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Myth and Magic

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by

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Thanks to my committee and director for believing I could say it better, and to my classmates for fabulous table reads and insightful feedback.

And many thanks to Bryce, for always being here for me.
for my parents
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Ends of the Earth
a play

by
Sara Green

Characters:
FIREKEEPER – an old spirit, female
GREAT SPIRIT – male
OJIK – oldest brother, 20
SEN – second brother, 19
KISHKE – third brother, 16
WEYAK – youngest brother, 14
CARDINAL – plays the four spirits of the cardinal directions
DAUGHTER – plays his four daughters
   Zibe – daughter of the North; late teens
   Nanzhe – daughter of the East; late teens
   Kikwea – daughter of the South; mid-teens
   Nemki – daughter of the West; early teens

Pronunciation Guide:
Ojik – OH-jeek
Sen – SEN
Kishke – KEYsh-kay
Weyak – WAY-ack
Zibe – ZEE-bay
Nanzhe – NAN-jay
Kikwea – KEY-kway-uh
Nemki – NEM-key
Gitcheegumee – git-chee-GOO-mee

Playwright's Note: There must be at least four exits, so
the brothers can exit in the four directions.
Scene 1
The FireKeeper

The stage is completely dark and remains so as the FireKeeper speaks.

FIREKEEPER
Welcome. This is the Story of the Four Brothers Who Journeyed to the Ends of the Earth.

The lights come up on the FIREKEEPER. She is alone, in the spirit world.

FIREKEEPER
Once there were four brothers who left their peaceful, pleasant home on the shores of Lake Gitcheegumee to travel to the Ends of the Earth.

Transition to Lake Gitcheegumee. Once the brothers enter, the FireKeeper stands apart, unnoticed by them.

FIREKEEPER
They were the second generation of people. Their father was created by the Great Spirit, but their mother was my daughter. Though I am the spirit-guardian of the flame, I remained on Earth and helped raise the little ones.

OJIK attends to his weapons. He is obviously a physical being, barely 20. He wears something white.
FIREKEEPER
The oldest was Ojik. He was a hunter, and strong-willed. I tried to shape his bossiness into leadership.

SEN (OS)
Ojik!

SEN enters. He is small but fiery. He wears something yellow.

FIREKEEPER
Sen was the second, a difficult labor, argumentative from the very beginning. I called him a spark in a summer field.

SEN
Have you seen my spear?

OJIK
No.

SEN
I know you have! Is that mine?

Ojik grabs the spear out of Ojik's hand and inspects it.

OJIK
It is not.

Ojik grabs the spear back.

SEN
Then you've hidden it somewhere!

OJIK
Take better care of your own things!
Ojik gathers his weapons and strides out. Sen stomps around angrily.

KISHKE enters. He is intellectual, a philosopher. He wears something red.

FIREKEEPER
The third, Kishke, was always thinking about life's mysteries. He often forgot to think much about anything — or anyone — else. He was my ember in a clay pot.

SEN
Kishke! Have you seen my spear?

KISHKE
I believe it's in the canoe.

SEN
I knew Ojik took it!

KISHKE
I'm fairly certain you left it there yourself after your last fishing expedition.

SEN
No! Ojik is always hiding my things, telling me what to do.

KISHKE
Sometimes you encourage him by arguing about everything.

SEN
I don't argue about everything!

KISHKE
Oh, really?

Sen realizes he was just arguing.
SEN
Doesn't he ever bother you?

KISHKE
I try not to take it too personally. It's not, you know. He does it to everyone.

SEN
Yeah, but he's been doing it to me the longest!

KISHKE
Then I'd think you'd be used to it by now.

Kishke sits and meditates. Sen exits.

WEYAK enters hesitantly. He wears something black.

FIREKEEPER
Weyak was the baby. (Correcting herself) The youngest. He tried to do as he was asked, but he was afraid of everything. I tried to teach him to look out for himself.

He approaches Kishke, reaches out for him but doesn't touch him, opens his mouth as if to say something but doesn't speak. He retreats.

KISHKE
What is it, Weyak?

WEYAK
(startled)
Oh, Kishke! I - didn't mean to disturb you.

KISHKE
But?
WEYAK
I think you should go speak with Grandmother. She's standing on the shore, just staring out into space again. I called to her, but her trance was deeper than yours. Or she's very good at ignoring me.

KISHKE
I'm sure she wasn't ignoring you. She's just getting lost in her thoughts sometimes. Go try again.

Weyak scuffs off.

Scene 2
Weyak confronts the FireKeeper

Shores of Lake Gitcheegumee. The FireKeeper stares out into space. Weyak enters.

WEYAK
Grandmother?

FIREKEEPER
Oh! What is it, child?

WEYAK
I'm worried about you.

FIREKEEPER
Ah, I'm just daydreaming. Nothing to worry about.

WEYAK
You've been acting strangely. Not at all like yourself.

FIREKEEPER
Well, that is strange! I feel perfectly like me. Who do you think I'm becoming?
WEYAK
This is serious! I think you're ill.

FIREKEEPER
Posh! A spirit is never ill.

WEYAK
You're constantly exhausted. You can barely move.

FIREKEEPER
It's nice to know you're looking out for me. But there's really nothing to worry about.

WEYAK
I'm not a boy anymore, Grandmother. You can tell me the truth.

FIREKEEPER
If - if I were ill, what would you do about it? Hm?

WEYAK
Anything.

FIREKEEPER
Anything?

WEYAK
Whatever I could.

FIREKEEPER
Ah. That's different. When the time is right, I'll let you know.

WEYAK
So there is something wrong!

Beat.

FIREKEEPER
Perhaps.
WEYAK
And getting worse every day.

FIREKEEPER
I fail to see the point of telling you things about which you can do nothing. You are not old enough.

WEYAK
I am of age now, grandmother!

FIREKEEPER
I am...world-weary. Not something you can fix with a poultice, or salve, or draught.

WEYAK
World-weary does not mean the same thing to me as it does to you.

FIREKEEPER
No, it does not. Come now, all this daydreaming has left me famished.

WEYAK
Grandmother, please.

FIREKEEPER
All right. Gather your brothers.

Weyak nods and runs off.

Scene 3
The Curse

The four brothers enter.

FIREKEEPER
I am trapped here. In this body. For giving you fire.

KISHKE
Trapped?
FIREKEEPER
Cursed.

WEYAK
Cursed! We must pray for the Great Spirit to lift it!

FIREKEEPER
Actually, the Great Spirit is the one who cursed me.

SEN
That's impossible! The Great Spirit protects us from evil.

FIREKEEPER
That's what he wants you to think. But he came here, before any of you were born. Late one night...

The GREAT SPIRIT enters.

GREAT SPIRIT
Ah, my marvelous FireKeeper! I'm surprised to find you here, but very glad, very glad indeed.

FIREKEEPER
What can I do for you, sir?

GREAT SPIRIT
I thought my little man was here, but I was concerned when I saw the fire.

FIREKEEPER
Yes, it is our fire, mine and my daughter's.

GREAT SPIRIT
Has the man not arrived yet?

FIREKEEPER
No, he is here.

GREAT SPIRIT
And you taught him about fire?
FIREKEEPER
He would have to know, living with us.

GREAT SPIRIT
Was I not clear about the plan?! “When there was nothing, the Great Spirit sent his thoughts into the void of the universe. When he found the best place to create the world, he did just that.”
I created the Creepy-Crawlies and the Four-Legged Walkers and all that.

We hear moving water,
then leaves moving, then
animal noises. At the end of creation we are enveloped in a collage of natural sounds.

FIREKEEPER
Yes, two of everything except the Two-Legged Walker. So you sent him to me. To be with my daughter.

GREAT SPIRIT
Are you calling me lazy? Because I didn't create a woman?

FIREKEEPER
Sir, I would never.

GREAT SPIRIT
You cannot understand the ways of great deity; they are mighty and mysterious – completely beyond your comprehension. You just have to believe that I know what I'm doing.

FIREKEEPER
Your powers are undeniably superior, but I think I know how to execute mine--

GREAT SPIRIT
Better?
FIREKEEPER
Satisfactorily. Haven't I done as you asked? They are expecting their first child.

GREAT SPIRIT
You were supposed to give her to him.

FIREKEEPER
I did.

GREAT SPIRIT
They are here! With you! They were supposed to leave!

FIREKEEPER
Wait, you wanted me to abandon my daughter to this strange man, no questions asked?

GREAT SPIRIT
Questions? I am the Great Spirit, and I commanded that it should be so!

FIREKEEPER
So I just ... send my daughter off? Just like that?

GREAT SPIRIT
Just your daughter. You keep the fire. You are, after all, the FireKeeper. Don't you see? How can the guardian of the flame guard the flame if it's in their reckless hands?!

FIREKEEPER
Please forgive me, sir. I didn't know. I'll make it right.

GREAT SPIRIT
You can't take it back now! Even I can't take it back. You've ruined everything!

FIREKEEPER
I'm still here to teach them--

GREAT SPIRIT
You will pay for this grievous mistake!
FIREKEEPER
Surely this small change--

GREAT SPIRIT
Small change?! You gave the man fire!

FIREKEEPER
How can I fix this?

GREAT SPIRIT
You will stay here to make sure they don't do anything stupid.

FIREKEEPER
Of course.

GREAT SPIRIT
In this body, on this Earth!

FIREKEEPER
No, sir, please!

GREAT SPIRIT
I trusted you with the most powerful of the gifts. And you betrayed me!

FIREKEEPER
Never!

GREAT SPIRIT
I curse you, oh FireKeeper, with eternal corporeality!

The Great Spirit exits.

FIREKEEPER
Thus the Great Spirit cursed me for giving you fire. And the fire is tied to me. Since I am cursed--

KISHKE
So is it.
OJIK

The black flames.

WEYAK

The coldness.

FIREKEEPER

Exactly. How it consumes nothing, cooks nothing, gives no warmth. If it is to be saved, you must travel to the Ends of the Earth! (beat) If you fail, we will lose fire forever.

OJIK

We will not fail.

SEN

I'm sure that together -

FIREKEEPER

No. You must each go a separate way. Only the gifts from the four directions combined may save me, and the flame. (Beat) When you get there, you will be expected.

KISHKE

Expected?

FIREKEEPER

By the Cardinals, guardian spirits of the directions who have not yet drawn the ire of the Great One. (beat) It is a long, long journey, but you must go. For the good of all men and women on Earth.

OJIK

I understand.

FIREKEEPER

I strongly encouraged them to go, not just for my own health, but for the sake of all humanity. Then I left them alone to make their decision.
Scene 4
Brothers decide to Journey

Near Lake Gitcheegumee.
Weyak enters hurriedly.

WEYAK
I can't do it! Travel all the way to the End of the Earth? Alone?? It's too much!

Ojik enters.

OJIK
Weyak!

WEYAK
I can't do it!

OJIK
You have to. For Grandmother.

WEYAK
How, Ojik? The bugs; the bison; the thunder; the thickets; the open, empty sky! I can't!

OJIK
Be brave!

WEYAK
That's easy for you to say.

OJIK
It is now.

Kishke and Sen enter.
Their conversations are separate.

KISHKE
Sen, Grandmother is very ill.
She's just getting old.

KISHKE

She's not like us.

SEN

Everyone gets old!

WEYAK

I want to help, but...

OJIK

You can do this, Weyak.

KISHKE

You don't believe that she's trapped here?

SEN

Seriously? That's ridiculous!

KISHKE

So you're going to do nothing?

SEN

I don't see why I have to do anything! If Grandmother got herself into this situation, she can get herself out.

KISHKE

You know she's too frail to travel.

WEYAK

And we need all four gifts.

OJIK

Yes.

SEN

You know Ojik's going, so just take two directions each.

KISHKE

You want me to travel to the Ends of the Earth twice?
Then...I'll try.

Good boy.

The others?

Kishke will. Go tell Sen he must as well.

What, I - I can't just tell him.

Then I will.

Ojik crosses to Kishke and Sen; Weyak follows.

I don't want to go!

Sen.

Don't you even--

You are going.

No, I'm not!

Yes, you are.

Stop telling me what to do!
Ojik exits. Sen turns to Weyak.

SEN
What about you, scaredy cat?

WEYAK
I'm going.

SEN
Humph.

KISHKE
Ojik could take two directions. But then he'd get two girls.

SEN
Girls? No one said anything about girls.

WEYAK
All the men and women.

KISHKE
What did you think that was all about?

SEN
That was low.

KISHKE
But you're going now, aren't you?

SEN
Yeah...

WEYAK
I hope I meet a pretty girl.

Sen and Kishke LAUGH.

SEN
What would you do with a pretty girl?

17
Ojik enters, bringing four packs.

WEYAK
Tell her she's pretty.

SEN
How ridiculous.

KISHKE
No one needs to be told what they already know.

OJIK
He's right.

SEN
He doesn't know anything. I'm older. I know things.

OJIK
I'm oldest. I know he's right.

WEYAK
Was that not the first thing Father said to Mother?

KISHKE
It was.

WEYAK
You can't argue! It's the truth.

Sen turns away. Weyak smiles.

SEN
Chances are we won't meet any pretty girls anyway.

OJIK
Now he may be right.

SEN
Ugh! This is too much stuff!

WEYAK
We are supposed to travel to the Ends of the Earth.

SEN
It's still too much stuff!

WEYAK
I hope I go somewhere nice. Like by the lake in the summer.

Sen and Kishke laugh again.

KISHKE
I don't think you'll learn anything from a leisurely vacation.

OJIK
It will be very difficult, but Grandmother is counting on you. On all of us.

Ojik hands Weyak and Kishke each a pack. The FireKeeper addresses the brothers.

FIREKEEPER
You must travel alone now for many, many days. Pray to the Great Spirit for protection.

KISHKE
Even after he cursed us?
FIREKEEPER
He cursed me, not you. Continue your devotions. Now, you will learn much beyond the small lands of your home. Go in the four directions until you can go no farther. North, east, south, west!

She points to Ojik, Sen, Kishke and Weyak, in that order.

SEN
Let's get this over with.

FIREKEEPER
Be very careful, my boy.

OJIK
We will.

KISHKE
We won't fail you, Grandmother.

FIREKEEPER
You will return stronger men.

Weyak hugs the FireKeeper.

WEYAK
Farewell.

FIREKEEPER
Farewell.

The brothers exit. Ojik heads north. Sen heads east. Kishke heads south. Weyak heads west. The brothers always enter and exit traveling in these directions until
they reach the Ends of the Earth.

FIREKEEPER
What neither they nor I expected was that the Great Spirit's curses were transferable.

Scene 5
Part One: Ojik


FIREKEEPER
Ojik was determined as he headed north. The frosted ground crunched under his feet. The shrill winter wind blew. And the Great Spirit hounded him.

The Great Spirit enters; Ojik cannot see him.

GREAT SPIRIT
I call upon the snow to sting his face and the wind to tear at his clothes!

OJIK
Oh Great Spirit, please watch over me as I travel.

FIREKEEPER
But the Great Spirit did nothing.

GREAT SPIRIT
I am not merciful just because someone asks. But I will watch over you. I see how you stubbornly face the wind. I see how the snows merely annoy you. So I will make the weather worse! The worst storm I have created yet!
Ojik is exhausted and the snow overcomes him. Ojik falls to the ground.

FIREKEEPER
He shivered as the cold pierced his bones. Every morning it took great effort to get up.

Ojik stands with great effort.

OJIK
Please give me strength.

GREAT SPIRIT
The lands of the far north are harsh, boy, and you chose to enter them!

OJIK
Oh Great Spirit, why will this on your own creation?

GREAT SPIRIT
Oh-ho! You are no creation of mine! You're an agent of the FireKeeper, that disobedient traitor! I will throw everything I have at you! At all of you!

Sen, Kishke and Weyak enter.

FIREKEEPER
They were losing hope. Their small efforts were dwarfed by even larger obstacles. They cried out:

BROTHERS
Oh Great Spirit! My journey is so long! Each day I continue, but I am so worn down. I have been

OJIK
Blinded in a whiteout.

SEN
Adrift at sea.
KISHKE
Lost in the forest.

WEYAK
Struggling up the mountain.

BROTHERS
Alone. (beat) How far is the End of the Earth?

FIREKEEPER
Every morning they thought:

BROTHERS
I have traveled so far. Today I must reach the end.

FIREKEEPER
But they saw only endless, barren landscapes.

OJIK
Snow.

SEN
Water.

KISHKE
Trees.

WEYAK
Rocks.

BROTHERS
Oh Great Spirit!

Brothers sink to their knees.

FIREKEEPER
They called out to the creator of Man in their time of need. They were only asking for hope. Such a small thing, like a dandelion seed. But he did not heed their cries.
BROTHERS
Will the End of the Earth never come?

FIREKEEPER
They reminded themselves of their father's travels.

BROTHERS
Father traveled the whole Earth.

GREAT SPIRIT
Your father wandered for many years, unhindered, because he was doing as I wanted! You ask for my help – bah! If I could strike you down, if I could turn the world on its side to misdirect you, I would, absolutely!

The Great Spirit exits.

FIREKEEPER
They just needed a little hope. And soon hope came. They saw, as clearly as if it was in front of them, what they hoped to find at the end of the journey. (beat) A pretty girl.

The DAUGHTER enters. She glows, and her features are indistinct.

KISHKE
I saw her briefly.

OJIK
Far off.

WEYAK
In the distance.

SEN
Then she vanished.

BROTHERS
Gone.
FIREKEEPER
They reached for her, but she disappeared into the darkness. They held her image, vague as it was, dearly in their hearts.

KISHKE
I remember her face.

WEYAK
Radiant like the moon.

SEN
Her hair like black water.

OIJK
And her delicate fingers.

BROTHERS
Pointed the way.

The Daughter exits; the brothers follow her.

