SELECTION #3 – A THOUSAND WONDERS

(Lights up on SONIA, THOMAS, and PHILLIP walking in the woods.)

SONIA
Don’t walk too fast! The leader of the expedition is supposed to be in front!

PHILLIP
It’s not our fault you have little legs.

SONIA
I don’t have little legs.

(THOMAS and PHILLIP keep their pace up.)

Guys!

THOMAS
You gotta keep up if you don’t want to be alone in the woods.

SONIA
I don’t care about that.

PHILLIP
(Matter of fact)
Sonia isn’t scared to face the monsters in the woods.

THOMAS
Right, the monsters!

PHILLIP
You heard them too?

THOMAS
Oh, yeah.

(THOMAS starts to make immature ghost sounds.)

SONIA
Stop it, guys, you’re just trying to scare me. There are no monsters here, and if we ran into one, I know exactly what…

(SONIA suddenly sees an old, wooden barn door.)

This is it! This is the barn!
THOMAS

It doesn’t look like much…

SONIA

We have to go in!

PHILLIP

Didn’t Eve say we’re not allowed?

SONIA

She’ll understand when I show her the Silver Key!

THOMAS

The Silver Key?

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SONIA

I SAW THIS DOOR IN MY DREAMS LAST NIGHT.
INSIDE IS A TREASURE!

PHILLIP

A treasure?

SONIA

IT’S A KEY!
A SILVER KEY…

It takes you to a beautiful place, and if you help me find it, you can come too!

I DREAMED ABOUT A SKY,
A COLOUR I HAD NEVER SEEN.
I DREAMED ABOUT A RIVER
FLOWING DOWN BUT THEN UPSTREAM.
I DREAMED ABOUT THE TOWERS
AND WISHED THEY COULD BE REAL.
I DREAMED ABOUT THE SEA,
THE WATER TASTED SWEET.

(SONIA walks closer to the door, scared and thrilled and excited and just a little bit nervous. THOMAS and PHILLIP look at her.)

A THOUSAND WONDERS
CALLING FROM INSIDE.
A THOUSAND WONDERS,
I CAN BE YOUR GUIDE.
SONIA (cont’d)
ADVENTURE DOESN’T WAIT FOR YOU
TO STAND AROUND AND DOUBT.
I’VE SEEN A THOUSAND WONDERS,
IT’S RIGHT BEHIND THIS DOOR.
I WANT TO SEE SOME MORE!

(SONIA gets closer to the door, she reaches out and almost touches it.
Her arm flinches.)

Come on!

I DREAMED ABOUT THE STARS,
WE’LL SEE ‘EM WHEN OUR SHIP SETS SAIL.

THOMAS
WE’LL SAIL OUT TO THE MOON,

SONIA
THE MILKY WAY!

THOMAS & SONIA
A BIG CASCADE!

SONIA
WE’LL SAIL OUT TO THE ISLAND,

THOMAS
WHERE? THE ISLAND?

SONIA
THE RUINS IN THE LAKE.

THOMAS
THE RUINS?

SONIA
WE’LL SAIL OUT TO THE SUN!

THOMAS
AHH!

PHILLIP
I’ll just wait here.
SONIA
NO! A THOUSAND WONDERS, 
BEG TO BE REVEALED.

SONIA & THOMAS
A THOUSAND WONDERS,

THOMAS
YOU CAN ALMOST FEEL THEM.

SONIA & THOMAS
ADVENTURE DOESN’T WAIT FOR YOU 
TO STAND AROUND AND DOUBT.

SONIA
I’VE SEEN A THOUSAND WONDERS,

THOMAS
LET’S SEE A THOUSAND WONDERS!

SONIA
I’VE SEEN A THOUSAND WONDERS.

THOMAS
A THOUSAND WONDERS,

PHILLIP
LURING US INSIDE.

SONIA & THOMAS & PHILLIP
A THOUSAND WONDERS,

THOMAS & PHILLIP
YOU CAN BE OUR GUIDE.

PHILLIP & SONIA & THOMAS
ADVENTURE DOESN’T WAIT FOR US 
TO STAND AROUND AND DOUBT.

SONIA
I’VE SEEN

PHILLIP & SONIA & THOMAS
A THOUSAND WONDERS,
THOMAS
IT’S RIGHT BEHIND THIS DOOR.

PHILLIP & SONIA & THOMAS
I WANT TO SEE

THOMAS & PHILLIP
A THOUSAND WONDERS.

SONIA
A MILLION WONDERS!

PHILLIP
A MILLION WONDERS!

THOMAS
A BILLION WONDERS!

SONIA
A BILLION WONDERS.

PHILLIP
A TRILLION WONDERS!

SONIA
A TRILLION WONDERS!

PHILLIP & THOMAS
QUADRILLION WONDERS!

SONIA
A GOOGOL WONDERS!

