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Squire with Fire
Disappearance of Luka



Squire With Fire: Disappearance Of Luka
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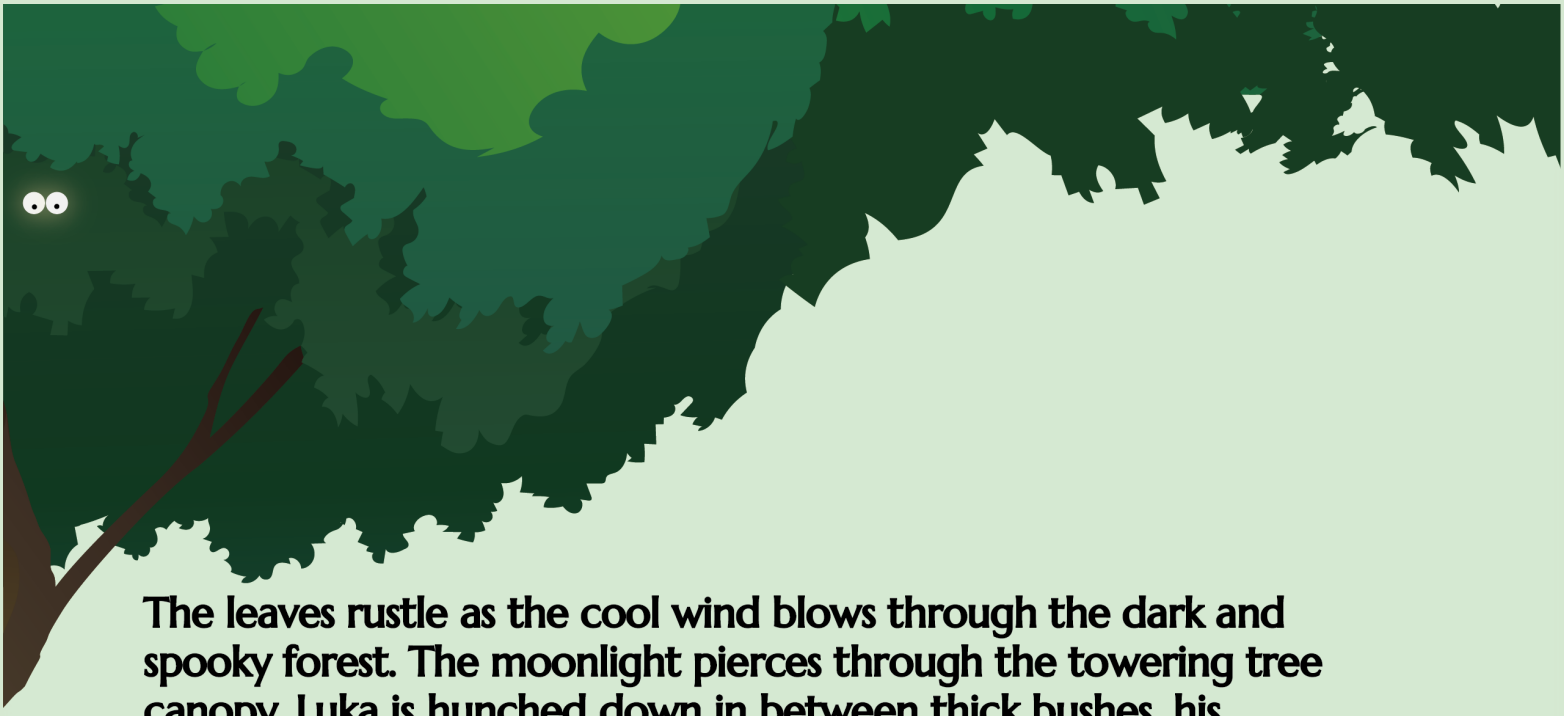


I dedicate this book to my sweetheart Joyce who for over 28 years as the ever-seeing wise owl has fired up my passion to accomplish my dreams while providing me with creative ideas, including the splashes of color.