FIREKEEPER
After seeing the young women, their hardships suddenly didn't seem quite as hard. They followed their visions of the women, and each one led them to a man.

Scene 6
Arrival at the Ends of the Earth

The Ends of the Earth.

The CARDINAL SPIRIT enters. He wears something that is white, yellow, red and black.
FIREKEEPER
Each man seemed to glow like the women had, but somehow they were different – real. Weyak met the man at the top of the desert mountain.

Weyak enters.

WEYAK
Have I reached the summit?

CARDINAL
Welcome, traveler.

FIREKEEPER
Kishke stumbled into a clearing.

Kishke enters.

KISHKE
Where am I?

CARDINAL
You have arrived.

FIREKEEPER
Sen spotted a smudge on the horizon.

Sen enters.

SEN
Is that...land?

CARDINAL
Welcome to the End of the Earth.

FIREKEEPER
Ojik saw a glimmer of yellow in the distance.

Ojik enters.

OJIK
Fire?
CARDINAL
Do come inside.

FIREKEEPER
The brothers recognized something familiar about the men.

BROTHERS
Are you--?

CARDINAL
A spirit, yes.

OJIK
The Spirit of the North.

KISHKE
Of the South.

SEN
Of the East.

WEYAK
Of the West.

BROTHERS
Oh, mighty spirit -

CARDINAL
Welcome. You have arrived at the End of the Earth. Do come in. Out of the cold. Out of the water. Out of the darkness. Out of the heat. I have been expecting you. You have traveled a long way. Please, drink.

The Daughter enters with drinks. She also wears all four colors.

FIREKEEPER
The ladies were even more beautiful than they imagined.
BROTHERS
It can't be...

CARDINAL
She's just my daughter. Pay her no heed. Leave us now.

The Daughter exits.

CARDINAL
Why are you here?

BROTHERS
I seek to learn from you, mighty spirit.

CARDINAL
Who told you of our secrets?

BROTHERS
My grandmother, the FireKeeper.

Yes, I see her in you.

BROTHERS
I carry her knowledge with me. I learned much from her, but she knows there is more to be learned.

CARDINAL
You care for her gift well.

BROTHERS
She taught me well.

CARDINAL
Hm. It is late, and we are all tired. We will talk more tomorrow. Tonight, rest.

BROTHERS
Thank you, mighty spirit.

FIREKEEPER
They slept as they had not slept in many, many nights. In the morning, the daughters came to them again. Weyak was sleeping so peacefully that he didn't even dream. The Daughter of the West was pretty, in her own way. It was still dark out, so she knelt close.

The Daughter enters as NEMKI, accessorized with black.

DAUGHTER as NEMKI
Just a boy! Father said to expect a man, but he's just a boy! A handsome boy, though, I suppose.

Weyak snores loudly, startling Nemki, which wakes him. Then she leans in, her face close to his.

DAUGHTER as NEMKI
You're awake! Now I can see your eyes. They're not bad looking.

WEYAK
Who are you?

DAUGHTER as NEMKI
Nemki, Daughter of the Spirit of the West!

WEYAK
Weyak.

DAUGHTER as NEMKI
Father says you're going to marry me.
WEYAK
Marry you?! What if I don't like you?

DAUGHTER as NEMKI
Why don't you like me?

WEYAK
I didn't say that! I mean, I just met you. But you seem very nice.

DAUGHTER as NEMKI
Thanks...

She doesn't believe him.

WEYAK
We got off on the wrong foot, I think. Can I start over?

DAUGHTER as NEMKI
Please do.

Beat.

WEYAK
You're very pretty.

DAUGHTER as NEMKI
Really?

WEYAK
Yes. Your face is like the moon.

DAUGHTER as NEMKI
That's very sweet. (beat) I like you.

WEYAK
I like you, too.

They look at each other. Suddenly, she darts forward and kisses him on the cheek before running
off. He touches her kiss and smiles. He exits in a daze.

Kishke enters, meditates.

FIREKEEPER
Kishke was already awake and meditating. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he thought of a quiet girl, someone to take care of him so he could think deeply about the mysteries of the universe. The Daughter of the South had her own ideas. Her footsteps brought Kishke out of his thoughts.

The Daughter enters as KIKWEA, accessorized with red.

KISHKE
You're--?

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
Kikwea.

KISHKE
Kishke.

Kikwea approaches him, but he ignores her.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
I know. The Earth told me.

KISHKE
The Earth?

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
If I sit and listen quietly with my heart, sometimes Mother whispers to me.

KISHKE
The Earth is your mother?
DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
She is mother to us all.

KISHKE
Actually, I have a mother.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
A spirit?

KISHKE
No, she's a human, like you.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
Who was her mother?

KISHKE
The FireKeeper.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
The FireKeeper is a powerful spirit, but even she cannot create life alone.

KISHKE
We were all created by the Great Spirit.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
Not so! He created but one man - from the flesh of Mother Earth! So was I born. So was your mother. The Great Spirit - praise his name! - is not the only spirit. You have much to learn from us.

KISHKE
I only came here to get a gift from your father, whatever it is.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
Much to learn indeed.

The Daughter exits.
Kishke, confused, also exits.
Sen enters sleepily.

FIREKEEPER
Meanwhile, in another corner of the world, Sen was dreaming of a girl on his arm who never argued with him and laughed at all his awful jokes. However, the Daughter of the East was skeptical that this young man staying in her house was worthy of all that. She gently tried to wake him.

The Daughter enters as NANZHE, accessorized with yellow. She wakes Sen harshly.

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
Wake up, boy. Wake up!

Sen wakes with a start.

SEN
Huh?

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
What is your name?

SEN
Sen.

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
Sen. A good name.

SEN
It's okay, I guess.

DAUGHTHER as NANZHE
My mistake.

SEN
Huh?
DAUGHTER as NANNZHE
It's an okay name.

SEN
There's nothing wrong with my name!

DAUGHTER as NANNZHE
I didn't say there was - you did.

SEN
Oh. And what's your name?

DAUGHTER as NANNZHE
Nanzhe.

SEN
Nanzhe? What kind of a name is that?

DAUGHTER as NANNZHE
A perfectly lovely one, thank you.

She rises angrily to her feet.

SEN
Of course. A lovely girl for a lovely name. I mean -(beat) Sorry.

An awkward silence.

DAUGHTER as NANNZHE
There's healthy debate and then there's talking back. Only a fool can't tell the difference.

BROTHER as SEN
I'm not--

DAUGHTER as NANNZHE
You crossed the open ocean in a tiny canoe with one paddle. I can't help but wonder. You know, you'll get much further saying nice things than disagreeing all the time.
SEN
I don't - Oh.

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
You just learned your first lesson. Don't forget it because you were half asleep.

SEN
Pleased to have met you!

She starts to go, then spins back.

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
(interrupting)
Nanzhe is a perfectly lovely name.

She exits swiftly.

SEN
Stupid, stupid! “What kind of a name is that?”! Ugh!
(beat) I should've told her she was pretty!

Sen stumbles out. Ojik enters.

FIREKEEPER
And Ojik waited impatiently for her, remembering her mysterious scent. He imagined her being soft-spoken and accommodating. Unfortunately for him, the Daughter of the North was used to having things her own way. But she did have an exotic scent, which is how he knew she was there.

The Daughter enters as ZIBE, accessorized in white.

OJIK
Hello. (pause) You're a striking beauty. Even in the dark.
DAUGHTER as ZIBE
Flattery will get you nowhere.  (beat) Well, not exactly nowhere, but not very far.

OJIK
I'm--

DAUGHTER as ZIBE
I know who you are.

OJIK
And you're?

DAUGHTER as ZIBE
Yes, I suppose we'll be here all day if I make you guess that. It's Zibe.

OJIK
A beautiful name.

DAUGHTER as ZIBE
Thank you.

OJIK
Thank you for letting me stay here.

DAUGHTER as ZIBE
It was not my choice. But since you are here, I expect obedience in my house. There will be no telling me what to do.

OJIK
You have reason to think I would?

DAUGHTER as ZIBE
You are a guest here and you will abide by my rules.

OJIK
Of course. (beat) That's a lovely cape.

DAUGHTER as ZIBE
You're quite the flatterer.
OJIK
You're welcome.

DAUGHTER as ZIBE
I'm sorry. Thank you.

OJIK
You will have much to teach me, I think. I'll be a good student.

DAUGHTER as ZIBE
I'll be the judge of that.

OJIK
I'm in your hands.

Scene 7
Impossible Tasks

"The brothers and the Cardinal Spirit enter."

FIREKEEPER
Later, as promised, the Cardinal Spirits spoke with the brothers about why they were there.

BROTHERS
I seek to learn from you, oh wise one.

CARDINAL
Is that all you came for? My wisdom?

WEYAK
Well, my grandmother is very ill, and she said you had a gift that might help.

CARDINAL
Do you not know why? The Great Spirit cursed her for giving you her gift of fire!
OJIK
I know.

CARDINAL
The FireKeeper is supposed to keep the fire, no? But she gave it away!

SEN
But why would the Great Spirit send Father to her if she wasn't supposed to share her gift?

The Daughter enters, unseen.

CARDINAL
For her daughter. The Great Spirit created no woman. And that's why you were sent here, really. For my daughter. And my daughter you can have. But I shall not part with my gift.

KISHKE
Yes, your daughter is acceptable, but I must beg for your help in healing my grandmother as well.

CARDINAL
And who shall help me once I am cursed for giving man my gift? No, you cannot have it.

SEN
It is not just my grandmother who is sick.

WEYAK
She is still connected to the fire.

OJIK
It is cursed.

CARDINAL
Impossible.
KISHKE
She did not relinquish all responsibility, she just shared fire with man.

WEYAK
The flames turn black. They give no heat.

SEN
But anything within them dies.

OJIK
Instantly.

CARDINAL
Hm. The loss of fire will be a great tragedy.

BROTHERS
Help me and the flame won't be lost.

CARDINAL
But my gift will be blighted, and even if you find someone to help me, then their gifts will be blighted and eventually the whole world will be covered in blight!

WEYAK
Surely the Great Spirit would not allow that to happen!

CARDINAL
He has already shown that his ways are less than merciful.

BROTHERS
Please!

WEYAK
I need your help.

KISHKE
I cannot go home empty-handed.

SEN
Not when my brothers will succeed.
OJIK
We need gifts from all four directions.

CARDINAL
You really think my fellow spirits are giving in so easily?

BROTHERS
You will ruin fire for us all!

CARDINAL
Enough! I will give you my prized possession--

BROTHERS
Thank you, oh wise spirit!

CARDINAL
If you prove yourself worthy.

BROTHERS
What must I do?

The Cardinal Spirit indicates Ojik.

CARDINAL
Come with me.

Sen, Kishke and Weyak exit.

FIREKEEPER
The spirit took Ojik outside into the cold grey light. The
shrill winter wind blew flurries of snow across the icy
ground.

CARDINAL
What do you see?

OJIK
Snow.
What do you hear?

Wind.

The Cardinal Spirit breathes deeply. Ojik is impatient, but silent.

Out where the sky meets the land, there is a giant wolf, white as the snow and quiet as the wind. You must kill it. You have three days.

I will do my best and hope my efforts will prove my worth.

But he thought to himself:

I'm a good hunter. I will triumph.

Ojik exits; Sen enters.

The Spirit of the East thought it was pure luck that Sen had made it across the ocean in a small canoe, and so he devised a plan to test these skills.

Off the shore of the other side of this island there is a great maze. If you can paddle to the center and back by sundown, you shall have your prize.

That's it? A maze?

I can make it more difficult if you'd like.
SEN
No, no. A maze that will take all day to complete will be quite a challenge. I'll try my hardest.

CARDINAL
It is agreed then. You have three chances. You begin tomorrow at dawn.

FIREKEEPER
But Sen was thinking:

SEN
That's it? A maze? No problem. I'll be done by lunchtime!

Sen exits; Kishke enters.

FIREKEEPER
In the Southern woodlands, Kishke stood with the spirit under the gold-green light.

CARDINAL
Today I will hide my gift. If, by the full moon, you can find it, congratulations. If not, you must accept defeat and be on your way.

KISHKE
What is the gift?

CARDINAL
You will know it if you find it, if you know how to look. Are we agreed?

KISHKE
I don't have much choice. We are agreed.

FIREKEEPER
Kishke waited inside while the spirit hid his gift in plain sight.

Kishke exits; Weyak enters.
The Spirit of the West took Weyak outside and stood on the edge of the mountain. He swayed in the warm desert breeze. Weyak held back.

CARDINAL

Come closer, boy.

Weyak shuffles forward a few steps.

CARDINAL

A little closer.

WEYAK

Forgive me, but I have no desire to stand on a cliff-edge in this wind.

The Cardinal Spirit laughs.

CARDINAL

It's amazing that you are here.

WEYAK

How can I prove myself so that I may win your gift, and go home?

CARDINAL

On the other side of this mountain there is a cave. If you can make your way through it, I will give you my gift. Now, this cave is very deep. It runs under the whole mountain, and comes out on that ledge below me.

Weyak inches forward to see this ledge, cranes his neck, but is not close enough to the edge to see anything. He scrambles back.
WEYAK
All – all right.

CARDINAL
You will start in the morning.

Scene 8
Part Two - Weyak

The desert. Sunrise.

FIREKEEPER
And at sunrise, Weyak stood with the spirit at the mouth of the cave, shivering with cold and fear.

CARDINAL
There it is before you. I will meet you on the ledge on the other side of the mountain at this time tomorrow.

WEYAK
Tomorrow??

CARDINAL
I told you the cave was long.

The spirit hands him a pack of supplies without a word.

WEYAK
O-O-Okay.

Weyak enters the cave. The Cardinal Spirit chuckles to himself as he exits.
Weyak picks his way forward carefully. Something scares him and he runs toward the entrance.

He stops just short of exiting the cave.

WEYAK
I can't. It's so dark! And scary. And... I can't do it! I can't do it alone.

FIREKEEPER
He knew his brothers and his grandmother were counting on him. What he didn't know that they were struggling just as much with their tasks.

Ojik enters.

OJIK
For the first time...I don't know...if I can kill this animal.

Sen enters.

SEN
I can't figure out this stupid maze!

Kishke enters.

KISHKE
How am I ever going to find this...thing?

BROTHERS
Oh Great Spirit, please help me!

The Great Spirit enters.
GREAT SPIRIT
I don't know why you're asking me for help. I can't give you any. The rules have been set. And even if I could, I wouldn't.

BROTHERS
This task is impossible!

OJIK
The beast is massive.

SEN
The maze tortuous.

KISHKE
The hiding place unknown.

WEYAK
The cave terrifying.

GREAT SPIRIT
Did you think your trials would be over once you made it to the Ends of the Earth?

He LAUGHS as he exits.

BROTHERS
How will I ever win?

WEYAK
Oh, forgive me, Grandmother!

OJIK
I'm trying my best.

KISHKE
I'm not sure I can do this.

SEN
I would rather travel to the Ends of the Earth five times than attempt this again!
FIREKEEPER
They felt certain of failure, but they knew the others were counting on them.

BROTHERS
My brothers are sure to succeed.

WEYAK
And if we don't have all four gifts, we can't save Grandmother.

KISHKE
I'm going to be the only one empty-handed.

SEN
And if I don't win the gift, there's no way she'll have me.

OJIK
I will win!

BROTHERS
I will!

The four brothers exit.

Scene 9
Part Three - Kishke

The Cardinal Spirit and his Daughter enter.

FIREKEEPER
While the brothers attempted their tasks, the daughters approached their fathers.

DAUGHTER
You aren't going to let anything happen to him, are you, Father?

CARDINAL
The test is meant to be impossible, not deadly.
DAUGHTER
You didn't answer my question. Your little test could still destroy him.

CARDINAL
The rules have been set. I don't want to interfere.

DAUGHTER
Father! He already came all the way to the End of the Earth.

CARDINAL
I know. And for that he will be rewarded.

DAUGHTER
You mean me.

The Cardinal Spirit hesitates.

CARDINAL
Yes.

DAUGHTER
So you just gave me away, no questions asked?

CARDINAL
It is your fate, child.

DAUGHTER
I am your child, aren't I? Yet you part with me so easily while you cling so tightly to your stupid little gift.

CARDINAL
Do you want me to end up like that fool, the FireKeeper?

DAUGHTER
You threw me to him like a consolation prize! "Oh, I'm sorry, this little weed you can't have, but take my child instead!"
CARDINAL
You will not speak that way to me! About my gift from the Great Spirit! You do not understand his wrath. Of course I am sad to part with you, my child, but I knew this day would come. You are meant to be a mother of the nation. I have to let you go. But my gift...

DAUGHTER
I see. I really have no choice then.

CARDINAL
I'm glad you understand.

FIREKEEPER
But they thought:

DAUGHTER
If I'm going to be tossed aside, I'm taking the thing he values most with me.

FIREKEEPER
At that moment, they all decided to help the brothers, surreptitiously. They knew they could not give their fathers' gifts away; they had to be won by the rules of the agreements. Yet there were no rules against hinting. So they went off to devise the best plan.

The Daughter exits.
Kishke storms in.

FIREKEEPER
Kishke returned late that evening.

KISHKE
I have played your game!

The spirit is unperturbed.

CARDINAL
Not long enough. Until the full moon. We agreed.
KISHKE
Just give me the gift already!

CARDINAL
If you cannot find it, you do not get it. We agreed.

KISHKE
At least tell me what I'm looking for! I'll never find it this way.

CARDINAL
You will know it if you find it. I promise.

KISHKE
I'm sure your daughter already knows where it is.

CARDINAL
Probably.

KISHKE
She'll tell me if you don't!

CARDINAL
I doubt that very much. Kikwea!

The Daughter enters as Kikwea.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
Yes, Father?

CARDINAL
Do you know where I have hidden my gift?

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
Yes.

