

Lavan Youmans
They/It

For the past year I have been working on this project, this piece of writing, [*A wish called Fall*](#).

A wish called Fall is a fantasy novela about finding yourself and dealing with change, even when it isn't positive. I have written around 32,000 words during IMPP on this project, and have drawn 10 unique illustrations to go along with my story.

I have always enjoyed reading and creating stories, but I wanted to see if I could turn that love into something more than ideas. I decided to pick one of my many story ideas and try to write it, and I have. A wish called Fall is both better than I had ever imagined it being, and just the beginning. I know so much more now than when I started this project, and I plan to continue writing whenever I can.

I have been so happy to hear what people think of my story, and so happy to hear that they like it. Being able to write something that my mentors are excited to read has meant the world to me, and has given me confidence to continue writing even when I don't know what to do next. Watching A wish called Fall take shape has been an amazing experience and I have written something that I am really proud of.

One thing that has been challenging is hanging on as I have been editing and illustrating. I have been writing pretty much constantly since the school year started and going from that to editing has been hard. To feed my urge to write I have been writing some short stories out of school, but I still miss sitting down during IMPP and churning out over a thousand words everyday.

I would like to thank my mentors, Ruma and Bob, for always hyping me up when I felt low, and endlessly reading and rereading my work. Having people always ready to give feedback and advice has been so useful and I know I wouldn't have half the words that I have without them.



PROLOGUE

The wishing wood is a place of magic. There are not many places of magic left. Today there are more inventors, engineers and doctors than wizards. More places of scientific learning than magical power. The wishing woods is one of the last.

The people around the wishing woods have always insisted that magic originally came from the woods. They have told a story for years and years. A story about the first person who walked into the woods and walked out a wizard. Not many know the story today. Perhaps a grandparent or two, rocking in a well worn rocking chair. A few children inquisitive enough to wonder, brave enough to ask, and patient enough to listen. Many people, important people, used to listen to the tale as well. Go into the forest to give their thanks. There were festivals and holidays and times people would walk into the woods with a wish and hope in their heart. Today, not so much.

There are still strings tied to many of the trees in the forest. More on the ones near the border of fields and woods. Reminders of the wishes asked of the forest. Of hopes. Still

bits of paper with words or pictures, stuck in the hollows of trees. But mostly, these days, it was just a forest.

That day, it was not just a forest. It was late summer, leaves turning brilliant colors and the village celebrating, quietly, the leaves turning and summer's end.

And someone was in the forest. They were lying down in the green grass, just dusted with falling leaves. Their skin was a shade between the color of the bark on the trees, and the pale of the moon. Their hair was the color of the dirt, brown and wavy and ending just below their ears. The clothes they wore were common among the farmers that lived in the area, a long brown tunic that reached to their knees, tied with a rope, and a set of puffy pants. They wore no shoes. They were young, face still plump with baby fat and summer's bounty. It was difficult to tell their exact age, whether they were in their twelfth summer or their sixteenth, or perhaps a small twenty. What they were, at that time, in those woods, was scared.