I dedicate the story to Kui (Chris) Zhang who inspired me to write about a white dragon after he gave me a 3D-printed fully articulating white dragon when my first Squire With Fire book was published.


1



The leaves rustle as the cool wind blows through the dark and spooky forest. The moonlight pierces through the towering tree canopy. Luka is hunched down in between thick bushes, his slender white body reflecting the bright moon rays. He is hoping that the mean dragons don't see him as they fly over the treetops. The forest is so quiet except for some noisy crickets.

Luka hears a stirring sound above his head. He looks up, only to see a large owl staring at him with his big yellow eyes. It flies off with a loud screech. Luka whispers to himself, "What was I thinking flying into the forest to hide from those terrible dragons? If they catch me, I'm sure they will burn my tail with their fiery breath and say nasty things about me being all white.
A white dragon!"


3



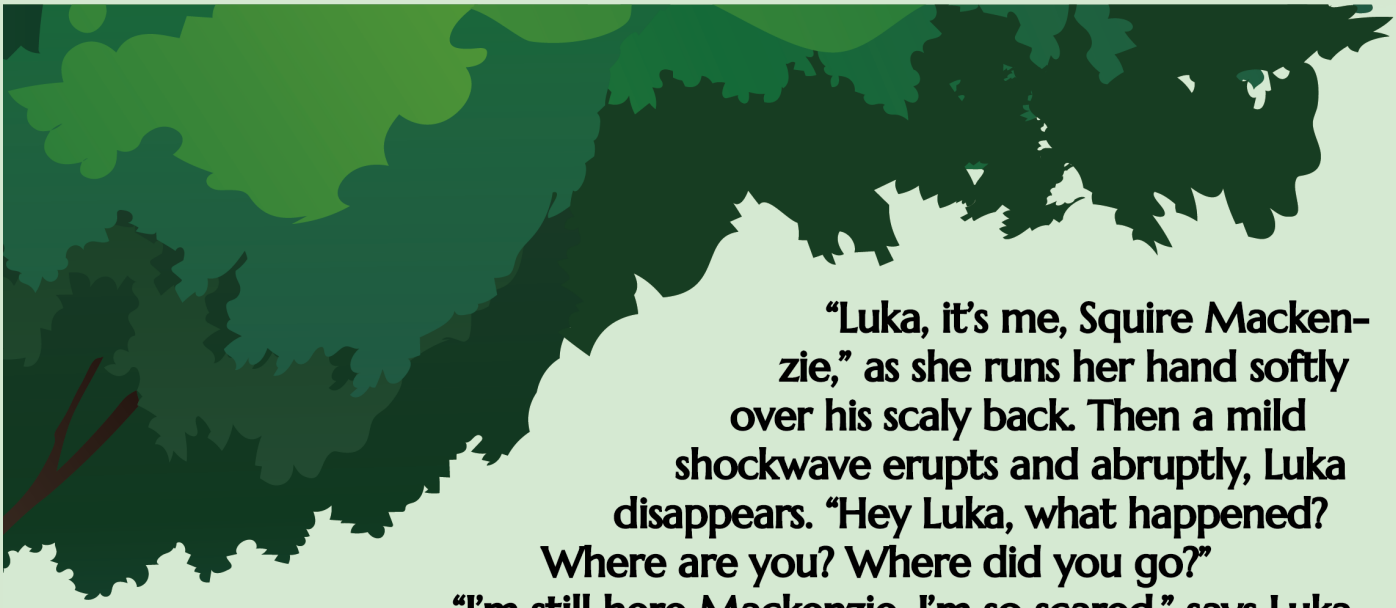
Luka hears a faint crunch. “Something is out there. Maybe one of those mean dragons. Most dragons are red or green like my parents. Some are like Elder, who is black. I wish I could fight back. They know I can’t breathe fire.”

Another crunching sound, but it’s much louder. Then, a tree branch snaps. “It’s getting closer to me. I’m so scared.”

