

(2) The Library of Lost Shadows

Mia loved her school library, but she noticed something strange. At exactly four o'clock every day, the shadows on the wall would start to wiggle. One Tuesday, while Mia was reading a book about space, her own shadow jumped off the floor and ran behind a bookshelf! "Hey! Come back here!" Mia whispered loudly. She didn't want to get in trouble for being noisy.

She crawled behind the shelf and found a tiny golden door. She opened it and stepped inside. It was a giant room filled with shadows. There were shadows of cats, shadows of bicycles, and even a shadow of a giant cake. In the middle of the room sat an old man with glasses. "Welcome to the Library of Lost Shadows," the man said. "I am the Keeper. Did you lose something?"

Mia pointed to her shadow, which was busy trying to pull a shadow book from a shelf. "My shadow ran away," Mia explained. "Why did it leave me?" The Keeper smiled kindly. "Shadows get bored sometimes," he said. "Your shadow spends all day following you. Sometimes it wants to read its own stories. This is the only place where shadows can be free to explore."

Mia looked at her shadow. It was happily reading a book about flying. "I didn't know you liked to read, too," Mia said to her shadow. The shadow waved its dark hand at her. Mia turned back to the Keeper. "Can I stay for a while? I want to see what my shadow likes." The Keeper nodded. "Of course. But remember, when the sun goes down, you must go back together."

Mia and her shadow spent the next hour looking at beautiful shadow pictures. They saw shadows of dragons fighting and shadows of stars dancing in the sky. It was the most magical afternoon Mia had ever had. "It's almost five o'clock," the Keeper said as he closed a large book. "The library is closing soon." Mia stood up and reached out her hand. "Are you ready to go home?" she asked her shadow.

The shadow hopped back onto the floor and attached itself to Mia's feet. "Thank you, Mr. Keeper," Mia said. "We will be back next Tuesday." The Keeper winked at her. "We will be here." Mia walked out of the tiny door and back into the school library. As she walked home, she noticed her shadow was moving a little differently. It looked like it was dancing. Mia smiled, knowing that she and her shadow now shared a wonderful secret. They were a perfect team.