CARDINAL
Are you going to tell this boy where it is?

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
No.
KISHKE
Of course not in front of you!

The Cardinal Spirit considers.

CARDINAL
Very well.

The Cardinal Spirit exits. They glare at each other.

KISHKE
You will tell me.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
I don't think so. After all, women precede men in all things.

KISHKE
What?

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
You are in women's territory now, the direction of procreation.

KISHKE
Tell me where to find the gift!

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
You must learn to appreciate the strengths of both.

KISHKE
Both what?

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
Both men and women.

He scoffs.
KISHKE
You're talking nonsense.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
It is a different kind of strength, but just as necessary as male strength. For instance, the strength of my silence.

KISHKE
Tell me where the gift is!

She says nothing.

KISHKE
At least what it looks like!

Silence.

KISHKE
Something! Anything!

She remains silent. Kishke storms off.

FIREKEEPER
The next morning, Kikwea went into the forest. Part of her wanted Kishke to find the gift because she was angry with her father, but another part really didn't think he was worthy. Alone, she contemplated how she could get out of going with him. Suddenly, he intruded.

Kishke enters.

KISHKE
Kikwea?

His tone is softer. She remains wary.

KISHKE
I would like very much if you could please help me find this gift. You don't have to tell me where it is! Just...a small hint?
She turns away. He follows her.

KISHKE

She turns back, intrigued, but still cautious.

KISHKE
About us. I mean, women and men. Our different strengths. You succeeded so easily where I am failing miserably. I imagine that a woman's strengths complement a man's failings in other ways. And, perhaps, a man's strengths complement a woman's.

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
When men and women work together, there are no weaknesses.

KISHKE
Will you help me?

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
You must listen to your mother. She will tell you what you wish to know.

KISHKE
But I sat all day yesterday--!

DAUGHTER as KIKWEA
With your mind turned inward. You must turn your focus out and listen. Listen carefully. Mother Earth only whispers.

Kishke follows her. He sits in a quiet place, and listens. The Daughter drops a specific identity as Sen, Weyak and Ojik enter.
SEN
You must have figured out this maze.

OJIK
Faced this beast.

WEYAK
Explored this cave a hundred times!

DAUGHTER
Of course I haven't.

SEN
Of course you haven't!

OJIK
You know to avoid it.

WEYAK
You've been forbidden because of all the horrible things inside!

DAUGHTER
I haven't because Father just created it yesterday.

BROTHERS
What?

DAUGHTER
He created it as a test for you.

BROTHERS
For me?

SEN & KISHKE
I'll never figure this out!

OJIK & WEYAK
I'll be the only one who doesn't get the gift.
SEN
My brothers will laugh at me.

WEYAK
Grandmother will die.

OJIK
Fire will be useless.

KISHKE
This journey will have been pointless!

DAUGHTER
You are the only one who can defeat it. I know you can!

BROTHERS
Please help me!

SEN
Tell me how the walls move!

DAUGHTER
Something may be moving but it's not the walls.

OJIK
Show me how to kill the beast!

DAUGHTER
You know how. Take me with you on the hunt, and show me.

WEYAK
Come with me through the cave.

DAUGHTER
You must go alone. Be brave!

KISHKE
Just give me the gift!

DAUGHTER
Listen, and you will find it on your own. Listen, and watch, and learn.
Scene 10
Part Four - Sen

FIREKEEPER
Without the daughters' help, the four brothers never would have completed their tasks.

WEYAK
I made it through the cave!

OJIK
I killed the giant wolf.

KISHKE
I found the gift of cedar all around me.

SEN
I...I...

Weyak, Ojik and Kishke exit. Sen stands on the beach, staring out at the maze. The Daughter approaches him.

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
Have you figured it out yet?

SEN
The walls don't move, but the waves do.

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
The waves--

SEN
Up and down, up and down.

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
Low and--

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SEN
High! High tide covers most of the walls.

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
Exactly.

He reaches for her.

SEN
Come with me! We'll get the prize together!

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
You have to do it yourself or Father will refuse to give it to you. But I'll wait here until you return. Go now, while the tide is coming in.

Sen paddles into the maze. He quickly makes it to the center, where there is a small stone orb atop a pedestal. Just as he grabs it, the tide starts going out. As he paddles back, the bottom of his canoe starts scraping the tops of some of the walls. The sun begins to set.

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
Sen?

SEN
Nanzhe?

DAUGHTER as NANZHE
Where are you? The tide's going out!

SEN
I know!
Sen emerges from the maze. He runs up to the Daughter, carrying the orb.

SEN

I made it!

DAUGHTER as NANZHE

You did it! I knew you could!

He kisses her just as the Cardinal Spirit enters. Sen sees him before the Daughter does.

CARDINAL

You are late!

DAUGHTER as NANZHE

Just barely! The sun has not entirely set! You should honor your agreement!

CARDINAL

Did you help him?

DAUGHTER as NANZHE

Perhaps I gave away a small hint.

CARDINAL

Why would you do that to your own father?

DAUGHTER as NANZHE

You already gave me away. My loyalties lie elsewhere now.

SEN

Please, sir?

Sen holds out the orb. The Daughter stares up at her father.
CARDINAL
I suppose I have to. You did complete the task.

SEN
Thank you, sir!

CARDINAL
Come on now, before it gets too cold.

The Cardinal Spirit
starts to exit.

DAUGHTER
Father, I'm sorry.

CARDINAL
For what, child?

DAUGHTER
Now the Great Spirit is going to curse you!

CARDINAL
I'm not as certain of that as I was before. You see, I am not the Keeper of this gift, just the Caretaker. The Great Spirit cannot really fault me for sharing it.

FIREKEEPER
But I have another theory.

GREAT SPIRIT
Cursing all the Cardinal Spirits, then who know who else after them--it would have been too much work!

They all exit.
Scene 11
The Gift Ceremony

Ends of the Earth.
Moonlight.

FIREKEEPER
The next day, the brothers rested. Then, under the full moon, the spirits honored their agreements and gave their gifts ceremoniously.

The Cardinal Spirit and the Daughter, with a basket, enter; the brothers enter from the four directions.

BROTHERS
I have learned your secrets at the End of the Earth and now seek to return home.

OJIK
The snow cleanses and renews all the waters. As Mother Earth shares her life-blood with us, so must we share with each other.

CARDINAL
Receive this sweet grass as a sign of your new generosity. Use it in celebration.

The Daughter hands him a bundle tied with a white ribbon.

SEN
All things move in the Great Circle, from darkness into light and back to darkness. But the cycle never ends; the light always returns.

CARDINAL
Receive this tobacco as a sign of your new wisdom. Use it in communication.
The Daughter hands him a bundle tied with a yellow ribbon.

KISHKE
All are born of a mother, therefore women precede men in all things. Where man is weak, woman is strong.

CARDINAL
Receive this cedar as a sign of your new compassion. Use it in purification.

The Daughter hands him a bundle tied with a red ribbon.

WEYAK
Our fire within will never go out. The power of life continues forever, as we all share our strengths, part of the Great Circle.

CARDINAL
Receive this sage as a sign of your new courage. Use it in prevention.

The Daughter hands him a bundle tied with a black ribbon.

The Cardinal Spirit turns to the Daughter.

CARDINAL
I hope you know that I will not part with you as lightly as I did those...weeds. You are my most beloved. I see now that you will have your own way. You need not go with him.

DAUGHTER
Actually, I rather like him.
The Cardinal Spirit appraises the brothers.

CARDINAL
Your virtues have won my gift, and my daughter's heart. She will go to you willingly, and with my blessing. May you have a long and happy life.

The Daughter turns back to the brothers.

DAUGHTER
Once I have prepared for the long journey, I shall come to you. You must go now, I know, but we will meet again. Look for me a year and a day after your return home.

FIREKEEPER
The Cardinal Spirits blessed the young men, and they began the long journey back.

Scene 12
Break the Curse

Lake Gitcheegumee.

FIREKEEPER
At last, after countless nights, they returned to familiar lands.

The brothers enter, meeting.

OJIK
My brothers!

WEYAK
How are you?

SEN
Well enough.
KISHKE
How was the north?

OJIK
Very cold. The south?

SEN
Very wet. Did you meet a pretty girl?

WEYAK
As a matter of fact, I did.

SEN
So did I. You were right.

OJIK
What?

SEN
He was right. I should've started off telling her she was pretty.

KISHKE
Maybe I should've tried that too.

OJIK
I told her she was beautiful, but it didn't seem to help.

WEYAK
Really? The girl I met was pretty, and I told her so, and everything was fine.

KISHKE
Did we all meet girls?

SEN
Seems that way.

WEYAK
Have any of you seen Grandmother yet?
KISHKE
I've just arrived.

SEN
Same here.

FIREKEEPER
My boys! Did you receive the gifts?

OJIK
We did.

FIREKEEPER
Then let us begin at once.

WEYAK
Releasing you could mean death.

FIREKEEPER
I know. But I would still be free.

SEN
Then we will break this terrible curse!

KISHKE
Woman should precede man in all things.

The FireKeeper walks in a circle, then sits at the center. The brothers stand around her, each at his own direction. She begins the ritual.

FIREKEEPER
Oh Great Spirit, revered is your name. Forgive us our indiscretions as we forgive each other.

BROTHERS
Mother Earth, whence we came, so let us return to you.
At the northern point, Ojik raises the sweet grass.

OJIK
The white north reminds us to be generous.

BROTHERS
Oh Mother Earth, bless us with your continuing generosity.

At the eastern point, Sen raises the tobacco.

SEN
The yellow east reminds us of the wisdom of the Great Circle.

BROTHERS
Bless our earthen bodies and our small spirits that one day will part.

At the southern point, Kishke raises the cedar.

KISHKE
The red south reminds us of the strength of compassion.

BROTHERS
Bless the women in our lives as they teach us with great patience.

At the western point, Weyak raises the sage.

WEYAK
The black west reminds us to find courage in the knowledge that our fire is everlasting.

BROTHERS
Bless the flame within us all.
FIREKEEPER
And bless all our relations.

BROTHERS
Bless all our relations.

They stare at the FireKeeper. She sits perfectly still, as stone. She seems not to breathe; the brothers find themselves holding their breath as well.

The Great Spirit enters.

GREAT SPIRIT
After everything...you are still very devoted.... I suppose...she's suffered long enough. And you have shown that you can take care of my gifts. (beat) Oh, all right! There! Be free.

The Great Spirit exits.

FIREKEEPER
The curse is broken.

SEN
What just happened?

FIREKEEPER
My spirit, my true self has consumed my body from within. I could feel it pulling away, tugging at the flesh from the inside, ripping away from the bones. It occupied the tiny space in between. I was so claustrophobic I could hardly move. Then, my spirit expanded and the body was forgotten.

KISHKE
Just asking for seven blessings broke the curse?

OJIK
No. It took traveling to the Ends of the Earth.
FIREKEEPER
For someone you love. I don't think it would have worked otherwise.

WEYAK
We were glad to help, Grandmother.

FIREKEEPER
I will be forever grateful, my boys.

Scene 13
Epilogue

Lake Gitcheegumee / spirit world

FIREKEEPER
Soon the fire returned to normal. And a year and a day later, the daughters of the Cardinal Spirits arrived on the shores of Lake Gitcheegumee. They were more radiant and beautiful than the brothers remembered.

The Daughter enters, glowing faintly.

FIREKEEPER
Not long after their arrival, I returned to the spirit world, never to be seen again. The Two-Legged Walkers had learned all we spirits had to teach, and so we left them to walk the Earth alone.

But they continued to learn from each other, and they passed their knowledge to their children and their children's children, setting down the ways of the tribe. Becoming the People of the Place of the Fire.

Lights out.
SUPERSTARLETS

EXT. PARK - DAY - ANIMATED

Traditional 2D cel style. Very detailed, fairly realistic, but with larger eyes.

DAISY (12) twirls on one white flat. Her dip-dyed yellow skirt spins away.

The yellow shrug pulls tight across her back as she holds her hands in front of her, palms facing out. A yellow plastic bracelet slides down her wrist.

Her long blonde hair swishes as she stops spinning. She is lean, with a surprising strength under her bubbly exterior.

DAISY
Bright Star Burst!

A flash of yellow stars spray out of Daisy's hands.

JORDAN (13) stands with white tennis shoe in front of the other. Her fingertips graze the hem of her green dress before she raises her arm overhead.

A green plastic bracelet slides down her forearm. Her green eyes narrow.

Holding one arm in front of her, she draws the other down in a quarter-circle, then pulls back like she's drawing a bow. A slightly green, star-tipped arrow of light appears. She releases the arrow.

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

The arrow hits a huge, glassy-eyed FISH swimming through the air - and Daisy's stars bombard it. Its wide eyes grow wider; it seems to be having its first thought - one of
surprise. Then, it turns into a glowing silhouette, and disintegrates into glitter.

Daisy and Jordan turn their sights on TOPAZ (17). Her clingy black dress reveals much of her yellow-orange tights.

Lightly-colored mist swirls around her tall, thin frame, into a decanter of mercury glass. Light glints off her gold cuff bracelets as she takes her hand off her hip and puts the stopper in the decanter. Topaz LAUGHS.

TOPAZ
You'll never stop us, girls!

Topaz throws something down and a cloud of smoke puffs up and around them all. The girls COUGH as Topaz' LAUGHTER is heard retreating. The smoke clears; Topaz is gone. The girls look at each other.

DAISY
Drat!

EXT. DARK CASTLE - ANIMATED

A perpetual storm cloud rumbles behind a black castle with many spires.

INT. DARK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SAME TIME - ANIMATED

A cavernous room, all hard angles and flat surfaces.

VIRIDIAN (16) lounges against the entryway. As she picks at her nails, it's obvious her copper bracelets need shining. Her mercury glass decanter is tucked precariously under her arm. She wears green tights under her black dress.

On the other side of the entryway, CERULEAN (17) taps her foot impatiently. Her silver bracelets clink together as
she crosses her arms. She also holds a mercury glass decanter. She wears a black dress and blue tights.

Viridian and Cerulean flank Topaz as she enters. Their heels click against the stone floor as they approach a blocky, obsidian throne where LUCINDA perches.

Lucinda (early 20s) glares at them with her inky eyes. Her long, dark, wavy hair makes her thin, boyish frame look even smaller. She leans forward.

The trio bows before her, staying down. They hold out the mercury glass.

SIRENS
We bring more prana, Lady Lucinda.

LUCINDA
Nicely done, girls. I couldn't expect any more from glorified stage hands.

Lucinda CACKLES.

The trio share uneasy glances.

TELEVISION CREDITS - ANIMATED

Less detailed, more stylized animation, though at first the differences are subtle.

Up-beat, pop music plays as the closing credits of a children's magical girl show start playing.

SILHOUETTES of three girls. Two look like Daisy and Jordan. Lights reveal the figures; they are NOT Daisy and Jordan, but generic magical girls.

PULL OUT to reveal:
INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Television screen plays the credits.

MAYA (12) dances around the living room, humming along to the closing theme song. Her poofy skirt and short dark hair bounce around. Her movement makes it even harder to look at the wild pattern on her tights. She is small and looks younger than she is.

MOM (OS)
Show's over! Time for homework!

Maya glances toward the sound, then ignores the command.

MOM (OS)
Maya! I can hear the end song.

Maya's MOM enters. She's fairly hip for a mom, but very busy and obviously doesn't have time for this. She turns off the television by pushing the button on the actual television, then stands in front of it with her hands on her hips.

MOM
Homework. Now.

Maya stomps off.

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY - LIVE ACTION

The doorway frames HECTOR (17) as he sits at his desk, which is piled high with books, pamphlets and papers. His sandy hair shows he's been running his hands through it. He manages athletic and nerdy, but more of the latter and less of the former.

He hears Maya STOMPING up the stairs.

Maya scuffs past Hector's room. He doesn't turn around.
HECTOR
You sound like a draught horse.

Maya comes back to his doorway. He turns to look at her.

MAYA
Social studies is the bane of my existence.

HECTOR
So you have to take it out on the stairs?

MAYA
Who cares what the state bird of Delaware is?

HECTOR
The people of Delaware.

Maya glares at him.

HECTOR
Maybe. Don't you have any art homework?

MAYA
No. But we're making puppets at school. I got the princess!

HECTOR
Yay, glitter...

MAYA
Shut up.

Beat.

HECTOR
Your social studies?
MAYA
Oh. Right.

HECTOR
You have to take the bad with the good.

MAYA
I guess...

HECTOR
The sooner you start, the sooner you'll be done.

MAYA
Yeah, yeah. I'm going!

Maya heads into her own room.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - LIVE ACTION

Maya's bed is unmade, her butterfly-covered comforter hanging on the floor. There is a pile of stuffed animals on the floor at the foot of the bed, and another pile of clothes in front of the closet. The closet doors are open, and more than half the hangers are empty.

Maya's sits on her pink-cushioned chair at her white desk. She stares at her social studies book. She opens it and pulls out a sheet of paper. Her pencil is covered with glitter. She stares at the book some more, then at the blank paper, and starts doodling dresses.

MOM (OS)
Stop drawing!

Maya glares out the door.

MAYA
How does she do that?
She pulls out a new sheet of paper, writes her name at the top of the page and 1. on the first line. She stares out the window.

Across the street, a red tabby (TAJ) sits, looking up at her window. Maya gets up when she sees it looking at her.

MAYA
Hello, new--

The cat hurries away when it sees that Maya has seen it.

MAYA
Neighbor...

She stares after it, puzzled.

MOM (OS)
You'd better finish before dinner!

MAYA
Okay, okay!

Maya sits and starts scratching out her homework.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Morning. Kids are entering the building, a few are playing in the playground.

Maya is walking across the school yard. She waves.

ELLE (13) waves back. She is every bit a teenager, making Maya look even more childish when Elle joins her.

ELLE
Good morning, Maya. How was your evening?
MAYA
Great! Well, the afternoon was great, because they finally found the last girl! On Super Sailors!

ELLE
You still watch that baby show?

MAYA
Well, I still like it. Their dresses are really cute...

A PRISSY GIRL passes them.

PRISSY GIRL
Morning, Elle.

She glares at Maya. Elle waves.

ELLE
What classes are you taking?

MAYA
I don't know.

A GANGLY BOY walks by.

GANGLY BOY
Hey, Elle.

His voice cracks, and he blushes. Elle smiles.

ELLE
Hey. Well?

MAYA
What?

ELLE
We have to sign up soon!
MAYA
I'll figure it out, don't worry.

A YOUNG FASHIONISTA comes up on Elle's other side, and tries to loop her arm through Elle's.

YOUNG FASHIONISTA
Elle, why didn't you sit with us yesterday? You don't have to hang out with less-thans anymore.

MAYA
Hey!

ELLE
Just because she wears mismatched clothes and still watches baby shows doesn't mean she's less-than!

Elle grabs Maya's arm and pulls her away from the Fashionista, into the building.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LIVE ACTION

Maya and Elle walk toward their classroom.

MAYA
Thanks for the glowing defense.

ELLE
Tell me you'll take honors.

MAYA
Are you?

ELLE
Duh.

SIMON (12) passes them. He has spiky hair and thick-rimmed glasses. He turns to look at the girls and waves.
Maya turns bright red, but Elle waves back.

Simon's eyes shift - he was looking at Maya and is only now noticing Elle. He looks at Maya once more, then hurries away.

Elle looks at Maya.

ELLE
Did you even wave?

MAYA
N-no.

ELLE
You'll never catch a boy like that.

MAYA
Why would I want a boy?

ELLE
Who else is gonna take you to dances?

Elle peels off into her own classroom, and Maya continues on to hers.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Late morning. Maya's desk is in the middle of the classroom. She doodles as Ms. Harwood's voice drones:

MS. HARWOOD (OS)
Next week we'll be turning in our stories. Please remember to write in pen, as all your teachers next year will require it.

MS. HARWOOD already has the grandma puff of hair, but hers is bottle-brown; though plump, there is no softness about her.
MS. HARWOOD
Maya? how are you going to write your story?

MAYA
Uh...very quickly.

MS. HARWOOD
In pen. Please pay attention.
Now, speaking of next year, the administrators from the junior highs will be coming next week. And the classes you select are going to shape the rest of your academic career, so choose wisely!

The recess bell RINGS. Ms. Harwood nods, and all the students rush to leave. Maya shoves her paper and pencil in her desk, and is one of the last to get up.

MS. HARWOOD
Maya?

The last of the other students leave as Maya turns back.

MAYA
Yes?

MS. HARWOOD
You still need to make up the test you missed last week.

MAYA
Oh, right...

MS. HARWOOD
You can come in after lunch.

MAYA
During recess??
MS. HARWOOD
You've already had more time to study than the other students did, Maya. It's not fair to them to wait any longer.

MAYA
Okay...

Maya fidgets.

MS. HARWOOD
You can go now.

Maya runs out.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Morning recess. Maya hurries onto the crowded yard. She looks around, spotting Elle with a group of kids huddled around a tree. As she gets closer, she hears the boys yelling:

BOYS
Scaredy cat! Scaredy cat! Mangy old thing. I'll get you down!

One of the boys throws a ROCK into the tree. A girl grabs his arm.

GIRL
Don't! You'll hurt it.

BOY
So?

Maya sneaks in next to Elle.

MAYA
Hey.
ELLE
We were trying to coax it down, but now the boys are just scaring it worse.

Maya looks into the tree and glimpses a cat clinging to a high branch.

MAYA
It's a cat, I'm sure it climbs lots of trees.

ELLE
But it's just been clinging to that one branch since I got here!

MAYA
If you're so worried about it, why don't you go get it?

ELLE
Me? Climb a tree? Please. But someone really should go up after it.

MAYA
Fine, I'll do it myself.

ELLE
I didn't mean you!

Maya starts to move through the crowd.

ELLE
Maya! All the boys will see up your skirt!

Maya stops, looks down at her skirt, then up at the cat. She recognizes it as the same cat from outside her house. He stares at her.

Maya worms her way through the crowd to the tree.
She jumps but her fingers barely graze the lowest branch. She tries again to no avail. The others LAUGH at her. Maya hunches down real low, then springs up. She gets a tenuous grasp with one hand, then manages to get the other hand on the branch too.

As she walks her legs up the trunk, her skirt starts to come up. The boys OOH and the girls GASP - but Maya is wearing bike shorts underneath. The boys AW while the girls SIGH in relief.

Maya scrambles up the tree toward the cat. When she can almost touch him, he WINKS at her and bounds out of the tree, off the head of the boy who threw the rock, and rushes across the yard out of sight.

The kids leave as Maya works her way out of the tree. Elle waits for her at the bottom. Maya almost falls out of the tree.

ELLE
I can't believe you did that. You were so...brave.

MAYA
It's just a tree.

ELLE
Yeah, but no one else wanted to climb it, did they?

MAYA
I guess...

The recess bell RINGS.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - LIVE ACTION

The RINGING continues.
Kids flood out of classrooms; school is out. Elle and Maya meet in the hallway. They walk a bit.

**MAYA**

*Ugh! Social studies book.*

Maya turns around and fights the crowd back to the classroom. Elle stands still as the others move around her.

---

**INT. CLASSROOM – DAY – LIVE ACTION**

Maya enters the classroom. It is empty, except for the red tabby, who sits on Maya's desk, his back to her. She stops.

**TAJ**

*There you are! Take this!*

He indicates something on the desk. Maya doesn't move.

**TAJ**

*Put it on now, Maya!*

Maya comes closer and sees what looks like a blue plastic digital bracelet-watch on her desk. Taj nudges it with his nose. Maya ignores him and reaches into her desk for her book.

**TAJ**

*You have to stop the Sirens!*

Maya pulls the book out of her desk and starts to leave.

**TAJ**

*Come back here!*

Maya does not look back.

**MAYA**

*You can't tell me what to do because you aren't really even talking.*
Maya leaves. Taj blinks in disbelief.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LIVE ACTION

Elle sees Maya coming toward her, book in hand. Maya has a dazed look.

ELLE
What happened in there?

MAYA
Nothing.

ELLE
Are you sure?

MAYA
I'm fine.

They push through the outside doors.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - CONTINUOUS - LIVE ACTION

Maya and Elle are stopped in their tracks by all the noisy commotion happening outside.

Everyone is seriously cranky. Kids are pushing each other, whining, crying; parents are yelling at them and at each other.

ELLE
Did we miss something?

MAYA'S POV: At the edges of her vision, Maya can almost see faintly-colored mist coming out of people. She closes her eyes tightly and shakes her head. When she opens her eyes, the mist is gone.
ELLE
Maya?

MAYA
Don't look at me. I don't know what's going on.

Elle and Maya start walking home, the only two people who aren't visibly upset.

EXT. MAYA'S HOUSE - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Maya goes inside the house.

Taj rounds the corner and nonchalantly approaches Maya's house. He peers up at her open window. He climbs gracefully toward it. He takes a couple of confident leaps.

He leaps for the window sill - and mislands it. He scrambles for purchase, his claws scratching the sill, his back legs circling wildly. He finally gets his back claws secure, and heaves himself onto the sill like nothing happened.

Taj slips inside.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Maya drops her backpack on the floor. She turns to kick her shoes off, and sees Taj.

She quickly slams the door.

MAYA
If Mom sees you! Get out! Shoo, shoo!

TAJ
I've been looking for you.
MA YA
There isn't a talking cat in my house because we aren't allowed to have pets.

TA J
Listen to me, Maya, please!

Maya looks him in the eye.

MA YA
How do you know my name?

TA J
I've been watching you.

MA YA
'Cause that's not creepy at all.

TA J
You are a Guardian Star. And I'm here to awaken you.

MA YA
As you can see, I'm already awake, thanks. Now get out before Mom finds you.

TA J
We obviously need to come to some sort of understanding here, starting with your understanding that you're a Star.

Taj jumps up on Maya's desk. She sees the bracelet next to him.

TA J
Put this on and you'll see.
MAYA
I don't take things from
strangers, and especially not from
strangers who are freaky talking
cats.

She kicks off her shoes and starts rifling through her
backpack.

TAJ
Then allow me to introduce myself.
I'm Taj, your adviser, of sorts.

MAYA
I don't think I need the advice of
a cat, thanks.

TAJ
I'm just trying to make you see
what you are. The latest in a
long line of girls just like you.

MAYA
I'm nobody special.

TAJ
You didn't see anything weird this
afternoon?

Maya hesitates.

MAYA
No. I mean, except you.

TAJ
You can see the magic now because
you know it's real. And the only
people who know it's real have
powers.

MAYA
Magic is not real!
TAJ
Said the girl who is conversing with a cat.

MAYA
I don't know who you think I am, but you're mistaking me for someone else. I am not magic!

TAJ
I realize this is hard to believe, but you are the current Evening Star.

MAYA
Just get someone else, okay?

TAJ
I'm not recruiting you! I'm trying to enlighten you. Every generation has its Three Stars. And you are one. I sense your mark.

Maya freaks out, looking all over herself.

MAYA
Mark? What mark?

TAJ
When you become the Guardian Star, a visual representation of your original form manifests itself.

MAYA
Huh?
TAJ
If you transform, a star glows on your forehead. Just put on the bracelet. If nothing happens, then I was mistaken. And you'll never see me again.

MAYA
You promise?

TAJ
I swear it.

MAYA
Fine.

Maya takes the bracelet and puts it on reluctantly. The face blips.

MAYA
Whoa.

TAJ
Now push the button!

MAYA
Which one? There are, like--

TAJ
The one in the middle!

Maya pushes the button.

MAYA'S TRANSFORMATION SEQUENCE - LIVE ACTION

Black liminal space.

A BLUE HEPTAGRAM glows on Maya's forehead.

Transition to ANIMATION as she rotates and becomes a glowing silhouette. Blue stars swirl around her. Her
skirt flares out, becoming much poofier, sticking almost straight out.

As the stars fade, Maya strikes a pose as the Evening Star.

A white ruffle peeks out from under her blue dress, matched by her white mary Janes.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - DAY - ANIMATED

Maya inspects herself in disbelief.

MAYA
What did you do to me?

TAJ
I didn't do anything. It was always in you. I just awakened it. Now, wear the bracelet at all times. You need it to transform, and to communicate with the others.

MAYA
There are others?

TAJ
Yes, as I said before, there are Three Guardian Stars. You are the last to awaken. Listen, when the Earth was first created...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE - ANIMATED

The Earth is a glowing blue-green marble.
TAJ (VO)
Three Stars were assigned to protect it. They watched in shifts, so the Earth was never alone. They were the Day Star--

A yellow dot WINKS into existence.

TAJ (VO)
The Evening Star.

A blue dot BLINKS on.

TAJ (VO)
And the Midnight Star.

A green dot WINKS.

TAJ (VO)
When the Earth was in danger, the Stars descended to protect it.

The dots swirl down to Earth.

EXT. ICY HIGHLANDS - DAY - ANIMATED

Three large energy orbs swoop past a small, ragged ARMY toward a HOARD OF DEMONS, leaving colored trails behind them. The ARMY MEN stand in awe as the colored lights zoom in and out of the hoard. Soon the demons have all fallen. The army CHEERS.

EXT. OPEN SEA - ANIMATED

A huge SEA SERPENT looms over a fishing boat. The three lights fly in and spiral around the serpent, disorienting it until it has tied itself in knots and falls beneath the waves. The FISHERMEN CHEER.
EXT. ROLLING HILLS - NIGHT - ANIMATED

An ANGRY MOB, complete with torches and pitchforks, faces off with a DRAGON.

TAJ (VO)
The Earth was a dangerous place in those days, and soon the Stars had spent too much time away from the heavens. They became mortal.

Three female figures run up from behind the crowd. Their features are indistinct in the firelight. Their brightly colored dresses - yellow, green, blue - looks strange compared to the villagers' drab clothes.

TAJ (VO)
But they retained their powers.

The women yell an indistinct BATTLE CRY under the ROAR of the dragon. The dragon is bombarded with yellow, blue and green lights. It soon collapses under the barrage. The townspeople CHEER.

TAJ (VO)
And when the time came, their powers passed on to others.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND TOWN - EVENING - ANIMATED

A BOG MONSTER slogs toward three different young women, but they still wear yellow, green and blue. The monster BELLOWS, overpowering their different BATTLE CRY. The women attack. It MOANS and MELTS back into mud.

The young women turn triumphantly to face a group of VILLAGERS. The women's colors stand out even more against the villagers' black and white. They look angry.
Eventually they learned they needed to hide their powers.

VILLAGER
Witches!

The women run.

BLACK LIMINAL SPACE - ANIMATED

Three female bodies in dark shadows, their features obscure. They wear long toga-style dresses, with pieces of armor. The center woman’s armor is yellow/gold, the two on either side of her blue and green.

But they are remembered still in stories about warrior goddesses like Athena, or brave women like Mu-Lan.

On the forehead of the center woman glows an enneagram (nine-pointed star). On the forehead of the green-clad woman, an octogram glows. On the blue, a heptagram.

Every generation, there are three Stars.

Slowly at first, the female bodies morph into three other female bodies, wearing slightly different but still color-coded clothes; the stars still glow on their foreheads.

They pause in these new forms for a breath, then begin morphing again, more quickly. Faster and faster, the trio cycles through many different bodies and outfits, always retaining the color-coding and the forehead-stars.
Taj (VO)
Though no one today knows who they are - no one can know - they continue to protect the Earth.

At last, the figures settle on forms that look like Daisy, Jordan and Maya.

Taj (VO)
When there is no danger, the powers sleep.

The forehead-stars fade.

Taj (VO)
But as soon as there is a threat, the Stars must awaken.

The stars glow, much more brightly than before, blindingly, until everything is enveloped in a white light.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - DAY - ANIMATED

Maya is enraptured in the story.

Maya
This...is...awesome! We're like the Super Sailors!

Taj
Huh?

Maya
Girls with powers kicking--I mean, saving the world!

Taj
Yes, exactly! You should begin training at once.
MAYA
Let's go!

EXT. MAYA'S BACKYARD - DAY - ANIMATED

Maya bounces excitedly.

MAYA
Okay, what are my powers?

TAJ
You will feel them within you. Close your eyes and let them speak to you.

MAYA
Okay.

TAJ
Oh, and aim up. We don't want to ruin anything.

MAYA
Right.

She closes her eyes and takes a few deep breaths. She opens one eye.

MAYA
I don't feel anything.

TAJ
Imagine them glowing within you.

Maya closes her eyes again. Slowly, she seems to stand taller. She points at the sky with both hands.

MAYA
Evening Star Power!

Nothing happens.
She wiggles her fingers, holds her palms toward the sky, pretends she is throwing something. Nothing.

    TAJ
    It's okay. Just focus!

Maya nods, and closes her eyes again. She lunges forward and flings one hand out.

    MAYA
    Dusk Dust!

Nothing happens.

    TAJ
    Dusk Dust?

    MAYA
    It just came to me.

    TAJ
    Keep trying.

    MAYA
    What exactly am I trying to do?

    TAJ
    The powers manifest themselves differently with each generation.

    MAYA
    You don't know what my power is?

    TAJ
    Uh...no. But I know you have them!

    MAYA
    Great.
TAJ
Try again! Imagine you are saving your house from a fireball!

Maya closes her eyes again.

MAYA
I feel like I should have a wand.

TAJ
Well, you don't.

Maya sighs. She twirls in a circle then makes her thumb and finger into a gun.

MAYA
First Star I See Tonight! Byew!

She shoots into the sky.
Nothing happens.

Maya slumps.

TAJ
Try again!

MAYA
It's not working! You were wrong. I'm not really the Star.

TAJ
You transformed.

MAYA
Yeah...

TAJ
So you are she! Try again!

Maya closes her eyes reluctantly.
All is still for a moment.

Maya hears a BEEPING.

MAYA
What is that?

TAJ
It's your bracelet!

Maya opens her eyes and looks at the bracelet. The face is blinking ALERT inside a heart.

TAJ
The others need you! You must go to them!

MAYA
And do what? A distracting dance?

TAJ
Just get down here!

Maya crouches down so Taj can see the bracelet. He unsheathes one claw and pushes buttons rapidly.

TAJ
Good luck!

MAYA
You're not coming with me?

She already has a glowing blue aura and blue sparkles appear. Soon they cover her form, and rush upward. Maya is gone.

Taj hears the back door open and runs off.

Mom pokes her head out the door.

MOM
Maya?
Mom looks left and right, then comes out into the yard. She stands where Maya stood and looks up into the sky.

MOM

Hm.

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - DAY - ANIMATED

The sparkles descend and coalesce into Maya. She looks around. The lobby is deserted except for a PIMPLY TEEN working concessions. He seems not to see Maya.

A large, scaly tail comes around the corner. Maya hears the creature BELLOW. She looks back at the teen; he is oblivious.

The tail slides away as the creature turns around and Maya comes face-to-face with a dragony-lizard MONSTER. She freezes.

Daisy and Jordan run in after the monster. They see Maya, and her presence catches them off-guard.

JORDAN

She sees!

Daisy pushes buttons on her bracelet.

DAISY

She's...the Evening Star.

Daisy and Jordan's faces light up.

The monster takes a deep breath.

JORDAN

Hey! It breathes fire!

DAISY

Your powers!
Maya is petrified. Daisy and Jordan start running.

Jordan tackles Maya to the ground just as the flames rush over them.

    DAISY (OS)
    Over here, you big dumb ox!
    Dragon...thing...

The monster turns toward Daisy. Jordan helps Maya up.

    MAYA
    What just...?

    JORDAN
    Behind the counter!

Jordan pushes Maya toward the concessions counter. Maya scrambles behind it. The teen starts WHISTLING to himself as he wipes down the counter. Maya sees a faintly-colored mist seeping out of him.

    MAYA
    Hey, get down!

He doesn't hear her. She pulls on his pant-leg.

    MAYA
    Hey!

    TEEN
    Mouse! Mouse!

He jumps up on the counter. The monster swipes at the teen, sending plastic lids, straws and napkins flying into the air. The teen SCREAMS and faints, falling off the counter next to Maya. She risks a peek over the edge.

Behind the monster, Daisy holds her hands out toward it.
DAISY
Bright Star Burst!

As Daisy's stars strike the monster, Jordan, off to one side, looses an arrow.

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

The arrow strikes the monster in the side. It ROARS its death-cry, turns into a glowing silhouette, and disintegrates into glitter.

JORDAN
Get her!

It appears she is pointing at Maya, but Maya hears a LAUGH behind her. Maya turns to see Topaz.

TOPAZ
Three of you now! How cute! But today, there are three of me, too. No one likes going to the movies alone! Viridian! Cerulean!

Viridian and Cerulean come up behind her.

VIRIDIAN
Yes, Topaz?

Topaz points at the three girls.

CERULEAN
Oh, how cute!

TOPAZ
My words, exactly.

Jordan begins her attack.

JORDAN
Shooting--
VIRIDIAN
Now, now. Play nice. You don't want to end up like the others.

The Sirens CLINK their metal bracelets together. Glowing yellow, green and blue circles fly out of their bracelets and toward Daisy, Jordan and Maya.

Maya ducks while Daisy and Jordan leap out of the way. The Sirens LAUGH and run off.

Maya hears people inside the theaters complaining loudly. A MAN WITH AN OLD FEDORA comes out of one of the theaters, grumbling to himself. He puts on his hat as he walks out, oblivious to all else.

Maya stands and brushes her self off.

JORDAN
Are you sure she's a Star?

Daisy shrugs.

MAYA
Well, Taj said I was...

DAISY
She knows Taj. She has a bracelet.

JORDAN
She's completely useless.

MAYA
Hey!

DAISY
Meet us at Frostine's Ice Cream House tomorrow.

MAYA
Uh, I don't know where that is...
JORDAN
It's across the street from the mall!

MAYA
Oh, that place...

She still doesn't know.

DAISY
Be there at two o'clock.

JORDAN
Don't be late!

DAISY
Let's go.

JORDAN
Right.

Jordan and Daisy start pushing buttons on their bracelets. Jordan is faster; she has a green aura and green sparkles appear. The sparkles rush upward as Daisy's yellow aura starts glowing.

MAYA
Wait! How do you--?

Daisy grabs Maya's wrist. Daisy quickly pushes buttons as sparkles start surrounding her.

MAYA
Thank you!

Daisy is covered in sparkles and disappears. Maya's aura starts glowing.

The MANAGER walks in.
MANAGER
What the? Troy!

The teen sits up groggily.

MANAGER
What happened here?

TEEN
There was...a mouse.

INT. DARK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SAME TIME - ANIMATED

The Sirens bow before Lucinda.

SIRENS
More prana, lady.

LUCINDA
Marvelous.

She comes down off her throne and takes the decanters from them and turns back.

TOPAZ
And...

Lucinda spins around.

LUCINDA
And?!

Topaz glances uneasily at the others.

TOPAZ
The Guardian Stars...

LUCINDA
Yes??

103
VIRIDIAN
They've found the last one!

LUCINDA
What?!

CERULEAN
All three Stars have been awakened, Lady.

LUCINDA
I knew what she meant! This is horrible!

She flails in anger.

VIRIDIAN
Don't worry, this new girl was completely useless.

LUCINDA
She may be useless now, but she'll soon realize her powers.

CERULEAN
So there are three of them. There are three of us, too.

LUCINDA
We aren't ready to take on three of them yet!

Topaz hesitantly rises and delicately approaches Lucinda.

TOPAZ
We've gathered a lot of prana already, lady.

Topaz tries to take the decanters from Lucinda, but Lucinda keeps moving away.
LUCINDA
Not enough! You'll have to work faster! If their powers combine...

Lucinda goes behind the throne. Topaz looks at Viridian and Cerulean to follow.

INT. DARK CASTLE PRANA ROOM - CONTINUOUS - ANIMATED

A huge glass container dominates the room. It looks like the top half of an hourglass, with a spigot on the bottom. There are several tubes coming out of the top; they hang from the ceiling and trail down the walls.

Inside the glass, lightly colored mists swirl.

Lucinda stalks up to the container.

LUCINDA
Look at this! Barely half full! I need it to be completely full, girls!

She spins and tosses the decanters at Topaz. She juggles them, one flying out of her arms one way, and another another way. Viridian and Cerulean catch them. They all sigh visibly.

LUCINDA
Now that all the Stars have awakened, they're going to find us out before we have enough prana!

VIRIDIAN
Um...excuse me...uh...enough for what?

LUCINDA
The Destruct-O-Beam, you imbecile!
VIRIDIAN
Oh, right!

LUCINDA
If I don't have enough prana to reach critical compression, it won't be a Destruct-O-Beam! It'll be a - an Obnox-O-Spray!

CERULEAN
That sounds nice!

LUCINDA
An Obnox-O-Spray will not destroy anything!!

CERULEAN
Oh, right!

LUCINDA
Figure out a way to get rid of those girls!

She pushes past them and storms out of the room.

SIRENS
Roger!

They spin and salute. Viridian salutes with the hand holding the decanter, and she lets it fall, but Topaz catches it with her saluting hand. Viridian grins sheepishly as she takes back the decanter.

They each go to a different station and attach a tube to the top of their decanters. The mist flows from the decanters into the container. They look at each other, resolved.
INT. DARK CASTLE - LUCINDA'S ROOM - SAME TIME - ANIMATED

Lucinda picks up something off a table, but her back is turned, blocking the view.

LUCINDA
This is the only way, Edmund.
They'll thank me, I'm sure.

She looks at an old photograph of a boy in his early teens. She sets the photo back on the table, next to a picture of her around the same age, with two other girls. They all have their arms around each other. The two girls are laughing, but Lucinda smiles with her lips closed over her braces.

The sound of Lucinda's heels echoes as she walks away.

EXT. FROSTINE'S ICE CREAM HOUSE - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Frostine's Ice Cream House is a small shop in a strip mall. It has a striped awning and two tables set up on the sidewalk.

INT. FROSTINE'S ICE CREAM HOUSE - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Daisy and Jordan sit at a booth with their treats in front of them. Jordan checks her watch and SIGHS.

DAISY
She's not late yet.

JORDAN
She will be.

DAISY
Give her a chance. We'll be stronger together than on our own.
JORDAN
You really think so?

DAISY
I really hope so.

Jordan checks her watch again.

JORDAN
I told you she's--

A bell DINGS as the door opens and Maya bounces in. She waves to Daisy and Jordan, then goes to the counter and orders. Jordan scowls.

JORDAN
She's not taking this seriously.

DAISY
She just doesn't realize the seriousness yet.

In the background, Maya orders:

MAYA
...bubblegum with extra whipped cream, thanks!

JORDAN
Even her ice cream is frou-frou.

DAISY
Hush!

Maya scoots in next to Jordan, who turns away.

DAISY
Sorry we had to leave in such a rush yesterday. Parents get suspicious if we're gone too long. I'm Daisy, the Day Star.
JORDAN
Jordan, Midnight.

MAYA
Maya! Even--

JORDAN
We know.

DAISY
So, now you're a Guardian Star, the first thing to know is that you can't tell anyone.

JORDAN
Absolutely no one. Not a soul.

DAISY
If people knew what was happening, there'd be chaos.

JORDAN
Total chaos.

The pimply teen from the theater comes over with Maya's cup of ice cream. It's piled high with whipped cream. He slams it down on the table. Maya stares at him. He scowls at her.

TEEN
Do I know you?

JORDAN
No!

Maya takes her ice cream with a smile, and the teen trudges off.

MAYA
Geez, he was rude.
DAISY
He had all the good taken from him yesterday.

Maya digs in to her ice cream.

MAYA
Oh, wow. This is the best ice cream ever. Wanna try?

She offers some to Jordan, who turns up her nose.

JORDAN
No, thank you.

MAYA
Wait, he's not good anymore?

JORDAN
Those girls, they're stealing good prana, the vital energy in everyone.

DAISY
And we can't replace the prana stolen.

JORDAN
We can only restore it.

DAISY
We think.

JORDAN
The monsters protect the Sirens while they suck all the good out of people.

MAYA
But why?!
JORDAN
We don't know...

DAISY
It's bad enough that they're taking it. We have to stop them, Maya.

MAYA
I know.

Jordan and Daisy share a surprised glance.

JORDAN
Good.

DAISY
So...have you figured out your power yet?

MAYA
No. I was hoping it would come to me if I was in real danger, but that didn't happen...

JORDAN
Then you have to learn now to fight. For real.

MAYA
Like punching people? No way.

JORDAN
We can't be saving you and fighting monsters at the same time!

DAISY
She's right, Maya. We need your help. Somehow.

111
MAYA
I'm probably the worst guardian of Earth in history.

DAISY
You'll figure it out soon. I know we can do it together!

MAYA
Together!

They look to Jordan.

JORDAN
Right, together...

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - LATER - LIVE ACTION

Maya arrives home. She tries to be quiet about it.

MOM (OS)
Hey, guys!

Maya cringes a little.

MAYA
It's just me, Mom!

Mom pokes her head out of the kitchen, wiping her hands on a towel.

MOM
Where's your brother?

MAYA
He just dropped me off and said he was going over to Wrinke's or Wiggley's or something.

MOM
Wrigley's?
MAYA
That's it.

Mom SIGHS.

MOM
He's supposed to mow the lawn today. I don't suppose you want to do it?

MAYA
The lawn mower's bigger than I am, Mom.

Mom LAUGHS. Maya fakes a laugh.

MOM
What's with you? Didn't you have fun with your new friends?

MAYA
Yeah, it was great.

MOM
How did you meet them again?

MAYA
It was at that - thing - after school - about - junior high. I told you, remember?

Maya is a terrible liar. Her mom obviously knows she's lying, but lets it pass.

MOM
It's good that you'll already have some friends at your new school.

MAYA
Yeah, I'm really excited about it.
She sounds super bored.

MOM
Why don't you come tell me all about it? I'm making cookies!

Maya follows her mom into the kitchen.

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - LIVE ACTION

Behind spotless glass doors gleam bright dishes on crisp white shelves.

Maya peeks at the bowl of dough as her mom checks the sheet in the oven.

MAYA
What kind are you making?

MOM
Low-fat whole-wheat flour oatmeal raisin with apple sauce instead of sugar!

MAYA
That sounds disgusting.

Mom pulls the sheet out of the oven.

MOM
Just try one once they're cool.

MAYA
Ugh.

Mom puts in the other sheet and turns to Maya.

MOM
So? Tell me about your friends.
MAYA
They're nice, but way more... talented than I am.

MOM
You have plenty of talent! I can think of at least seven things you do well.

MAYA
I guess so.

MOM
But?

MAYA
I don't know. It's just... Daisy's so - bright. And Jordan's - athletic. I'm - not going to fit in.

MOM
Don't worry about what you think you're supposed to do. Just do what you feel you should be.

Mom moves the cookies from the sheet to cooling racks.

MAYA
Really?

MOM
That's how you'll shine, sweetie. Try one.

Maya warily takes a cookie. She sniffs it. She bites off a tiny piece.

MOM
Well?
MAYA
Totally disgusting.

She hands the rest of the cookie back to Mom. Mom takes a bite.

MOM
It's not that bad!

MAYA
It doesn't taste like a cookie should.

MOM
Well...

MAYA
Guess I'll get a head start on homework.

MOM
You mean doodle?

MAYA
Yeah, probably.

MOM
Okay, have fun. Oh, hey, where did that cat come from?

Maya panics for a millisecond, then composes herself.

MAYA
What cat? There's no cat? Why would I have a cat?

MOM
The stuffed orange thing on your bed?

Maya LAUGHS nervously.
MAYA
Stuffed! Oh right. That thing! Ha ha ha...

MOM
Yeah. Where'd you get it?

MAYA
School. I mean, Elle. I mean, Elle gave it to me at school yesterday. Ha ha...

MOM
Okay. I just didn't remember seeing it before.

MAYA
Yeah, it's no big deal. Just a stuffed toy! I'm gonna go now.

MOM
'Kay. Draw pretty things!

Mom drops dough on the sheet as Maya leaves.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER - LIVE ACTION

Maya rushes into her room and closes the door. She spins to look at her bed. On it there is a stuffed animal that looks strangely like Taj.

MAYA
Taj?

She picks up the stuffed cat.

MAYA
Is that you?

Taj remains silent and motionless.
I like you better this way.

She smirks and heads for the closet. Taj starts growing in her hands. Slowly, he becomes bigger and bigger, his features becoming more life-like until he is a tabby again. Maya tries to keep a hold of him as he squirms.

Stop squirming! What if someone sees you?

Let me go!

Be quiet!

Let me go and I will!

Sweet-ums?

Everything's fine!

They stop struggling. Taj unsheathes his claws and glares at Maya. She glares back, then drops him unceremoniously. He pads back to the bed.

Maya sits at her desk and ignores him for a moment.

You know, that's pretty cool, what you can do.

I know.

He starts cleaning his face.
INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

All is quiet. Ms. Harwood surveys from her desk. The students are hunched over, scratching away, taking a test.

Maya's paper still has a lot of blank spots. She gnaws on her eraser.

Suddenly, the face of her bracelet blinks the ALERT, and beeps. She fumbles with it, stopping the beeping as Ms. Harwood glowers at her.


MS. HARWOOD
Yes?

MAYA
I need to go to the bathroom.

MS. HARWOOD
Not until you finish your test.

MAYA
But I really have to go! Right now!

MS. HARWOOD
Then turn your test in right now.

She glances at Maya's mostly-blank page, then goes back to her desk. Maya's eyes dart between the test and her flashing bracelet.

She scribbles something in all the blanks, then rushes to Ms. Harwood's desk and slams her paper down. She hurries toward the door.
MS. HARWOOD
Maya?

MAYA
What?

MS. HARWOOD
Aren't you going to ask first?

MAYA
May I go? Please?!

MS. HARWOOD
Yes. Here's the hall pass.

Maya rushes back, grabs the pass, and runs out.

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM STALL - DAY - LIVE ACTION
The door bangs open as Maya enters. She fumbles with the lock, then pushes a button on the bracelet.

BLUE FLASH

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM STALL - MOMENTS LATER - ANIMATED
Maya, transformed, pushes some more buttons, fumbling.

MAYA
Where's the dumb map?

Maya pushes buttons. The screen flashes SENDING ALERT.

MAYA
No, no, no!

She pushes some more buttons. The screen flashes ALERT CANCELED. Then it reads OPTIONS. Maya is momentarily distracted. She shakes her head to refocus.
She finds the MAP. A green dot appears on a map; she's located Jordan. Maya struggles to find the TRANSPORT option, but finally succeeds.

Her aura glows and the blue sparkles appear until they cover her completely. The sparkles rush out.

INT. JORDAN'S PRIVATE SCHOOL - DAY - ANIMATED

Viridian and Cerulean LAUGH to each other in a hallway. Mists swirl out of classrooms and into their mercury glass decanters.

A huge SNAKE is wrapped around Jordan. She struggles to get out, but it squeezes harder and unhinges its jaw.

Blue sparkles descend and coalesce into Maya. She GASPS when she sees Jordan. Maya runs up behind the snake and SLAPS it in the back of the head.

The snake is momentarily disoriented, then turns to Maya, keeping a tight grip on Jordan. It HISSES, its tongue flickering in Maya's face.

Maya SMACKS it on the nose, then runs toward the Sirens. The snake slithers after her. Its grip on Jordan loosens, but it still holds her in one coil, dragging her along.

Jordan frees an arm and tries to pull herself from the snake.

    JORDAN
    Took you long enough!

    MAYA
    I had a test!

Viridian and Cerulean see the snake coming toward them, and jump aside.
MAYA
Where's Daisy?

JORDAN
(quietly)
Not here yet...

Maya chases Cerulean.

MAYA
You're mad at me when she's not even here?

JORDAN
I'm sorry?

Maya trips, and the snake looms over her.

VIRIDIAN
I applaud your selection.

CERULEAN
Thank you.

Maya scrambles over and sees the snake unhinging its jaw. She clamps her eyes shut. Suddenly, she opens her eyes wide. She holds both hands out in front of her.

MAYA
SevenStarStrike!

Seven ninja-stars shoot out of her hands in succession, sticking in the snake's mouth like burrs. It throws its head back, more startled than in pain.

Viridian and Cerulean share a surprised look.

CERULEAN
Let's go!

VIRIDIAN
Right!
Jordan gets her other arm free.

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

Her legs still trapped, Jordan looses an arrow into the back of the snake's head. The snake's head drops. It's body sways and quivers. Jordan finally pulls herself free.

JORDAN
Come on!

Maya gets to her feet and runs toward Jordan.

JORDAN
Split up!

She and Maya run in opposite directions down the hall. Jordan glances over her shoulder and sees the snake turn toward Maya. Jordan grins.

DAISY (OS)
Bright Star Burst!

Yellow stars hit the monster in the side of the head. It SMASHES into the wall, leaving a dent. The snake is dazed. Maya skids to a stop, and turns back.

MAYA
Daisy!

DAISY
I'm SO sorry!

JORDAN
Attack!

Maya makes a great circle with one hand, from down to her toes to high overhead. She holds both hands out.
MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

The blue stars stick in the snake's face. It turns into a glowing silhouette, then disintegrates into glitter.

DAISY
You found your power!

JORDAN
(to Daisy)
What happened?

DAISY
It's so dumb. It doesn't even matter.

MAYA
We defeated the monster and that's what counts.

JORDAN
Daisy?

DAISY
I was in music class and I didn't hear the alert.

JORDAN
A test and music class. I can't believe this!

Jordan stalks off a few paces. Daisy looks quizzically at Maya.

MAYA
My teacher wouldn't let me leave until I turned in my test. I got here as soon as I could!

DAISY
I know.
MAYA
I turned it in half blank.
Probably flunked.

DAISY
We're saving the world, Maya.
We're gonna flunk a few tests.
Hopefully when this is all over,
we'll be able to get back on track. Back to what we love. I had to drop out of dance. Both our grades are suffering already.
She's on probation here.

MAYA
At this fancy-shmancy place?

DAISY
She could be kicked out.

Maya watches Jordan.

MAYA
Jordan?

She doesn't turn around.

JORDAN
What?

MAYA
I'm really sorry. It won't happen again.

JORDAN
It'd better not.

Maya glances at Daisy, then back at Jordan.

MAYA
Well, we're...gonna go, then.
JORDAN

Fine.

Maya and Daisy share one last look before pushing buttons on their bracelets. Their auras start to glow.

Jordan's angry face softens. As she looks over her shoulder, Daisy and Maya teleport out. Jordan is left alone.

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

A THIRD GRADER (8) is washing her hands.

Blue sparkles descend into a stall.

The girl glances over.

From inside the stall there is a blue FLASH of light.

The girl is weirded out.

Maya, back to her regular self, steps out of the stall, and sees Taj sitting on the window sill. He startles her.

MAYA

What're you--

She sees the girl staring at her. Maya LAUGHS nervously. She starts washing her hands. The girl keeps watching Maya as she dries her own hands.

THIRD GRADER

You didn't flush.

MAYA

Huh?

THIRD GRADER

I didn't hear you flush.
MAYA
Oh, I was just changing my clothes.

THIRD GRADER
Then why wash your hands? And where are your other clothes?

MAYA
It's none of your business what I do in the bathroom!

The girl stares wide-eyed at Maya, then rushes out.

Maya SIGHS. She dries her hands. Taj SMIRKS at her.

MAYA
So what are you doing here?

TAJ
Just checking in on you.

MAYA
I don't need a baby-sitter.

TAJ
I'm glad you discovered your power, finally.

MAYA
No thanks to you.

TAJ
I only awaken the Stars, not their powers.

MAYA
Either way, you're a terrible alarm clock.
TAJ
Perhaps. But alarms clocks don't keep track of hall passes.

He points to the pass on the window sill next to him.

MAYA
I totally forgot! Thanks.

TAJ
Good work today.

He winks at her, then leaps down from the sill.

Maya grabs the hall pass.

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER - LIVE ACTION

Hector is in the kitchen making his second lunch. There is a tall sandwich on a plate, and he's pulling a bag of chips from the cupboard. Maya lingers by the doorway.

MAYA
Hector?

HECTOR
What is it, squirt? I'm busy.

He pours a mountain of chips onto the plate.

MAYA
I just...had a question...about all these new responsibilities.

HECTOR
Can't you talk to Mom?

MAYA
If Mom was home, she'd just give me a lecture about trying my hardest.
HECTOR
Sounds like good advice.

He puts the bag away and grabs his plate, and leaves. Maya follows.

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS - LIVE ACTION

Hector heads upstairs for his room and Maya follows.

MAYA
Hector, don't you ever feel... overwhemed by growing up?

Hector pauses.

HECTOR
Well, yeah, I guess sometimes. But that's life, you know?

He continues up the stairs.

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LIVE ACTION

Hector walks down the hallway. He keeps crunching chips. Maya is still following him.

MAYA
I mean, I'm responsible for so much now.

Hector pauses outside his room, looks at Maya skeptically.

HECTOR
You're twelve. What kind of huge responsibilities do you have? Mom doesn't even make you clean the bathroom.

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MAYA
I have homework, and friends, and I have to keep my room clean! I cook dinner once a week for your...black hole of a stomach!

Hector laughs a little.

HECTOR
Okay, okay.

MAYA
And picking out my own classes is a big deal! You've been doing it so long, you've forgotten what it's like!

HECTOR
Is that what this is about?

Maya fidgets with her bracelet.

MAYA
Yeah.

HECTOR
Look, there are a lot more responsibilities as you grow up, sure. But there're a lot more freedoms and privileges too. Right?

Maya looks confused.

HECTOR
I mean, I gotta chauffeur your skinny butt everywhere, but at least I can drive, right?

MAYA
Right...
HECTOR
You have to cook dinner, but you get to eat what you want, right?

MAYA
Right.

HECTOR
So, yeah, being in charge of stuff is scary, but you get to do it on your terms.

MAYA
Okay.

HECTOR
We cool?

MAYA
Yeah, thanks.

Hector goes into his room, munching a chip.

HECTOR
No problem!

Maya continues down the hallway to her own room.

INT. SCHOOL LUNCHROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

It's loud in the lunchroom. Kids are everywhere.

Elle, lunchbox in hand, waits for Maya to get her school lunch. Elle surveys the crowd; she spots someone and waves.

Maya joins Elle, tray in hand. They head for their seats. Maya follows Elle. Then, she sees they are moving toward Simon.

MAYA
No-no-no.
Maya slows and looks around for another place.

ELLE
Come on, Maya!

She smiles politely at Simon and grabs Maya's arm.

MAYA
Elle, no, please!

Maya tries to pull away, but Elle hangs on, and Maya has to go with her to avoid upsetting her lunch tray.

Elle pushes Maya ahead of her. When Maya just stands there, blushing furiously, Elle hurries around the table.

ELLE
May we sit here?

SIMON
It's a free country.

Maya plops down across from Simon. Elle sits next to him.

ELLE
I'm so glad we were able to find two together. I'm Elle, by the way.

SIMON
Simon.

They look at Maya, but she is absorbed in her lunch.

ELLE
This is my friend Maya.

MAYA
Oh, right, Maya. Sorry.
SIMON
I'm--

MAYA
Simon. I know. We have math together.

SIMON
We do?

MAYA
I sit in the back...

SIMON
Oh.

An awkward pause. Maya pokes her steamed vegetables. Elle places each item of her lunch on the table.

ELLE
So, what's your favorite subject?

SIMON
Science.

ELLE
What a coincidence! Maya's favorite subject is art.

Maya glances at Simon, blushes, and starts twirling her fork in her pasta.

ELLE
Mine's history, so I guess that leaves me out.

Simon glances at Elle, but she doesn't look at him. Simon turns back to Maya.

SIMON
What're they serving today? Spaghetti?
MAYA
It's linguine, but they call it
that because no one - spaghetti, I
mean, they call it spaghetti,
because if they called it linguine
no one...would...eat it. What?

Simon and Elle stare at her. He's trying not to laugh; Elle looks petrified. His LAUGH bursts out. Elle fake-
laughs nervously.

ELLE
Oh, Maya, you're a riot! Ha ha...

A small smile pulls at the corner of Maya's mouth, but she
doesn't get the joke.

SIMON
It's always peanut butter and
ejelly for me!

Simon takes a huge bite of his sandwich. Maya twirls her
fork absently as she smiles at Simon. When she lifts her
fork, there's a giant ball of linguine stuck on the end.

She lifts it to her mouth, but only realizes it's too large
when she's already closed her lips around part of it. She
tries to bite off a reasonable amount and ends up pulling
the whole ball off the fork, leaving linguine dangling down
her chin.

Her hand flies to her mouth and she manages as best she can.

As the boy next to her gets off the bench, he knocks over
her milk, spilling it all over her. Maya tries to exclaim,
but her mouth is full of linguine.

BOY
Oh, sorry, didn't see you.

He leaves without offering any help.
Maya can't look at the others.

MAYA
'Scuse me.

She hurries away.

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Maya is alone in the bathroom, trying to dry her clothes with the hand towel, the kind that comes in a big roll and loops down. It doesn't loop low enough for her to reach where she needs.

She goes into a stall and pulls out some toilet paper. She dabs at the spill, but the paper leaves little white pieces all over. She throws the paper into the toilet and stands defeated.

Then she sees her bracelet. She fiddles with it. Making sure she's alone, she pushes the button to transform. There's a blue FLASH.

ANIMATED.

Maya, now in her Star outfit, looks down at herself. Her clothes are all dry.

She comes out of the stall and admires herself in the mirror.

She hears a VOICE outside in the hallway, and the door opens a crack.

MAYA
SevenStarStrike!!

Without thinking, she throws her stars at the door as a FIFTH-GRADER (9) comes in. Most of the stars stick in the door, but one hits the girl in the arm.
FIFTH-GRADER

Ow!

She rubs the spot. A tiny drop of blood appears, like a pin-prick.

Maya is frozen, but the girl doesn't see her.

The girl looks around, then leaves.

Maya stares at the door, looks at her hands, grins wickedly and turns toward the towel dispenser.

MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

She batters the dispenser, surveys its dents, and GIGGLES.

MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

TAJ (OS)
What are you doing?

Maya spins wildly, throwing stars all over the bathroom, narrowly missing Taj, who sits in the window. Stars fly outside and stick in a tree.

Maya hides her hands behind her back and fidgets sheepishly.

MAYA
My clothes were wet and then someone came in and startled me and--

TAJ
You're supposed to be saving the world, not ruining it!

MAYA
I was just having a little fun...
TAJ
Do you always break things when you're having fun?

MAYA
No...

TAJ
I thought not!

Taj leaps down from the sill, leaving her alone.

She sticks her tongue out after him, then pushes the button.

Another blue FLASH.

LIVE ACTION.

Maya shivers in her wet clothes and frowns at her reflection.

MAYA
Now I'm going to smell like sour milk all afternoon...

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

The room is filled with a low hum of conversation as the students work on their puppets. They are painting paper mache heads and throwing together little outfits.

Maya's princess doesn't have a face yet, only a flesh-colored head. A foil-covered cardboard crown sits on her desk. Her princess' dress, however, is an intricately detailed ballgown.

Maya concentrates on adding pick-ups to the overskirt when her bracelet BLINKS the alert. It beeps only once before Maya silences it.
She heads toward the door.

    MS. HARWOOD
    Maya?

Maya ignores her.

    MS. HARWOOD
    Where are you going? Sit down!

Maya leaves the room.

    MS. HARWOOD
    Frances, go after her.

FRANCES, a smudgy stick of a girl, leaps up.

    FRANCES
    Right away, Ms. Harwood! I'll drag her back!

    MS. HARWOOD
    Just...convince her. Here's the hall pass.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Maya speed walks down the empty hallway. Frances jogs after her.

    FRANCES
    Hey, you!

Maya rolls her eyes, walks faster.

    FRANCES
    Hey! Ms. Harwood didn't say you could leave.

Frances is too close now to be ignored.
MAYA
So?

FRANCES
So you have to come back to class!

She grabs Maya's arm. Maya tries to pull free, but the stick-girl is stronger than she looks.

MAYA
Get off me!

FRANCES
Ms. Harwood sent me to get you!

Maya spies the hall pass in Frances' other hand and grabs it.

FRANCES
Hey!

They struggle over the pass. Finally, Maya pulls Frances close, and STOMPS on her foot. Frances lets go of the pass, grabs her foot, and starts to CRY. Maya races for the bathroom.

MAYA
Sorry!!

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY - ANIMATED

A GIANT HIPPO paws at the ground; it SNORTS. Daisy glares back.

Off to the side, Cerulean approaches Viridian. As always, mists swirl out of the shop and into their decanters.

CERULEAN
A hippo? Really?
VIRIDIAN
You picked last time! Besides, hippos are really scary!

The hippo opens its mouth and BUBBLES blast out.

CERULEAN
Yeah, real scary...

Daisy leaps aside from the bubble spray. The bubbles POP against the ground like small explosives. Cerulean is pleasantly surprised.

CERULEAN
Oh.

Two sets of SPARKLES descend, coalescing into Jordan and Maya, who flank Daisy. Jordan quickly assesses the situation.

JORDAN
A hippo?

VIRIDIAN
Hippos are scary!

The hippo is momentarily confused by Jordan and Maya's sudden presence. It opens its giant maw and BELLOWS.

DAISY
Its bubbles are explosive.

The hippo blows bubbles, swinging its head around, directing the bubbles at all three girls. The girls scatter. The bubbles BURST all over the trunk of a car, denting it.

Maya and Daisy hide behind one car, while Jordan hides behind another. Viridian and Cerulean LAUGH.

The hippo takes one lumbering step toward Daisy and Maya when the door to the flower shop opens.
Hector walks out, carrying a small box. He grumbles to himself. Mists swirl away from him. Maya GASPS.

The hippo twists its head around to look at Hector as he heads to his car.

MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

The stars stick in the hippo's thick hide. It twitches and the stars fall off. It takes a deep breath in.

Maya runs to the hippo and YANKS on its tail as hard as she can. The hippo throws back its head, its bubbles shooting harmlessly into the sky. Maya climbs onto its back and grabs its ears.

Hector gets into his car and drives away, leaving Jordan without cover.

JORDAN
Are you crazy?? Get off!

DAISY
She's safer behind the head than in front of it.

The hippo BELLOWS again, swinging its head wildly to shake off Maya. Daisy and Jordan keep their distance.

Topaz joins Viridian and Cerulean.

TOPAZ
A hippo?

CERULEAN
That's what I said. But watch.

The hippo sprays bubbles everywhere. They explode against Daisy's feet as she runs, and she falls.
TOPAZ
Not bad.

Jordan rushes to Daisy.

DAISY
I'm okay.

JORDAN
I have a plan.

The hippo takes another deep breath in. It sprays bubbles at Daisy and Jordan.

DAISY
Bright Star Burst!

The stars and bubbles meet, and counter each other.

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

Jordan's arrow flies right into the hippo's open mouth. The bubbles stop instantly. The hippo SQUEALS. It turns into a glowing silhouette and disintegrates into glitter. Maya falls to the ground.

Meanwhile, the others have turned on the Sirens.

DAISY
Bright Star Burst!

Viridian and Cerulean leap to opposite sides. Topaz CLINKS her bracelets together.

Topaz pulls her arms apart, and the stars hit a force field visible only at the moment of impact. Topaz grins smugly.

TOPAZ
Let's go, girls!
VIRIDIAN & CERULEAN

Right!

The Sirens run off.

Jordan lowers her arrow. As her hands get closer and closer together, the arrow gets smaller and smaller until it disappears.

The Man with the Old Fedora comes out of the flower shop with a large bouquet and goes to his car. He sees the dents all over the trunk.

MAN
Hit and run!

Grumbling, he gets into his car and drives away.

Jordan rolls her eyes.

DAISY
Who was that boy? Earlier?

MAYA
My brother.

The girls share worried looks.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - LIVE ACTION

The end of the school day. Kids fill the hall.

Maya comes out of her classroom last, holding a slip of paper. She reads it. It's a note from her teacher to her mom about her bad behavior earlier in the day.

Maya opens her backpack to shove the note inside, and spies Taj as a stuffed animal at the bottom of the bag. She pulls him out, and shoves in the note.
MAYA
You know, it's really annoying that you're following me everywhere!

She scoffs, accidentally blowing on Taj's ear; it twitches involuntarily.

MAYA
Where is Elle? Oh no...

She sees Simon farther down the hallway, leaning against the wall. She looks down at the dried milk on her clothes. She hugs the opposite wall and moves slowly.

Elle comes out of a classroom up ahead.

MAYA
(whispering)

Elle!

Elle neither sees nor hears her, as she has turned toward Simon instead.

MAYA
Elle?

Simon pushes off the wall as Elle joins him. They smile at each other. He takes her hand.

Maya stands frozen, open-mouthed. She gasps for air, having been holding her breath in shock. She turns away and walks quickly back down the hallway toward the back door, gripping Taj tightly.

TAJ
(quietly)

Ow.

MAYA
Oh, sorry.
Maya pushes through the door.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - CONTINUOUS - LIVE ACTION

Maya is close to tears.

MAYA
She knows I like him! How could she do this to me?

She shakes Taj in the air.

MAYA
Well? Say something!

She throws him at the ground. He lands as a cat.

TAJ
You should kill a rat for him.

Maya makes a disgusted face.

MAYA
If I only hadn't missed math today--!

TAJ
So you could sit behind him smelling like sour milk?

He shakes his head.

TAJ
Come on.

Maya readjusts her backpack. She glances back at the school.

MAYA
Fine.
She and Taj walk across the yard.

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Outside Hector's bedroom door, which has been pulled almost closed. He cannot be seen, but muffled music can be heard.

Maya trudges up the stairs. She passes Hector's door, then comes back.

   MAYA
   Hector?

She knocks on the doorframe.

   MAYA
   (louder)
   Hector?

   HECTOR (OS)
   What?

Maya peers farther into his room. He jumps off the bed, dropping a magazine on the floor and kicking it under the bed. He pulls the large headphones down around his neck as he rushes to the door. He grabs the door with one hand, and puts his other on the frame, his body blocking Maya's view.

   HECTOR
   I didn't hear you come in, squirt.

   MAYA
   That's because you're wearing earmuffs.

   HECTOR
   What d'ya want?

   MAYA
   I have a question about boys.
HECTOR
Talk to Mom!

MAYA
She's not home. Besides, I want the boy's view.

HECTOR
Look, Maya, you can't keep coming to me with all your stupid little problems! I'm doing important things!

MAYA
Sorry, it didn't look like--

HECTOR
I'm going off to college in the fall so you'd better start figuring out stuff on your own!

Hector starts to close the door.

MAYA
Why were you buying flowers today?

He opens the door and glares at her.

MAYA
I saw the...what's-it-called in the fridge.

HECTOR
Not that it's any of your business, but I bought the corsage for my date to the dance tonight. That's right! You're not the only girl in my life, twerp! Now get lost.

He slams the door in her face.
MAYA
(sarcastically)
Congratulations! I hope you have a wonderful time!

She walks away.

MAYA
I feel sorry for your date.

Maya goes into her own room and slams her door behind her.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - LIVE ACTION

Maya, in her purple pajamas, hunches over her desk.

MAYA
Taj, what's one-half times two-thirds?

Taj is asleep at the foot of her bed. She pokes him with her pencil.

MAYA
Taj! You promised to stay up and help me finish my homework!

Taj YAWNS.

TAJ
When?

MAYA
When you made me practice with my power this afternoon! You promised!

TAJ
Fine. What are we working on?
MAYA
Math.

Taj SCOFFS.

TAJ
Math? Can you count?

MAYA
Yes.

TAJ
Do you have a calculator?

MAYA
We aren't allowed to use one.

TAJ
But do you have one?

MAYA
Yes.

TAJ
Then forget your homework. You're set for life.

Taj puts his head back down and closes his eyes.

MAYA
Taj!

He ignores her.

She puts her face in her hand and tries to figure it out.

MAYA
When multiplying fractions...

She YAWNS.
MAYA
You first…multiply the top...

She lays her head on her arm.

MAYA
You multiply the top and
then…the bottom...

Her eyelids are so heavy. They're half closed, then closed
- then they snap open.

MAYA
So one times two is…two...

Maya falls asleep.

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - SAME TIME - LIVE ACTION

Maya's mom sees the line of light underneath Maya's door.

MOM
Maya?

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME - LIVE ACTION

MOM (OS)
Are you still awake?

Taj wakes.

TAJ
Maya! Wake up.

He prods her with his paw.

TAJ
Hey! Come on!

There's a knock at the door.
MOM (OS)

Maya?

Taj dramatically unsheathes his claws.

TAJ

Don't make me do it, Maya!

The doorknob starts to turn.

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - SAME TIME - LIVE ACTION

Maya's mom opens the door and looks into Maya's bedroom. She sees Maya asleep on top of her books. Taj is nowhere to be seen.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - LIVE ACTION

Maya's mom brushes Maya's hair out of her face.

MOM

Time for bed, big girl.

Mom guides a half-asleep Maya away from her desk and into bed. As Maya flops into bed, Taj, in stuffed form, is squished underneath her.

MOM

Good night.

MAYA

(mumbling)

Night, Mom.

Mom turns out the light and starts to go.

MAYA

Mom?
Mom turns back.

MAYA
What do you do when you like someone, like a lot, but they like someone else, and you like that someone else too, in a different way?

MOM
Once more?

MAYA
There's this boy...

MOM
Oh?

Mom sits on the bed.

MAYA
But he likes...a friend.

MOM
That's tough. I'm afraid you'll just have to choose, sweetie.

MAYA
What would you do?

MOM
You have to decide for yourself. But good friends are hard to find.

Mom rises, and kisses Maya on the forehead.

MOM
Sleep on it.

MAYA
Night.
Mom closes the door behind her.

Maya rolls over, and Taj, stuffed, pants for air.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Maya is slumped over a shopping cart. Her mom is up ahead; in her left hand, which is perched on her hip, she holds the list; in her right, she holds a pen, the end of which is between her lips.

MOM
What kind of salad dressing should we get? Catalina or Thousand Island?

MAYA
Those are both disgusting. Why can't we get Bleu Cheese?

MOM
Because Bleu Cheese is disgusting. Ranch?

MAYA
Boring.

MOM
Caesar?

MAYA
Gross, Mom! That has sardines in it!

MOM
Just pick something, Maya! But not Bleu Cheese!

MAYA
How about this?
She holds out a bottle of Balsamic Vinaigrette.

MOM
How about Raspberry?

MAYA
Fine.

As Maya replaces the Balsamic, she suddenly freezes.

Everything slows down, and all sounds become muted as she looks all around her. Her gaze lands on her bracelet. It's simply showing the time, digitally. When it clicks to the next minute, the sounds rush in on Maya, and time returns to normal.

MAYA
Mom!

MOM
What?

MAYA
We - uh - forgot the chili! I'll go get it!

MOM
We don't need--

But Maya is already running down the aisle.

MOM
--chili...

Maya turns the corner of the aisle, fiddling with her bracelet as she runs.

MAYA
Where's the menu on this stupid thing?
Somehow, she pushes the right combination so that the screen reads: Send ALERT? Press L and R to continue.

Maya pushes both buttons. Her screen flashes ALERT once.

She looks up just as a middle-aged woman pushes her cart out of a side aisle. Maya almost runs into her.

MAYA

Sorry!

Maya rushes toward the main entrance. Then she sees the RESTROOMS sign. She glances at the main doors, back at the sign, back at the doors. She runs outside.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Maya bursts out of the store. She looks all around, but the only thing she sees is an OLD MAN pushing his cart into the return stall.

She runs to the end of the building and looks around the corner. Nothing.

She runs to the other end. Only a weird lady with flaming orange hair taking out the trash.

She hears from the parking lot:

OLD MAN (OS)
Watch where you're going!
Hooligan.

MAYA
I know they're here!

The weird lady is gone. Maya runs behind the dumpster.

BLUE FLASH

ANIMATION
Maya runs back to the front of the store.

Topaz stands by the entrance; Viridian and Cerulean are at opposite ends of the parking lot. Colored mists swirl into their mercury glass decanters.

**VIRIDIAN**

Topaz!

Topaz spots Maya.

**TOPAZ**

Say hello to my Frog Prince!

She clangs her bracelets together, and as she pulls them apart a little force-field forms. Out of it hops a little FROG wearing a crown.

Maya blinks at it in disbelief.

It hops toward her. With each hop, it grows bigger and bigger until it is as big as a Saint Bernard, and twice as slimy.

Topaz LAUGHS as the Frog lashes its tongue at Maya. Maya dodges, running into the parking lot. The Frog’s tongue slimes cars and sometimes cracks windows, seeking Maya as she weaves between cars.

She runs out into the aisle and faces the Frog.

**MAYA**

Seven--

The Frog’s tongue grazes her, leaving her sprawled on the ground and covered in slime.

**MAYA**

Ugh!

The Sirens LAUGH.
Maya runs behind another car as the Frog jumps toward her. She notices that the car has dents all over its trunk.

The Frog tongue lands just inches from her face, CRACKING the back windshield.

Maya glances at her bracelet as she runs again.

MAYA
Where are you guys?

Maya peeks out over the hood of another car. She's quite close to Viridian. And the Frog is quite close to Maya.

Maya runs out.

MAYA
Over here, frog legs!

The Frog turns and lashes its tongue at her. She leaps out of the way - revealing Viridian right behind her! The tongue catches her right in her middle, bowling her over. She fumbles with the mercury glass.

Maya glances up from where she is sprawled on the asphalt. She glimpses GREEN SPARKLES coalescing behind another car.

Viridian drops the mercury glass. It SHATTERS, and the colored mists disperse into the air.

Cerulean LAUGHS at Viridian.

JORDAN (OS)
Shooting Star!

Jordan's arrow SHATTERS Cerulean's decanter as well. She still holds the top, and mists still swirl in, only to disperse once passing through.

Maya pushes herself up and runs behind a car.
MAYA
Watch out for the tongue!

Next to Jordan, YELLOW SPARKLES coalesce into Daisy.

The Frog has its attention on Maya, and takes a hop or two toward her.

DAISY
Together!

She and Jordan take their stances as the Frog prepares to lash at Maya.

DAISY
Maya, now!

Daisy and Jordan release their attacks:

DAISY
Bright Star Burst!

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

The Frog's tongue shoots out toward Maya.

Maya, a split second later than Daisy and Jordan, releases her spray of stars:

MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

Maya's blue stars and the bulbous end of the Frog's tongue meet in the middle. Maya's stars stick in it like burrs. The tongue flops lifelessly to the ground.

The Frog pulls in its tongue and lets out a horrendous CROAK. It turns into a glowing silhouette and disintegrates into glitter.

The three girls turn on the three Sirens.
Viridian is still lying on the ground, dazed. Cerulean is likewise dumbfounded by her broken decanter.

Daisy faces off with Topaz.

**TOPAZ**

Help me, you fools!

Cerulean snaps out of it and throws what remains of the decanter to the ground. Viridian scrambles to her feet.

They clang their bracelets together, and circles of blue and green light shoot out of them.

Maya and Jordan try to leap aside, but are clipped as the circles spray out. However, Daisy, her back to Viridian and Cerulean, takes the brunt of the attack and falls on her face.

**TOPAZ**

Well done! Let's get out of here.

She puts the stopper in the decanter and the Sirens run off.

As Maya and Jordan rush to help Daisy up, the Man with the Old Fedora comes out of the grocery store. He doesn't see the girls. He does see his cracked rear windshield, but doesn't seem to notice that it's covered with slime.

**MAN**

What the-?!

He GRUMMLES to himself as he puts his groceries in the trunk.

The girls look at each other. Maya suddenly looks startled.

**MAYA**

Gotta run!

She starts running for the store.
JORDAN

Hey!

Maya looks back. Jordan plucks at her dress, reminding Maya to change. Maya looks down at her own dress.

MAYA

Oh! Right!

She runs off to the side of the building, where the dumpsters are.

Daisy and Jordan push buttons on their bracelets, and their auras start to glow.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Maya juggles four cans of chili as she runs up to her mom's cart in the bread section.

MOM

Where have you been?

MAYA

I thought it was on aisle three, and then five, but it was really four and by the time I got there there was a traffic jam of carts in front of the chili and when they moved I suddenly forgot what kind of chili Hector likes so I just grabbed a bunch.

Maya dumps the cans into the cart.

MAYA

Sorry.

Her mom raises an eyebrow at her.
MOM
I don't like it when you run off like that, Maya. I don't like not knowing where you are.

MAYA
I'm really sorry, Mom. But I'm okay. So it's okay. Right?

MOM
Don't do it again.

MAYA
I won't.

MOM
Well, I think we have everything then. Let's go.

Maya pushes the cart, following her mom into a checkout line.

INT. DARK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - INDETERMINATE TIME - ANIMATED

Viridian, Cerulean and Topaz hesitate by the entrance. Only Topaz carries a decanter.

TOPAZ
Don't say anything! I mean it!

Viridian and Cerulean nod. They follow Topaz into the room.

Lucinda lounges in her great throne.

The Sirens bow before her.

TOPAZ
We bring you more prana!

Lucinda gives them the bare minimum of her attention.
LUCINDA
Good work, girls...

She glances at them, notices only Topaz is holding up a decanter. She lunges forward, sitting on the edge of her seat, her long, thin fingers scratching at the arm of the throne.

LUCINDA
Only one?!

TOPAZ
One that is completely overflowing with prana, Lady!

Lucinda speaks through her teeth.

LUCINDA
I sent three of you out with three containers — and you come back with ONE?! What happened??

The Sirens are silent. Suddenly, Viridian wails:

VIRIDIAN
I got hit by the Frog!

TOPAZ
I told you to keep quiet!

Lucinda is genuinely confused.

LUCINDA
What?

CERULEAN
Our body guard attacked her and she dropped the glass.

Viridian cowers under Lucinda's glare. Cerulean looks smug, until Lucinda glares at her.
LUCINDA
And what about you?

CERULEAN
M-me? I, uh, I was attacked! In horrible brawl!

VIRIDIAN
The Midnight Star shot the glass right out of her hand while she was laughing at me.

Viridian and Cerulean glare at each other. Lucinda rolls her eyes. Topaz bows lower and holds her glass higher. Lucinda stands as her anger rises.

LUCINDA
You are being beaten by little girls!

She comes forcefully down the stairs. Viridian and Cerulean cling to each other. Topaz stares at the ground.

LUCINDA
We are this close to having enough prana!

She snatches the glass from Topaz' hands. Topaz rises and backs into Viridian and Cerulean, who wrap their arms around her even as they cower behind her.

LUCINDA
You have one more chance, girls. One more! Then you're finished.

Lucinda glares at them, then turns around.

VIRIDIAN
What do you mean--

Cerulean clamps a hand over her mouth as Lucinda spins back around. She grin at Lucinda.
TOPAZ
Of course, my lady.

LUCINDA
Good.

Lucinda disappears behind the throne.

The Sirens all breathe a SIGH of relief. Then Viridian and Cerulean turn on each other again.

VIRIDIAN
This is all your fault--!

CERULEAN
If you hadn't--!

TOPAZ
Quiet!

Viridian and Cerulean are silent. They blink at Topaz.

TOPAZ
It's time to get serious.

Viridian and Cerulean put on their serious faces and nod.

INT. MALL - GIRLS' JEWELRY STORE - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Maya, Daisy and Jordan huddle conspiratorially in the back of the store, pretending to look at colorful bangles.

JORDAN
Did you see her face?

MAYA
You were awesome!

JORDAN
Thanks.
DAISY
Okay, so we're getting better at fighting their monsters, but we still don't know what they're doing with all the prana!

JORDAN
Maybe they're just taking it so people will be mean.

DAISY
Really?

MAYA
They have to be doing something with it.

DAISY
Yeah, but what? I mean--

Suddenly, they all freeze. After a moment, they blink and look at each other knowingly. They look around. The store is pretty crowded.

JORDAN
This way!

She grabs Daisy and Daisy grabs Maya as Jordan pushes past a cheap red velvet curtain. On the doorjamb is a sign: EMPLOYEES ONLY.

TRANSFORMATION SEQUENCES - LIVE ACTION

Black liminal space.

A HEPTAGRAM glows on Maya's forehead.

Transition to ANIMATION as she becomes a glowing silhouette. LIVE ACTION as an OCTOGRAM glows on Jordan's forehead.
Transition to ANIMATION as she becomes a glowing silhouette, in rotation. Green stars swirl around her.

LIVE ACTION as an ENNEAGRAM glows on Daisy's forehead.

Transition to ANIMATION as she becomes a glowing silhouette, in rotation. Yellow stars swirl around her. Her silhouette changes, until it's obvious she's wearing her Guardian Star outfit. The stars fade.

Daisy, in the middle, Jordan and Maya strike poses as the Guardian Stars.

INT. MALL - GIRLS' JEWELRY STORE - DAY - ANIMATED

Daisy, Jordan and Maya rush through the store, deftly avoiding people and displays.

INT. MALL - THROUGH-WAY - DAY - ANIMATED

Colored mists swirl past the store fronts.

DAISY
This way!

The girls run, following the mists.

INT. MALL - COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS - ANIMATED

The girls run into the courtyard. Mists are swirling all around them. Suddenly, they hear a sinister LAUGH. They face that direction but see nothing through the mists. As the laugh continues, another LAUGH joins it, from another direction, then a third LAUGH, until the girls are surrounded by mists and laughter.

The laughter grows louder as the Sirens appear out of the mists.
JORDAN
Where're your little friends?

TOPAZ
It's just you and us today, girls.

The mists swirl away as the Sirens come closer, leaving a clear circle surrounding them.

The Sirens and the Guardian Stars FACE OFF.

A moment of tense silence.

Topaz slowly raises her wrists. She CLANGS her bracelets together, and the other Sirens do too, filling the cavernous space with clanging echoes.

Yellow, green and blue circles shoot toward the Stars. They dodge. The circles hit each other and dissipate. As the Sirens move, the mists disappear.

The Sirens CLANG their bracelets together again. Circles fly toward the Stars.

Daisy dodges once more, sneaking closer to Topaz. Maya is hit and falls to the ground.

Cerulean looms over Maya. Cerulean relishes in the moment before she clangs her bracelets together again. Maya takes advantage of her hesitation and KICKS her in the shin.

Maya scrambles to her feet.

The Sirens CLANG their bracelets again.

Jordan runs in zig-zags, deftly avoiding the green circles. She TACKLES Viridian and they both fall to the ground. Viridian tries to slap at Jordan, while keeping her eyes closed and her face turned away. Jordan grabs her wrists and slams the bracelets into the ground.
Daisy and Maya get back to back and defend.

DAISY
Bright Star Burst!

MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

Their stars meet the circles head-on, and all attacks disappear.

Daisy and Maya move toward Topaz and Cerulean, and the Sirens back away. The mists continue to dissipate, until they become a swirling stream again.

Jordan looks up, following the path of the mists. She spies the mercury glass decanter on top of the fountain. She lets go of Viridian. It takes a moment for Viridian to open her eyes. Jordan has already started the motions of her attack.

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

VIRIDIAN
No!

Viridian pushes Jordan, and her arrow flies off course. It grazes the decanter, which starts to wobble.

All the fighting stops as the Sirens and the Stars stare at the teetering decanter.

POV: Inside the decanter.

The frozen scene below, seen through mists, wavering back and forth. Then FALLING.

BLACK.
INT. DARK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - SAME TIME - ANIMATED

Lucinda takes off a pair of oversized, cat-eye SUNGLASSES.

LUCINDA
That's IT!

She storms down the stairs and out the main entrance of the throne room, her heels clacking angrily against the floor.

INT. MALL - COURTYARD - DAY - ANIMATED

The Sirens run for the broken decanter. The mists all dissipate.

LUCINDA (OS)
Hello, girls.

She steps out from behind the fountain.

SIRENS
Lady Lucinda!

They fall to their knees.

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

Lucinda eyes the Sirens. Without even looking in Jordan's direction, she waves her hand and a purple disk glows, blocking the arrow.

LUCINDA
I'm disappointed in you.

DAISY
Bright Star Burst!

Again, without even seeming to see Daisy, Lucinda blocks her stars.
LUCINDA
You've been beaten. By little girls! You! Their powers are nothing compared to yours!

MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

Lucinda blocks again.

LUCINDA
I gave you everything you needed and you were nothing but a disappointment. Hand them over.

VIRIDIAN
Lucinda, please!

LUCINDA
If that's how you want it.

She points her finger at them. They cry out in pain. Their bracelets grow red-hot, then CRACK and fall off, shattering when they hit the floor.

LUCINDA
Good-bye, girls.

Lucinda stalks off.

Viridian starts crying.

CERULEAN
Shut up!

The Stars look at each other. They look back at the pathetic former Sirens. They turn to leave.

TOPAZ
Wait!
She raises her head. Viridian, sobbing quietly, clings to Cerulean, who is obviously disgusted with her.

    TOPAZ
    She just took all our powers.

Topaz rises as the Stars turn back.

    CERULEAN
    After all we did for her!
    TOPAZ
    I know.
    VIRIDIAN
    She never appreciated us!
    TOPAZ
    We'll make her pay.
    VIRIDIAN
    How?
    CERULEAN
    We're powerless!
    TOPAZ
    Not totally. We'll tell them how to get her.

Maya looks at Daisy and Jordan, then points to herself.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - LIVE ACTION

A bell RINGS, signaling the end of school. Elle mopes outside Maya's classroom door. Maya hurries out.

    ELLE
    Maya!

Maya turns back and sees her. Elle catches up.
ELLE
I haven't seen you much lately.

MAYA
Yeah, I've been busy. Lots of homework. And stuff.

ELLE
Tomorrow, do you want to see a movie with me? And Simon.

MAYA
You and Simon?

ELLE
My mom won't let us go by ourselves.

MAYA
Um, yeah, that'd be...cool...I guess. Pencil me in.

ELLE
Pencil you in?

MAYA
That means I'm not sure if I can go.

ELLE
I know what it means.

MAYA
I have to see what happens with...my...book report...

ELLE
You're book report?

MAYA
Yes...
Elle stops; Maya walks forward a step, and Elle spins her around.

ELLE
Look, Maya, if you don't want to go, just say so! I know you're jealous of me and Simon.

MAYA
What? No!

ELLE
But that's no reason to be a bad friend! I don't even know if we are friends anymore!

MAYA
Of course we are, Elle! I've just been...busy...

ELLE
Too busy for your best friend? You know what, Simon was right to like me more than you.

Elle storms off. Maya hangs her head.

INT. MAYA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Hector is at his desk, with his headphones on. He doesn't hear the front door slam, or the stomping up the stairs.

Maya stands in his doorway.

MAYA
Hector?

He doesn't hear her.
MAYA
Hector!!

He spins around.

HECTOR
What? Geez, Maya, you startled me.

MAYA
What do you do when a friend thinks you don't want to be their friend any more, but you do?

HECTOR
I'm kinda busy here. Talk to Mom.

MAYA
Mom isn't home!

HECTOR
Look, Maya, I've never been a twelve-year-old girl--

MAYA
This is important!

He pulls off the headphones.

HECTOR
I don't know what Elle is thinking.

MAYA
How did you know it was Elle?

Hector raises an eyebrow.

HECTOR
So you really should wait to talk to Mom on this one.

MAYA
Fine.
HECTOR
Okay.

He reaches for his headphones.

MAYA
What about another one?

He looks at her.

MAYA
What about the fear that even though all your grown-up responsibilities come with privileges, you still have to give up everything you really love to take care of your responsibilities?

HECTOR
Come on, I don't have time--

MAYA
Hector, please.

HECTOR
Look, you do have to give up some stuff, yeah. But the important things, you find a way. You find a grown-up outlet, you know?

MAYA
No...

HECTOR
When I was in junior high, everyone teased me for still liking dinosaurs. But now? All my friends think it's cool that I'm going to study paleontology. You see?
MAYA

Yeah...

She says it in a sort of dazed way, like the lightbulb is turning on with a slow glow.

HECTOR

Then get lost.

Hector puts on his headphones and turns back to his desk. She walks off.

EXT. JORDAN'S PRIVATE SCHOOL - DAY - ANIMATED

After school, Jordan waits out back. Maya teleports in, then Daisy. The girls look nervously at each other.

JORDAN

How are we going to defeat her? Even if we manage to get there, she blocked everything we had last time.

MAYA

Come on, Jordan! I'm ready to save the world. I know it isn't going to be easy. But at least I don't have to do it alone! I have two strong, amazing girls to help me.

DAISY

Let's do this!

TAJ (OS)

Wait!

Taj runs up, out of breath.

TAJ

You'll need my help--
JORDAN
How will you--

MAYA
Give him a minute to catch his breath!

Taj pants a moment longer, then composes himself.

TAJ
You're not teleporting to join each other, so you'll need my extra power to get you there.

Taj closes his eyes and concentrates. Slowly he grows larger and larger, and his features become stronger and his stripes become darker until he is a tiger.

MAYA
Wow!

DAISY
Taj, I'm impressed.

Taj's voice is lower now, but still recognizably him.

TAJ
Let's go.

The girls each lay a hand on Taj. They all close their eyes. Slowly, their auras start to glow -- Taj's is a rusty orange. The auras glow brighter than ever before. Suddenly, WITHOUT separating into sparkles, the colors shoot into the sky.

EXT. DARK CASTLE GROUNDS - SAME TIME - ANIMATED

The storm cloud surrounding the dark castle is even stormier than usual. There are low grumbles of thunder, but no lightning.
The way leading to the castle is planted with hedges so dark they are almost black. There is a straight path to the drawbridge, which is raised, but off to either side the hedges become a maze.

The colored lights descend and take shape as the girls and Taj. Immediately they are on guard, but everything is still and quiet except for the low thunder.

Daisy takes the lead and Taj brings up the rear as they head cautiously toward the castle.

They hear a GROWL, so quiet at first as to be indistinguishable from the thunder. The growl becomes louder and suddenly a HUGE CHINESE FOO DOG leaps out at them with a roaring bark. It looks more like the stone temple guardians than the fluffy pets, all muscle and teeth and claws.

Taj leaps over the girls with a great ROAR and tackles the Dog. They wrestle. The air is filled with their snarls. Fur flies as claws flash.

Daisy and Maya raise their hands in front of them, ready to use their attacks. Jordan begins hers:

JORDAN
Shooting--

Maya pushes her hands down.

MAYA
You'll hit Taj!

Taj smacks the Dog across the face, sending it tumbling into the maze. Taj's form gets almost imperceptibly smaller with every breath he takes.

TAJ
Go now!
The Dog bowls into Taj, sending them both rolling into the other side of the maze. Taj seems much smaller at the moment of impact.

MAYA
Taj!

DAISY
Come on!

Daisy grabs Maya's hand, and the three of them run toward the castle. Off in the maze they hear the huge Dog barking and yowls of a cat.

As they rush up to the castle, the drawbridge lowers expectantly.

INT. DARK CASTLE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS - ANIMATED

The girls enter the castle, then spin around - but the drawbridge doesn't slam shut. They take a few more steps, looking around. Everything is shadows.

JORDAN
So what's your plan?

DAISY
If we just work together...

MAYA
There are three of us and only one of her! We're sure to defeat her.

Lightning flashes. Suddenly, Lucinda's CACKLE booms over them, coming from everywhere. The girls huddle together.

LUCINDA (OS)
Welcome! I'm so glad you were able to find the place! Come right in.
Daisy pulls the other two forward.

LUCINDA (OS)
I'm waiting to give you a royal welcome in my throne room. Come in, come in!

She cackles again. The lightning continues. Daisy continues on, but Jordan tries to stop her.

JORDAN
We're doing exactly what she wants!

MAYA
So?

JORDAN
It's obviously a trap.

DAISY
So what if it is? We still have to find her and defeat her!

Daisy and Maya pull Jordan onward.

Lucinda stops laughing and continues taunting them:

LUCINDA (OS)
I knew those other girls were really no match for you. So young, so determined. Naively believing you can save the world.

The girls are deep in the main hall now. Maya pauses, and stops Daisy and Jordan.

MAYA
Look.

She holds out her arms. A pale blue mist is coming out of her arms. Daisy and Jordan hold up their arms too. Creamy
and pale green mists are being leeched out of them too. They follow as the mists float through the hall.

LUCINDA (OS)
But the world doesn't care about you. It's indifferent. Hostile, even. While you try to save it, it will destroy you!

MAYA
I don't think she's talking about us anymore...

The mists snake behind a large, dark tapestry. The girls hurry behind it.

INT. DARK CASTLE THRONE ROOM - CONTINUOUS - ANIMATED

The girls enter the throne room. Their good prana swirls behind Lucinda, who lounges in her throne, holding a microphone languidly. She doesn't appear to notice the girls. She keeps speaking into the mic.

LUCINDA
I know what you're going through, believe me. I was like you once.

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

Without blinking, Lucinda holds up her palm. A purple disk appears, blocking Jordan's arrow.

LUCINDA
Innocent. Idealistic.

Here the girls start talking over her, but Lucinda's booming voice is still heard in the background.
LUCINDA
I had dreams. My friends had dreams. But what became of them? We had to give up everything. Our lives were ruined forever. We'd given up everything for the magic.

Jordan starts running for the stairs, but Daisy grabs her.

DAISY
Jordan, wait!

JORDAN
For what? Our powers are useless against her!

MAYA
Not if we use them together!

JORDAN
Please!

MAYA
Did she just say "magic"?

The girls pay attention to Lucinda again.

LUCINDA
I even lost my one true love. Edmund.

She pulls out the picture of the boy in his early teens and gazes longingly at it.

LUCINDA
At that moment I decided. I would be a Guardian Star no more!

The girls GASP!
LUCINDA
It's not fair to have the responsibility of the world on the shoulders of little girls! I vowed to make the Guardian Stars unnecessary!

The girls nod, and attack.

DAISY
Bright Start Burst!

MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

Again, without even acknowledging them, Lucinda raises a hand and her glowing disk defends against their attacks. She looks at the girls for the first time.

LUCINDA
Wouldn't it be nice not to be needed anymore?

She cackles as she tucks the mic and the photo away. She rises slowly and holds both hands out.

LUCINDA
Meteor Shower!

She raises her hands to the ceiling and thousands of purple stars pour out of her hands, raining down on the girls. They have nowhere to hide, and drop to the ground, covering their faces. They CRY OUT as the stars hit them. They hear Lucinda's heels clicking as she comes down the steps.

JORDAN
This is hopeless!
MAYA
I'm sure Guardian Stars have had to defeat former Stars in the past...

DAISY
Seriously?

MAYA
We still have some good prana left! Think of something nice! (beat) Supernova!

DAISY
Right.

JORDAN
What?

MAYA
On my cue.

LUCINDA
Poor little girls.

The girls raise their heads.

LUCINDA
Soon it will all be over.

The girls stand. Lucinda raises her arms overhead. Maya nods.

LUCINDA
Meteor--

STARS
Super Nova!

They hold their hands all together, in front of Maya, who is in the middle. A white orb blooms from their six hands,
BLASTING into Lucinda. The force of the impact sends her flying across the room. She crumples on the stairs.

MAYA
Come on!

They follow their good prana into the other room.

INT. DARK CASTLE PRANA ROOM - CONTINUOUS - ANIMATED

The girls enter the prana room and see the giant half-hourglass. It is so full that the prana is no longer a mist, but a gel. The girls' prana is sucked into the container by the tubes draping from the top. There is a hose attached to the spigot at the bottom, and it snakes off somewhere unseen.

JORDAN
Shooting--

DAISY
Wait!

Daisy peers at the spigot. There's a gauge attached.

DAISY
It seems pressurized.

LUCINDA (OS)
It is pressurized.

Lucinda leans against the doorway.

LUCINDA
If you break it, it'll explode and kill us all.

DAISY
What were you going to do with all this prana anyway?
MAYA
(to Jordan)
Do you think you can just...knick the top?

JORDAN
No problem.

Lucinda leans forward. Jordan backs away while Daisy and Maya face Lucinda.

LUCINDA
Good prana is nice prana - until there's too much of it! What I have here will produce a blast strong enough to destroy the entire world!

She CACKLES.

LUCINDA
No more need for Stars when there's no more world to protect.

DAISY
Bright Star Burst!

Lucinda raises her arm, but she isn't quick enough. Daisy's yellow stars spray her, followed quickly by Maya's blue.

MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

From the back of the room, Jordan shoots the container.

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

Her arrow grazes the top of the container, causing a small crack.
LUCINDA

No!!

She runs to the spigot. The pressure is decreasing, slowly but steadily. She frantically twists the handle on the spigot then races off, following the hose, intent on using her weapon before the pressure gets too low.

Jordan races after Lucinda and grabs her. They both fall. Daisy and Maya rush past them. Lucinda snaps out a hand and grabs Daisy, who also falls. Lucinda pushes away from them both.

Maya is on the threshold back into the throne room. She sees that the end of the hose is attached to a strange-looking sprayer tucked in an alcove under the stairs. She and Lucinda grab it at the same time. They struggle over it, but Lucinda gets her finger on the trigger.

The sprayer BLASTS the concentrated energy into the throne room, taking out a chunk of the wall.

Lucinda and Maya continue to struggle over the sprayer, the prana blasting everywhere. Jordan is almost hit as she stands.

JORDAN

Shooting--

MAYA

Together!

JORDAN

We can't!

DAISY

It's all in the timing!

Lucinda single-mindedly tries to rip the sprayer from Maya's hands.
MAYA
Now!

JORDAN
Shooting Star!

DAISY
Bright Star Burst!

At the exact same moment, Maya lets go of the sprayer.

MAYA
Seven Star Strike!

As their attacks shoot toward Lucinda, they pull some good prana behind them, glowing extra-bright as they become super-strong. The arrow and the stars hit all at once, battering Lucinda into the wall.

She slumps to the floor, unconscious, the sprayer held limply in her arms.

Daisy runs to the spigot.

JORDAN
Wait.

The pressure is so low now that the prana comes out like water from a watering can, pouring all over Lucinda.

Lucinda's form gets hazy, then grows smaller and younger. Her bustier becomes a sweetheart top; her skirt becomes longer. Her boots lose their heels and reach only to her knees.

JORDAN
The good prana's taking all the evil out of her.

DAISY
Returning her to the last time she was purely good.
MAYA
When she was just like us.

The girls stare as Lucinda's form settles on that of a twelve-year-old girl.

YOUNG LUCINDA blinks at them, dazed.

YOUNG LUCINDA
Wh-where am I?

EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS - SAME TIME - ANIMATED

Taj's eyes open. It's bright and sunny. He raises his head. It's painful. He's a red tabby again. He looks around. The hedges are bright green. A butterfly flutters past.

Achingly, he wanders out of the maze. The main walk is lined with tulips. The castle glistens. Beside the drawbridge is a statue that looks just like the Dog.

Taj lies on the drawbridge and watches the koi. He is perfectly still except that the tip of his tail twitches.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Before school, Maya hangs up her backpack, doing her best to ignore Ms. Harwood. Young Lucinda walks in. Maya is taken aback. Lucinda's backpack looks too big for her small frame, and she keeps shifting its weight, but she seems content. She sees Maya for the first time and is also startled.

They stare at each other a moment, then Maya smiles. Lucinda, relieved, smiles back.
YOUNG LUCINDA
Thanks for...you know. It seems almost like a dream now. (beat) Good luck.

MAYA
Thanks.

MS. HARWOOD
Lucinda?

YOUNG LUCINDA
Yes.

Lucinda goes to Ms. Harwood's desk as the bell rings. The students take their seats.

MS. HARWOOD
Class, we have a special announcement today. This is Lucinda. I hope everyone will be nice to her and make her feel welcome.

Together, the class unenthusiastically chants:

CLASS
Welcome, Lucinda.

Young Lucinda goes to her desk and sits.

Next to her, a TOMBOY, save for her white-blonde curls, leans over.

TOMBOY
Hi, I'm Sunny. Wanna pencil?

She holds out a fistful.

YOUNG LUCINDA
Um, thanks.
She pulls one from the bunch. It's covered with bright triangles.

MS. HARWOOD
Okay, take out your math books and turn to page seventy-eight.

Young Lucinda glances at Maya, who raises her own glittery pencil toward Lucinda. Young Lucinda also raises her new one as if to complete a toast, then pulls out her book.

INT. SCHOOL LUNCHROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

It's the middle of lunch hour and the room is noisy.

Young Lucinda and the tomboy pass by the table where Maya is sitting across from Elle and Simon. They hold hands under the table and Maya pretends not to notice.

They all laugh. Elle and Simon look at each other. They fall silent. Maya rolls her eyes and looks away as she hears Elle SIGH.

Maya catches a SHAGGY-HAIRED BOY looking at her. There's something a little goofy about him, but in a lovable kind of way.

His eyes open wide when he's been caught, but then he smiles nervously at Maya. She smiles back confidently and waves. He blushes and turns away.

Elle and Simon are looking at her.

ELLE
What was that?

MAYA
What was what?

ELLE
That! What was that?
MAYA
Oh, nothing.

Elle and Maya giggle.

SIMON
I don't get it.

ELLE
Nevermind.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - DAY - LIVE ACTION

Maya's room is neat and organized. Her bed is made, and the comforter has been flipped to the solid pale pink side. There are no clothes on the floor, and the closet doors are closed. A handful of beloved stuffed animals are displayed at the foot of the bed. Taj is napping in a patch of sunlight.

From the hallway come Maya and Hector's voices.

HECTOR (OS)
Did you ever figure out that whole scary schedule thing?

MAYA (OS)
Yeah, I did. Thanks.

HECTOR (OS)
That's what big brothers are for, squirt.

Sounds of him going into his room.

Taj twitches in his sleep. Suddenly, he wakes, his ears alert, his eyes wide. Everything slows down, and all sounds become muted as he stares out the window. He blinks. Time returns to normal as Taj rises to his feet.
Maya rushes in.

THE END