Luka hears the mean dragons’ wings whooshing overhead, above the trees. He tucks his body even tighter and tries to hide deeper into the bushes. His white pointed tail can be seen sticking out of the thicket.

Suddenly, he feels something on his wing. It slithers up his back. Luka shakes with fear and then realizes his skin is beginning to glow. “Oh, no! What is happening to me?”





"Luka, it's me, Squire Mackenzie," as she runs her hand softly over his scaly back. Then a mild shockwave erupts and abruptly, Luka disappears. "Hey Luka, what happened? Where are you? Where did you go?"
"I'm still here Mackenzie. I'm so scared," says Luka.

Startled, Mackenzie keeps stroking her hand over Luka's back. "I can feel you, but I don't see you."

Luka says, "I'm right next to you. I don't know what's happening to me."

"You're safe with me, Luka. I'm glad I found you. Are you hurt?" She continues to rub his back, calming Luka. Slowly, parts of Luka's white body begin to reappear.

"There you are!" says Mackenzie with excitement. Luka turns and sees his favorite squire. Mackenzie coaxing her friend out of his hiding place. Luka's body stops shaking.





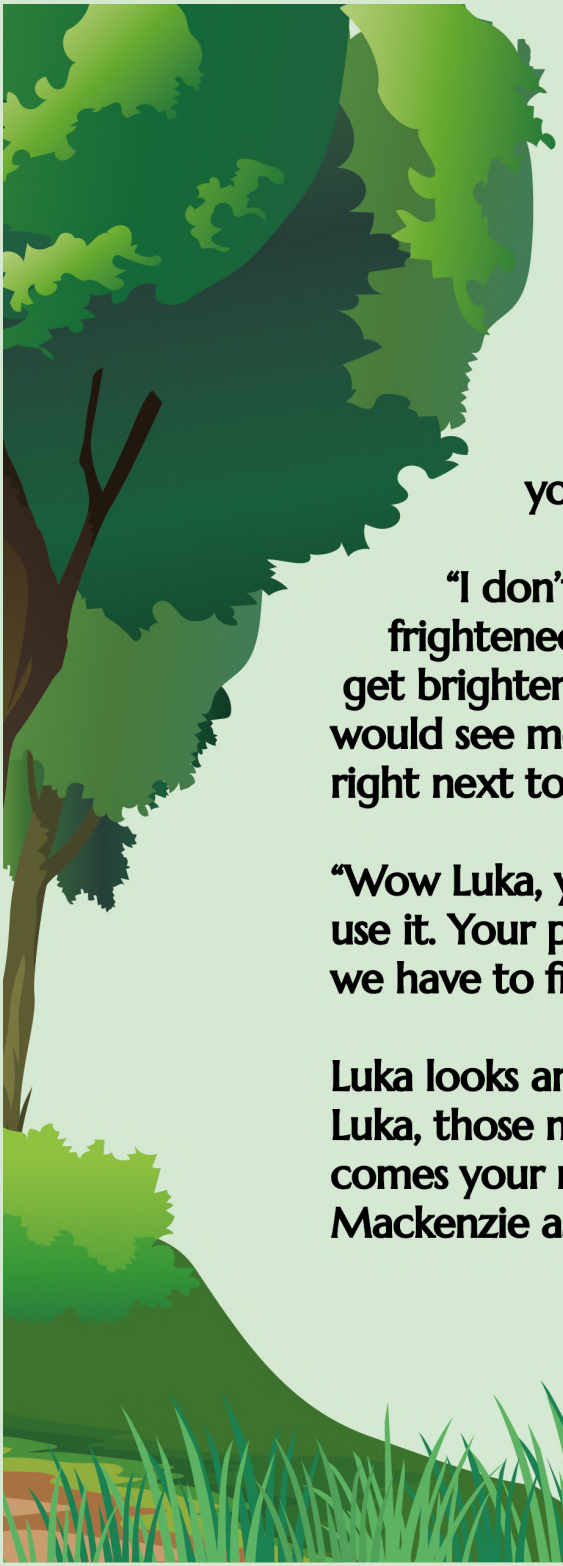
“Come on out of there Luka. I can see all of you now. Your momma and papa are very worried. They have asked all the knights and villagers to look for you.”

