Charlie and the Changelings

by

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Join Charlie as the meets the Changelings

Charlie was in the garden with Grandma.

"Autumn is coming Charlie," she said.

"How do you know?" Charlie asked

"Because the first leaf has turned red on the old oak tree. The Changelings must be very busy."

“Changelings?" said Charlie, "what are they?"

"Changelings are the creatures that help our world to change for each new season. They're a very hard working bunch are the Changelings."

"But I've never seen a Changeling," Charlie said

"Oh you wouldn't, they don't like to be seen. Besides, they do most of their work at night. But they’re about alright, just look for the changes."

That night, when everyone else was tucked up in bed, Charlie snuck out of the house and went into the garden. He walked down the garden path, stood under the old, oak tree and waited. Peering very carefully into the darkness, he stood as still as a stone. Slowly the moon came out from behind a cloud, the garden glistening in it’s silvery glow and as flashes of light twinkled through the branches of the oak tree Charlie spotted something moving up above.

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A tiny creature, that looked like a shrunken old man, was perched in the branches of the tree. His gangly arms were twice as long as his pot bellied body. His feet were flat and curled upwards at the toes, like a dish...which was useful thought Charlie, since they were full of paint. One foot held a deep, reddish colour and the other a hazy orange. Yet most strange of all were his hands. On each hand were four long fingers that turned hairy at the tips. These hairy fingers were like paintbrushes.

The peculiar creature hadn't yet spotted Charlie and continued about his work. He carefully stroked each leaf with his hairy fingers until it was transformed into a glorious Autumn red, tinged orange at the edges. "A Changling," whispered Charlie, "Changing the colour of the leaves."

The creature looked down at Charlie, his large pointy ears having allowed him to hear Charlie's  whisper.

"Not just any Changeling, young man, but a Brushell, the most precise and hard working Changeling there is. And don't let those others tell you any different."

"You mean there's more like you?" Charlie asked.

"Of course" the Brushell replied. "The Season Change is a big job, you don't think I could do it alone do you?"

With that the Brushell swung down from the tree and started to walk away. "Well are you coming or not?" he smiled over his shoulder at Charlie.

Charlie didn't hesitate, he set off after the Brushell, excited to meet the other Changelings.

First the Brushell took Charlie to meet the Scrunchapead. It was his job to scrunch each leave on the tree, giving it a crunchy, wrinkly texture. The Scrunchapead was well placed for this job as, like a centipede, he had lots of arms that he used to scrunch several leaves at once. Spotting some fallen leaves at the base of the tree, Charlie scooped them up and crunched them between his fingers, enjoying the wonderful sound.

Next the Brushell led Charlie to the blackberry bush in the corner of the garden. "What happens here?" Charlie asked, "it's just a horrible old, prickly bush”

"Not once the Puffles have finished it isn't," smiled the Brushell, pointing to a creature amongst the thorns. This creature had thick skin, like a rhinos and huge cheeks like a hamsters. It moved between the prickles easily, protected from the sharp points by it’s tough skin. Every now and then the Puffle would stop, take a huge breath that filled its cheeks and blow into something. Amazed Charlie discovered that it was blowing up juicy blackberries, like balloons. "Delicious" said Charlie, picking one off the bush.

And of course" said the brushell, pointing down into the blades of grass, "there's the Dewphants."

Charlie looked all around him, he looked down at the soft grass underfoot, lit by the silvery moon, but he couldn't see anyone. "Where?" He asked.

"Look carefully" said the brushell.

Charlie laid down on the grass, his face so glass the blades tickled his nose. It was then he saw them. Dashing busily inbetween the blades of grass were several

Dewphants. Like little gnomes these chunky fellows were working very hard indeed. What suprised Charlie most however was their noses. Or rather their trunks. Each Dewphants had a long trunk for a nose, out of which they squirted sparkling beads of water that stuck to the grass.

"It's a pleasure to meet you" smiled Charlie, putting out a finger for the nearest Dewphant to shake.

"Ooh they won't stop to talk" said the brushell. They've got a lot of grass to cover in dew drops before the morning and then they have to decorate the spiders webs as well"

Charlie turned to look at a nearby Dewaphant who was busily decorating a spiderweb that lay across the grass.

The sun just started to rise in the distance and the warm glow lit up the dew drops on the silver strands of the web, so that they shone like marbles.

"Beautiful isn't it? Said the Brushell. But suddenly he looked panicked. "My goodness if that is the sun rising I am late! I need to paint all the trees in this garden before morning!"

The Brushel looked to be in an awful panic and Charlie felt bad for having distracted him from his work. He wanted to do something to help his new friend but he knew that even if he picked up a paintbrush and they worked together it would take them far too long. Suddenly, spotting a Dewphant clambering over his slipper, Charlie had an idea.

Charlie started towards the shed, "I'll be back in a minute" he winked.

Charlie returned just moments later with his water pistol in hand. "Load me up" he said to the Brushell, who wasted no time, tipping the orange paint from his foot into Charlie's pistol.

The paint shot out of Charlie's pistol in a stream of colour, splattering dozens of leaves in a golden orange glow.

They worked until sunrise, transforming the garden into an Autumn paradise. As the Changlings scurried away to hide Charlie waved goodbye to his new friend the Brushell, yawned, turned back to the house and headed for bed.

"Charlie wake up. While you have been sleeping the Changlings have been busy working hard to bring in the Autumn. Quick, come and see" and hand in hand Charlie and his grandmother walked out into the garden to play in the autumn leaves.

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