



# CHERRY BLOSSOM AND THE QUEEN BUMBLEBEE

## Indiana Rivers

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The boots splashed into a puddle and sent muddy drops all over the pig's face. This particular pig did not enjoy wallowing in mud all afternoon but she had become used to letting the mud fulfil its purpose. The other pigs would snort at her otherwise. In this instance, the muddy drops provided much refreshment to her dry, crusty skin.

She was on a mission. Running as quickly as her short, stumpy legs could take her.

The human up ahead needed to be stopped.

Snorting and grunting, the pig trotted towards the human. Bath City Farm wasn't the biggest of farms so it didn't take long for the pig to catch up with them. The human fell down, slipping on wet concrete. The human turned onto her back and looked up as the muddy, angry pig towered over her.

The human smiled, weakly.

"I'm sorry, Sky Angel, I didn't mean to take your apple away from you. I was hungry and I wasn't thinking. Can you forgive me?"

"Why do you always call me Sky Angel? Isn't that your name?" Sky Angel asked.

"I want you to have my name. I want to choose a name for myself and I thought it suited you."

"Please return my apple to my mouth at once," Sky Angel demanded, jokingly.

The human placed the apple onto Sky Angel's tongue and laughed as Sky Angel gobbled it up.

"Well, you need to have a name so the other animals can address you."

The human frowned and scratched their chin. "Hmm, how about cherry blossom? It sounds genderless. Which I like."

Sky Angel stared at them for a moment. "Works for me."

Cherry Blossom stood up and sighed at the state of their clothes. "I'll need to wash these a-"

Suddenly, Sky Angel pushed Cherry Blossom with her snout, "Shhhhh!!"

"What is it?"

"I heard Banoshi."

Cherry Blossom ran towards the shop. They had a fear of bats.

House sparrows darted through the sky, enjoying the sunshine. Dotted bee flies fluttered their wings as they searched for food.

"Sky Angel, come on! Come inside!" Cherry Blossom shouted from inside the shop.

"It's only Banoshi."

Reluctantly, Cherry Blossom closed the shop door and looked out the window.

Sky Angel looked up as Banoshi descended towards her. She stepped back as he landed in front of her.

"Hello again, my friend," Banoshi said.

"Hello, Banoshi."

"What brings you to our part of the farm?" Sky Angel asked.

A gust of wind blew the leaves off the surrounding trees. As the leaves circled the air, a shimmer of yellow and black hovered in the sky. There was an almighty buzzing, Cherry Blossom covered their ears as the sound pierced through their mind. Sky Angel and Banoshi didn't seem affected by it.

Once the buzzing stopped, Cherry Blossom lowered their hands.

*You need not be afraid, child. I am not your enemy. I only wish to help you. To do that, I need you to trust me.*

Cherry Blossom couldn't figure it out. They could hear the voice but Sky Angel and Banoshi weren't talking, they were too entranced by the shimmer in the sky. Cherry Blossom turned left to right. There was no-one else in the shop.


*Please, there is nothing to fear. I am simply communicating with you through your mind. It is a form of bee magic. May we speak face to face? I'm outside.*

"You're the queen, aren't you?" Cherry Blossom asked.

"That is correct. I would very much like to meet you." Cherry Blossom nodded, squeezed their eyes shut and said, "okay. I'm coming outside."

*Thank you.*

Slowly, Cherry Blossom opened the shop door and walked towards Sky Angel. Banoshi smiled at her, genuinely. Cherry Blossom smiled back. They turned to the queen and stepped back. She must have been at least twenty times the size of a normal bumblebee. It was quite astonishing.



Banoshi bowed, "Hello again, my queen."  
The queen nodded to him.

Cherry Blossom followed, "Hello, your majesty."  
The queen hovered above them, then came down to Cherry Blossoms' level. "Hello, my dear, I am glad you have made friends here. But, it is my duty as queen, to make sure you and your species survive. To do this, I must take you to the other world."

"What do you mean?" Sky Angel responded.

"You know some of the story. When I became queen I learned of the great danger the humans would face in the future. One of the gifts that is passed down to us from our mothers is to foresee the future. And saw it I did. Sickness, famine, death. I couldn't stand-by and do nothing. So I took it upon myself to open a portal to another world. My calculations confirmed it was a habitable alternative for the humans. So I used my magic to take as many humans as I could to this world," The queen looked directly at Cherry Blossom, "but it looks like I wasn't able to take them all."

Cherry Blossom interjected, "wait, if what I know is true about seeing the future, it's that nothing is fixed. The future can change. Maybe whilst I'm here, I could help you, your majesty, to avert the future you saw. Your magic is powerful. Surely, we could do something to save this world? It's my home. And I don't want to leave Sky Angel and the other animals here. They are my friends. Please."

The queen's antennae stood straighter. "You are wise, child. I see no reason not to try your proposal. We will do what we can for this world."

"Thank you," Cherry Blossom said.

Sky Angel snorted, "Yes, thank you, your majesty."

The queen flew around in a circle and a glittery trail of various colours followed behind her.

A rumbling sound came from Sky Angel's trough. Red apples came tumbling towards them.

Sky Angel's eyes widened and she licked her mouth. Cherry Blossom smiled.

"A little gift to mark our new friendship" the queen giggled.

Banoshi ran after the apples, trying to pick up as many as he could.

"Remember to share, Banoshi. They are Sky Angel's favourite" the queen reminded him.

Banoshi nodded.

"How do you know that's the name I gave to Sky Angel?" Cherry Blossom asked.

"Magic, my dear. Magic."





# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Indiana is a creative writing graduate who has lived in Bath for 4 years and has an interest in environmental issues, animal rights and species extinction. She is also a freelance writer and studying for an MA in Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University. One of her main ambitions is to work for an environmental or wildlife conservation charity in the future.