“How did you find me?” asks Luka as he twists out of the bushes. He spreads his white wings and stumbles a bit as he walks toward Mackenzie.

“A farmer said he thought he saw a white dragon fly into the forest. I was able to see my way through the woods because the moon is so bright,” says Mackenzie as she grabs her shield and points Luka toward the trail. They begin walking.

“I then saw a white pointed object in the bushes reflecting the moonlight. I thought it was a big tooth from a large animal. It was your tail!” Mackenzie laughs.





"By the way, what's with you glowing and then disappearing right in front of me. How do you do that?"

"I don't know Mackenzie. It just happened. I was so frightened. I shook so hard, it hurt. Then, I saw my skin get brighter and brighter. I was afraid those mean dragons would see me. You asked me, 'where are you?' and yet, I was right next to you."

"Wow Luka, you have a special talent. You must learn how to use it. Your power to disappear is a great advantage when we have to fight Vikings or dragons from another region."

Luka looks around and scans the moonlit skies. "Don't worry Luka, those mean dragons won't bother you. Oh look, here comes your mom and papa to meet us. Here we are!" shouts Mackenzie as she waves her sword.



Luka's parents land next to their son and immediately wrap their enormous wings around Luka, hugging their little dragon.

Luka's mom, Sparky, turns her huge red body around and says, "Thank you so much Squire Mackenzie for finding him."

Suddenly, Mackenzie has to jump over her long tail to avoid getting knocked down. "Oops! Sorry Mackenzie. I'm just so excited to see Luka."

She does a little happy dance, shaking the ground as Luka's papa, Spitfire, proudly watches the joyous occasion.





Mackenzie shrieks, “Look everyone!” as she points toward the village. Huge flames are engulfing the village and belching plumes of smoke, making the bright moonlit sky black. The villagers are screaming as they flee to the castle.

“This is horrible! The Vikings are attacking. We must stop them before they get to the castle!” yells Mackenzie. “Spitfire, can you fly me to the castle?”





"Let's go!" says Spitfire. Mackenzie climbs onto Spitfire's back and grabs tightly around his neck.

Spitfire launches into the dark smoky sky, with Sparky and Luka in pursuit.

The three dragons land inside the fortress. The knights come running to meet them.



The lead knight, Sir Henry, says, “The Vikings have not tried to attack the castle yet. Instead, they left for their camp near the sea where their boats are docked. The fires are under control, but many villagers have lost their homes.”

Mackenzie frowns, “Very sad indeed.”

Sir Henry gives commands to the knights and dragons. “Mackenzie, since you can speak to the dragons so well, please tell your two large dragon friends to stand guard by the drawbridge and use their fiery breath to keep the Vikings away. The little dragon can use his fire to help the knights escort the villagers to the castle gates.”

Mackenzie says, “Luka can’t breathe fire. However, he has a special power that we could use to find out the Viking’s plans before they attack. Most likely they will wait until morning. Then, we can ambush them for a surrender.”



“What is this so-called ‘power’ of this little dragon?” asks a knight.

“Luka can disappear!” shouts Mackenzie.

Startled, Luka gently hits Mackenzie in the leg with his wing and whispers to her, “Are you crazy. I don’t know how to make myself disappear. And, if I did, I don’t know for how long nor how to get back to normal.”

Spitfire and Sparky approach Mackenzie and Luka. His worried mom asks, “You can disappear? Are you sure you can do this because if you go into that Viking camp, you don’t have fiery breath to fight?”





Luka starts to glow. “I know Momma.” He begins to shake. “We’ll work on it tonight and you’ll be ready before sunrise,” says Mackenzie.

“What? Before sunrise?” shrieks Luka.

