when the 47th visitor of the day stopped by the wizard's door. Jayu. He was the village potter, and somehow, even though his job did not seem dangerous, always seemed to get into scrapes. Today, though, was different. It wasn't Jayu who showed up at the door. Or at least, that's how it seemed. A little bluebird had pecked on the doorbell until I answered.

"Hello, little bird!" I cheerfully said "What do you need from the wizard today?" The little bluebird peeped, and hopped on one foot. Then it flew away. I shook my head, and started to close the door. But then, a flash of blue came in the corner of my eye. I opened the door again. The bluebird was back! It had a pebble, and set it down in the middle of the dirt outside of the isolated cabin that the wizard and I shared. It flew off again, and brought another pebble, which it laid down next to the first. *The bluebird must be trying to spell something* I realized. So I waited until the bluebird had finished spelling out its message with sticks and pebbles. It said:

**Not Bluebird. JAYU. Turn back.**

That's when I realized that this was not just a bluebird. Someone had turned Jayu into a bluebird! I ran back to the wizard inside of the cabin, Jayu-the-bluebird trailing behind me.

"Finally, boy." the wizard laughed.

"This is Jayu!" I said breathlessly, pointing to the bluebird. "He needs you to turn him back!"

"Because I am the master of favors, the one who will grant everyone's wish with the wave of my hand, who requires no payment out of the goodness of his heart, who everyone admires and loves." the wizard sounded very sarcastic.

"Well- yes sir! You are, sir. And Jayu will be very grateful, sir, he will repay you, sir." Jayu may have been the village gossip, spreading rumors about us, but he also gave me news about my family, and what was happening in the village. I couldn't lose that.

"Very well then, boy." the wizard waved his hand around, and carved a circle around the bluebird in the air with his breath. Jayu popped up from the chair that the bluebird had been perched on. He patted his various appendages appreciatively.

"I'm me! Thanks old man!" So, he may have been a little rude also. "Just wanted to tell the boy that his big sister's getting married." I almost laughed. My sister? Tumbleweed? I couldn't imagine her married. She was too rough-and-tumble, like her name. She wouldn't settle down, especially not with a *man*. But if she was- The wizard sniffed.

"That Tumbleweed never struck me as the type to be married. But if she is, Hedge, you may attend. I will be fine without you. In fact, I will be better. No one will answer the door, so I will not have to help so many people." He grinned.

"Thanks, sir!" I gathered my few possessions, said goodbye to the wizard, and set off with Jayu to the village.

My family greeted me warmly. As it happened, Tumbleweed *was* getting married. Her husband-to-be was gentle, yet energetic, and he and Tumbleweed had a lot of fun sparring

together. The festivities went on for a week, as customary, and as the week went on, I began to forget about the wizard and just have fun. But it was a lapse in judgement that made me forget.

People continued going to the wizard's for assistance, and when he refused to let them in and help them, the villagers became furious. They thought that the wizard was just being greedy with his magic, something that they had taken for granted until then. They forgot all of the times that he had willingly helped them in the past. Eventually, when the week was almost over, they assembled outside of the wizard's cabin, and broke his door down. He was not there. He had disappeared. The villagers ransacked the cabin, looking through everything. The wizard had disappeared, never to be seen again. This I learned from the note that mysteriously appeared on top of my pillow during the last day of the festivities. What shocked me the most though, was who had led the attack on the wizard's cabin. Jayu.

To be continued...