

Tashinga's Heart

For Tashinga

Tashinga was a happy child, but nobody can be happy all the time. He had a secret – the monsters!

Tashinga knew his name meant: “We are brave!” It was a reminder of his people’s courage. He should also be brave. This was the reason why he never spoke of the monsters to anyone. He was afraid of them. Still he had to face them sooner or later.

The monster, which appeared most often, was the Chair-Beast.

Sometimes when he left his clothes piled on the chair over night the chair-beast appeared... First it just looked like piled clothes, but after a while the shadows played on it – teased it into live. Then he could see it move. The chair-beast was an accomplished lurker. He only saw it moving from the corner of his eyes. Whenever he looked at it straight or even put the light on in his room, it simply reverted to a harmless pile of clothes. The monster-under-the-bed was even better at hiding. He could never see it – he only knew it was there. All the monsters only existed in the shadows and the dark. Tashinga was a big boy. Despite the monsters he would not sleep with the lights on! Still he was ashamed of being afraid of the monsters. When they were around his heart grew cold and froze his body with fear! They were his secret.

The monsters existed in a world that most adults did not truly believe existed. In the same world others existed too. This place was where Father Christmas, the Tooth Faerie and many others lived. His concern at the moment was the Tooth Faerie. He had teeth put under his pillow and she could not come to take them because of the monsters. He needed a solution! Somehow he had to defeat the monster so that the Tooth Faerie could visit him.

His mother sensed that he was worried somehow. He kept his secret. To cheer him up, she took him to a circus on Sunday afternoon. The circus had been in town for more than a week and Tashinga had wanted to see it since the first announcements had been made for the great show. It was wonderful. Acrobats were flying through the tent, clowns made everyone laugh and a magician made puppets dance without strings. The magician cheered Tashinga the most. Tashinga had an idea how to defeat the monsters. He needed allies!

On the next day he went to the place where all the circus people had their tents and trailers. And he saw the magician. He was too shy to go to the old man but he kept staring. The magician caught the boy's intense gaze. He smiled and walked towards Tashinga. Tashinga had come to see the magician, so he could not run away now. The magician addressed him with a kind smile, "Hello, boy, did I see you at the show yesterday?"

Tashinga did not speak. He was overawed. All he could do was to nod. The magician smiled again, said, "Hope to see you again and tell your friends about the show." Then he turned around and started to walk back to his trailer. Tashinga blurted out, "Can you make toys alive?!"

The magician stopped and turned back to the boy. He raised one eye brow, "Do you mean like in the show?" "No", Tashinga said, "like Pinocchio!" The smile in the magicians face was replaced by a thoughtful look. "So, boy, you know the difference?" Tashinga was not sure if the magician had really meant to voice it as a question. Anyway, he needed the man's help so he answered, not quite sure if it was the right thing to do: "Pinocchio is real! The life of your puppets was not quite real." He did hope that he had not upset the Magician in some way or even insulted his art. He was relieved to see the old man smile again. The magician said, "Real magic is not for the show. I hope you can understand that." "But you can do real magic?", Tashinga asked. "Only if you believe in it...", the magician said.

The magician was the first adult that Tashinga ever talked to about the monsters. And the magician promised help. He gave Tashinga a magic powder. That night Tashinga sprinkled it over his toys. The magic powder ensorcelled Tashinga's toys to fight the monsters!

That very night all the monsters appeared in Tashinga's bedroom and his toys charged them. Tashinga was scared! His heart was cold, chilled with fear, but for once it did not freeze his body too. But he was far more afraid that his toys might get hurt. He jumped out of his bed and shouted at the monster, "Get out of here and never dare coming back!"

The spell was broken. The monsters were gone and the toys had ceased moving. Tashinga had not only defeated the monsters – he had defeated his own fears! His mother came into the room. She had heard him shout. "Darling, is everything all right? Did you have a nightmare?" He told her that he was all right and did not have had a nightmare.

She also asked him if he wanted to sleep in her room. Tashinga just said, "I was afraid, mom, but now I am brave!" He slept in his room. The monsters were gone and would never come back. Now the Tooth Faerie might come. On top of all that he had learned something very important: Being brave is not about being fearless. Brave is who is afraid and does what needs to be done anyway!