Luka’s lizard-like skin glows brighter.

“Trust me!” says Mackenzie.

“Is everything all right?” asks Sir Henry. “Will Luka go into the Viking camp and find out their plans?

What’s with his shimmering body...it’s glowing?”

Mackenzie says, “That’s how he makes his body disappear. Yes, we’ll be ready before sunrise.” The knights agreed to the plan and left the dragons with Mackenzie.



“Sunrise?” screeches Luka. Luka suddenly disappears.

“Where did he go?” asks Sparky.

“I’m right here Momma. I am so scared about going into the Viking camp...by myself!”

Mackenzie jumps up and down with much delight. “That’s it Luka! When you want to disappear, think of something scary like those mean dragons who chased you into the woods. As long as you keep thinking of something scary, you’ll stay invisible.”

Sparky asks, “I don’t understand. What makes him invisible.”



Mackenzie explains, “His white skin reflects all of the surrounding light, changing colors according to whatever he’s near.

He is like those lizards down by the beach. When they lie on a leaf, they change their skin colors to match the patterns on the leaf.

Luka becomes invisible because his body blends into the environment really fast.”

“So, Luka, where are you?” asks Sparky.





Mackenzie shows her by stroking Luka. “He’s right here. You can feel him. Touch here.”

Sparky reaches out with her massive wing and exclaims, “I feel him. Whoa, that is eerie.”

Mackenzie says, “We believe in you Luka.”

“Ahh... that is soothing Momma,” says Luka as his mom continues to rub his back. Suddenly, parts of his body can be seen.

“Yeah! Luka is back,” says Mackenzie. Luka reappears, first with portions of his back and neck, then slowly his legs and finally his head and tail.

“There he is!” exclaims Spitfire.

“We better get some rest after we practice some more.” Mackenzie follows the dragons into their sleeping quarters so she can prepare Luka for his mission.


29

Hours pass. The rooster crows, “cock-a-doodle-doo!”

She walks over to Luka who is snoring very loudly. “Wake-up you brave dragon, it’s time to soar!”

All the knights gather in the courtyard with their full armor, swords, and shields.

Mackenzie continues to coach Luka on what to do. Gradually, Luka’s body disappears.

“We are so proud of you son,” says Spitfire. Though the people, knights and dragons could not see Luka, they move their heads in unison toward the sound coming from Luka who is saying,

“Goodbye. Time to soar! I won’t let you down.”

Everyone cheers as his voice fades away.





"Now we wait," says Spitfire as he hugs Sparky. "Luka is certainly living up to his name, 'bringer of light.' Our son is showing how he cares for those who are in darkness or fear."

A few hours later, Mackenzie hears a whooshing sound, then gets bumped. She falls to the ground. "What the heck..." says Mackenzie as she jumps to her feet, ready for an attack.

"It's me, Luka! I made it! I heard the Viking plans," says Luka as he reappears next to Mackenzie who explains the Viking battle plans to the knights.

Sir Henry says, "Let's go mighty warriors!" The knights mount their horses and follow the dragons as they fly to the Viking camp.





“Wow Grandpa, what a story! Did the dragons and knights captured the Vikings?” asks Mac.

“Yes, Mac,” says Grandpa. “The Vikings surrendered and left the territory. They were so surprised that the knights knew their battle plans, which stopped them from attacking the castle. I hope you’re hungry. The pizza arrived.”

“I’m starving! The pizza looks so yummy and gooey with all that cheese,” shouts Mac.

Mac grabs a piece of piping hot pizza and asks, “What happened to Luka?”

“Luka became a hero for his incredible bravery since he saved the villagers and knights from further destruction,” explained Grandpa.

“Did my ancestor, Squire Mackenzie, become a hero, too?” asks Mac as she takes a big bite of pizza.



“She sure did. For her fantastic gallantry, Squire Mackenzie was knighted by the queen and was presented with this famous dragon ring. That is why your mom named you Mackenzie.” Grandpa holds up his fist to show his granddaughter the ancient ring.

