



CHAPTER XI: *SPELL CHECK*

Written by Sarah Albee and illustrated by Gloria Nilsson

The umbrella in Thomas' hand clattered to the floor. Frozen by Lady Hallow's spell, he watched in horror as the blue feather bobbed like a leaf on the surface of a lake, moving toward her outstretched hand.

This was the end. After all their efforts, Lady Hallow would gain control not only of the Fundamental Orders, but also the feather. He had no clue what powers the feather held, but it must be important if she wanted it so badly.

“Mwah-ha-haaaaa!” she cackled, her green eyes flashing. “With this feather and the spell that is contained in this document, I shall rule the World! And I will start with your little friends back at Gillette’s castle. They shall be my first minions!”

Thomas tried to speak, but the words stuck in his throat.

Suddenly another hand shot out and closed over the feather.

“*Not* so fast!” a clear voice chided.

Lady Hallow’s gnarled hand had been just about to grasp the feather, but now it closed upon nothing.

Li-Ming!

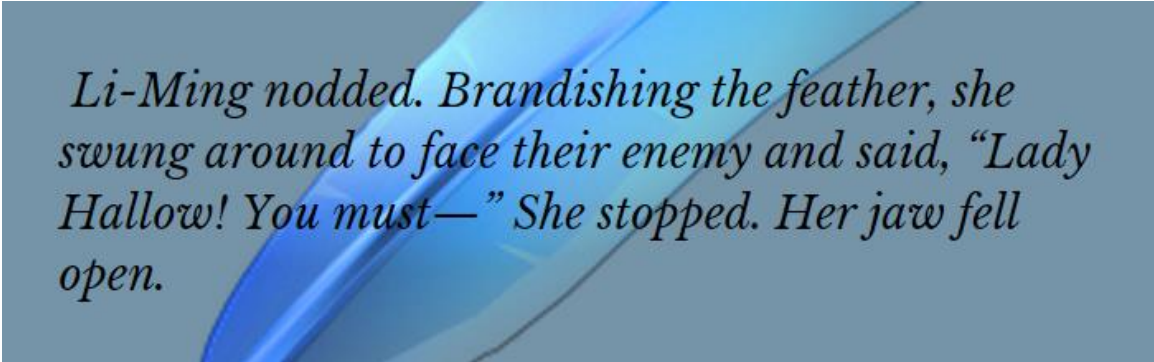
She had crept toward Lady Hallow and lunged for the feather. She held it high above her head.

“You got it! I thought you were out of it for sure,” Thomas said. The spell broken, he could now move.

“I guess I snapped out of it just in time,” admitted Li-Ming.

“Curses!” snarled Lady Hallow. She shook her empty fist in frustration.

Thomas turned toward Li-Ming. “Now that we have the feather, we can fulfill the prediction we saw on the card in the future. Let’s get going!”



Li-Ming nodded. Brandishing the feather, she swung around to face their enemy and said, “Lady Hallow! You must—” She stopped. Her jaw fell open.

“Uh-oh,” said Thomas.

“Uh-oh,” said Li-Ming.

Lady Hallow had vanished. And she’d taken the Fundamental Orders with her.

“Hurry,” said Thomas. “There’s no time to lose. She’s going to start her takeover of the world by enslaving our classmates and Mr. Espinoza. We need to get back to Gillette Castle!”

They huddled together. Thomas unfolded the worn parchment and held the wand over it. He uttered the words quickly.

There was a flash, a swirling wind, and a dark void opened up. And then all was still. They were in Gillette’s study.

Li-Ming held a finger to her lips. “We need to find Lady Hallow before she finds us,” she whispered. “If we can figure out how the feather works, maybe we can zap the Fundamental Orders out of her clutches before she turns us into cats.”

“Come on,” Thomas whispered. “Let’s start downstairs.”

With Thomas leading the way, they tiptoed down the main stairs.

“I don’t think she’s here,” Thomas whispered as they reached the landing.

“She’s—”

“Aha!” boomed a voice from across the room. Lady Hallow stepped out of the shadows. “You’ve made my work easier by bringing me the feather. Now hand it over!”

“Never!” yelled Thomas.

Lady Hallow raised her wand. A loud bang echoed in the great hall. Li-Ming screamed.

Lady Hallow had turned Thomas into a stone cat. The spell parchment he'd been holding fluttered to the ground.

“Thomas!” Li-Ming shrieked. She scooped up the parchment and whirled on Lady Hallow, brandishing the feather.

Lady Hallow took a step backward. Was she nervous?

Li-Ming glanced quickly down at the parchment. What? Something was written on it that she hadn't seen before.

“Give me that feather,” snarled Lady Hallow.

Li-Ming pocketed the parchment. “You change my friend back right now!” she yelled. “Or I'll—I'll—”

“You'll what?” taunted Lady Hallow. She held up the Fundamental Orders in front of her like a shield. “Blast these, and you will release the spell. I shall be unharmed, and will rule the world! Mwah-ha-haaaa!”

“Oh, yeah?” said Li-Ming. She pointed the feather.

BLAM!

Lady Hallow was now a ceramic frog. The Fundamental Orders she'd been holding exploded into pieces and floated like confetti to the floor.



Generously Funded by:

