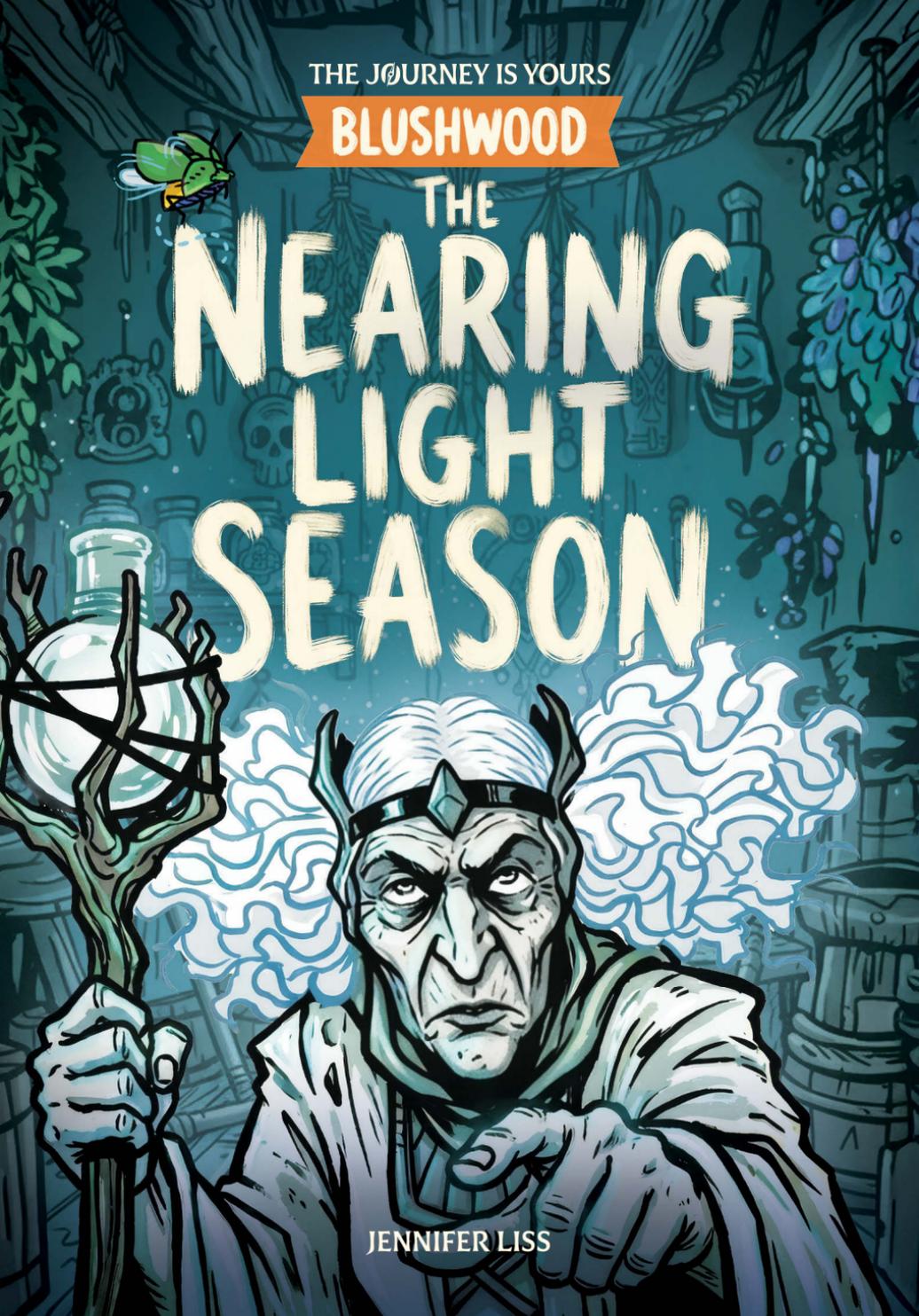


THE JOURNEY IS YOURS

BLUSHWOOD

THE
NEARING
LIGHT
SEASON

JENNIFER LISS





TO BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY...

In the kingdom of East Blushwood, not everything is as it seems. Sure, there's a queen. People work in the villages. The seasons change. Winter is cold. Flowers bloom in spring. There are caves, hills, and vast meadows. Birds fly. But here, dragons soar across the sky. Witches make deals with ghosts. Goblins beg for meat. In this extraordinary place, trees are guardians of secrets, and purple-winged owls speak half-truths.