“I remember your ring. Is it really true that animals can disappear?”

“Oh yes Mackenzie. This is the same capability used by many creatures in this world. It’s called camouflage. Even the military uses camouflage to hide from its enemies. They use different colors on their uniforms, helmets, and equipment in order to blend into their surroundings, so the enemy doesn’t see them.



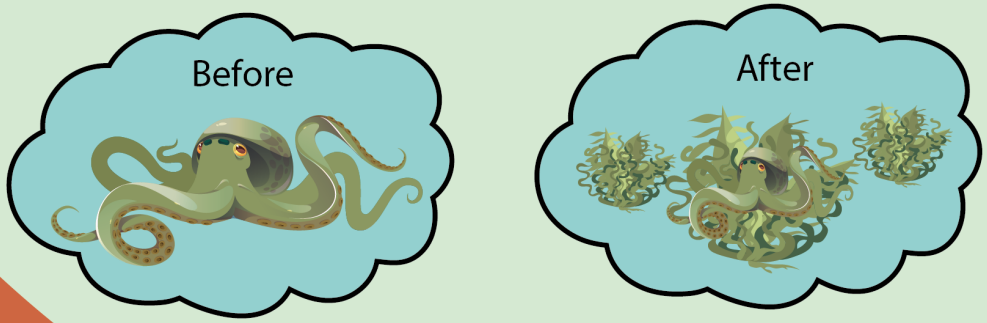


The chameleon and gecko lizards can change their skin color, too. In fact, the 'mimic octopus' will not only blend into its environment, but it can also change its skin texture from smooth to bumpy. This octopus can even pretend to look like a poisonous lionfish or sea snake."

As Mac makes hand gestures to show that her head is exploding, she says, "That's mind-blowing, Grandpa! Why become invisible?"

Grandpa smiles and says, "To survive and not be eaten by bigger animals or to sneak up on its prey for food."

"Did Luka ever sneak up on those mean dragons?"




"OUCH"

“Yes, once he knew he could hide in plain sight and basically disappear, he would sneak up on those dragons and pull on their tails or tweak their ears. They couldn’t see him and got scared, wondering why their tails and ears hurt. This gave Luka confidence to be strong and not fear them anymore.”

“I love how Luka can disappear to help others or protect himself from mean dragons and bad Vikings. Dorothy, a friend of mine, says she just wants to disappear. I think she would wish she had Luka’s incredible talent so she could disappear from the bullies at school. They make fun of her accent and the clothes she wears.”

“It is good that you’re her friend and believe in Dorothy like Squire Mackenzie did for Luka. He didn’t know he had such ability. Most of us must learn these things and build confidence to use our talents.

Hey, I know...how about we invite Dorothy’s family over for pizza. I can tell them my stories about tomatoes.”



Mackenzie happily replies, “That’s a great idea except for the part about tomatoes.”

“You don’t want me to tell them how Europeans, including knights, stopped eating tomatoes for over 200 years until pizza was invented in Naples, Italy?” asks Grandpa.

Grandma walks into the kitchen. “Wow, something smells great! Mackenzie, is he telling you about how tomatoes were considered “poison apples” because people died after eating them?”

“Don’t get him started Grandma. I want to enjoy this delicious pizza without thinking about people dying because they ate tomatoes from pewter plates, which gave them lead poisoning.”

“Oh Mackenzie, you DO remember my stories. I’m thrilled.” Grandma takes a slice of the cheesy pizza and places it on her plate. “Looks yummy.”



Grandpa asks, “How about the one...”

“NO MORE tomato stories Grandpa!” says Mackenzie and Grandma in unison.

They all laughed as Grandpa takes a big bite and tomato sauce squirts on his face.

“OK, I got the hint!” Grandpa chuckles and wipes his face. “No more tomato stories.”

Mackenzie laughs and shouts, “YEAH! Happy Dance!”






"Hey Luka, now you have color!"