What?

SONIA
I WANT TO

PHILLIP & SONIA & THOMAS
SEE SOME…

COMPANY
EEE-‘EH-AH.
(The door opens on its own. With a loud creak. Or a soft scream. The light reveals a very old barn, not a thousand wonders at all.)

PHILLIP

(Genuinely)
Woooww… This is amazing…

SONIA

Let’s go!

(SONIA plunges into the barn, PHILLIP and THOMAS following behind. There are piles of boxes. It’s dark and moldy. THOMAS props the door open so the daylight can illuminate the barn.)

THOMAS

(To PHILLIP)
You think this is amazing…?

PHILLIP

(Almost challenging him)
Yes.

SONIA

(Calling back to them)
The key must be here somewhere!

THOMAS

Be careful, Sonia!

SONIA

I am careful.

(SONIA wanders off.)

THOMAS

Ugh, something dripped on me.

(Lights up on the Library, EVE and ARMITAGE at the desk, the Book in front of them, still open to the first page.)

EVE

Al Azif… is that a title?

ARMITAGE

It’s Arabic.
EVE
Can you read Arabic?

ARMITAGE
(Translating from the Book)
That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange aeons even death may die.

(ARMITAGE carefully flips through the pages.)

PHILLIP
What was this for?

THOMAS
Cows…? Pigs?

PHILLIP
Do you think they used to kill them in here?

EVE
Is it all in Arabic?

ARMITAGE
Most of it.

THOMAS
Sonia, you can’t go off alone!

SONIA (O.S.)
Then help me look!

ARMITAGE
Beware all you who dare to seek glimpses beyond the Veil:

THOMAS
Where are you?

SONIA
(Popping out from behind THOMAS)
I’m right here!

(THOMAS is startled. PHILLIP laughs at him.)

THOMAS
Shut up, Phillip.
ARMITAGE
Those who Pass never return, for in the Vastnesses transcending our world are Shapes of darkness that seize and bind.

SONIA
Help me look!

PHILLIP
Why are you so obsessed with that key?

ARMITAGE
Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate,

SONIA
Because it opens the door!

ARMITAGE
Not to the places we know, but between them.

PHILLIP
To a thousand wonders.

THOMAS
You know that’s only a dream, right?

(SONIA pouts. The kids all separate, exploring the barn on their own.)

EVE
What does it mean, Yog-Sothoth?

ARMITAGE
It’s a religion.

EVE
But it looks like a workbook…

(THOMAS holds up a blank canvas from one of the boxes.)

THOMAS
A canvas…

EVE
See this diagram? And an annotation.

ARMITAGE + PHILLIP
It’s ancient.
EVE
But this is in English. He’s left notes, almost like…

THOMAS
…it was waiting for me. What do you think I should paint on it?

PHILLIP
I don’t know.

ARMITAGE
No one has practiced this in a very, very long time.

EVE
So why would someone in my family write about it?

THOMAS
Let’s go back to the house.

ARMITAGE
This was your grandparent’s house… your house, now. You’ve never seen this before?

THOMAS
I want to see how good that old paint is.

PHILLIP
But we’re not done exploring.

EVE
There must be something more to it.

THOMAS
Sonia, we’re going back!

SONIA
(Apparing out of thin air)
But I haven’t found the key yet.

ARMITAGE
We’ll keep looking.

THOMAS
Come on!

SONIA
But…
THOMAS
I said, we’re going back.

SONIA
No! I’m not going, we’ve only been here a few minutes.

THOMAS
Sonia, I’m in charge, and I say we’re leaving.

PHILLIP
Who said you were in charge?

THOMAS
Of course I’m in charge, Phillip, I’m the only one who seems to understand anything.
(To SONIA)
And I’m not a baby.
(A beat)
It’s time to go, okay, look outside.

PHILLIP
You’re wrong.

THOMAS
Look, it’s getting dark already!

PHILLIP
You’re wrong about me. And Sonia. And that means I don’t have to care about you. Just leave us alone, okay? We’re going to stay.

(A beat. THOMAS’s face goes sour.)

THOMAS
Fine. Stay. Stay in the dark, old, gross barn all night for all I care – I’ll just tell Howard. Then you’ll be grounded, trapped in your room, stuck with no more hide and seek, no more stupid games, no more exploring. Or you know what? Even better, the barn will just fall down and kill you and I won’t have to deal with you anymore.
(Silence. The air seems charged.)
Or you could just come with me and it will all be fine and we’ll be a one big happy family like Howard wants. Deal?

(More silence. SONIA starts to cry. THOMAS grabs her by the arm and marches her out of the barn, but PHILLIP lingers for a moment. He takes something out of his pocket and looks at it, it’s ARMITAGE’s pocket knife. It winks at him, he contemplates for a second, but then stuffs it back in his pocket and exits.)