You are the Soothsayer, or Truth-Teller of East Blushwood. Queen Rozala relies on you to keep the kingdom safe. She sends you on missions whenever there are threats. Your razor-sharp senses and powerful visions help you along the way. Your parents who died a long time ago also had special gifts.

In a small cottage in the woods, you were raised by your grandfather. He is old, but he still has the spirit of his youth. You two laugh often and share stories. But you keep quiet about your assignments from the queen.

On your missions, answers are not always easy to find. Tough decisions need to be made. The truth may be painful to face. But when you fail, you try again. When you get stuck, you look at things in a new way.



► **Your journey begins.**

It's getting cold in the cottage. You put another log on the dying fire. Then you sense that the queen's red fox, Syfer, is near. You peer outside the kitchen window.

The fox is in the deep snow. With eyes the color of coal, the animal watches you.

When Queen Rozala sends her fox, matters are urgent. You must go.

“Grandpa,” you say.

He snores softly in his rocking chair. Not wanting to wake him, you drape a quilt across his lap.

Syfer flicks her tail. It's time to hurry. Quickly, you lace your boots and slip on a heavy coat. You leave soundlessly.

Quietly, Syfer leaps across the frozen creek. She bounds into the forest. Your boots crunch the snow behind her.

The fox follows a narrow path.

In a clearing, you see Queen Rozala with her horse. Two soldiers are nearby. She brushes snow off her cape. The fox leaps into her arms.

You bow.

“It is important,” the queen says. “But you must already know that.”

“Yes.”

Your senses are heightened. Light snowfall sounds like thunder. The queen’s green cape looks as soft as moss. You can even smell the fox. Her musky scent mixes with the queen’s perfume.

But there’s something else. An object is in the pocket of Queen Rozala’s cape. This meeting is about that object. You’re sure of it.

The queen sets the fox down at her feet. She pulls a small book out of her cape’s pocket. It is *The Book of Warnings*. Ancient queens wrote the book.

Queen Rozala reads aloud from it. “When snow swallows Elder’s Rock, beware. Death is coming in the nearing light season.”

You gasp. Elder’s Rock is a big boulder. It rests on a ridge in East Blushwood.

“This winter was like none other,” the queen says. “We’ve had so much snow. Now the nearing light season is here. Days are getting longer. Soon, they will get warmer.”

“But the snow is still here,” you say.

The queen nods. “We must heed this warning. Though we do not know what it means. Who is death coming for? Can we stop it?” She touches your shoulder. “Your mission is to find out. Work quickly. Good luck.”

Queen Rozala mounts her horse. She rides off. Her soldiers trail behind.

Two ideas come to you.

To check out Elder’s Rock, go to page 48.

To try to summon a vision, go to page 11.

► **You decided to summon a vision.**

In order to summon a vision, you try to be calm.

You take deep breaths, but nothing works. Your mind is foggy. A vision doesn't come. It can't be forced. You've learned this lesson before.

It's time for a new plan.

Two ideas come to you. The wise crows guard the spirits of the dead queens. Those crows might know something. Going back to Elder's Rock could also be helpful. Perhaps you missed a key detail before.

To check out Elder's Rock, go to page 48.

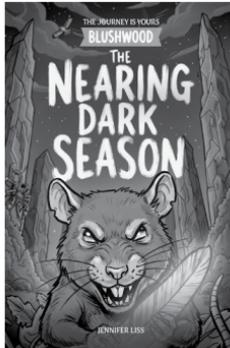
To get information from the wise crows, go to page 28.

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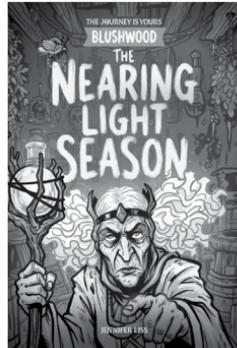
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THE JOURNEY IS YOURS

BLUSHWOOD



THE NEARING LIGHT SEASON

The ancient queens have foretold of death to come in the nearing light season. It is your mission, Soothsayer, to stop this from happening to the kingdom of East Blushwood. But whom or what can you trust to guide you along the way? Time is running out, and you must make difficult choices to prevent disaster from swallowing up the place you call home.

LEXILE HL360L

ISBN: 978-1-63889-724-8



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