

CITY OF LIGHTS by Kelly Byrd

EXCERPT

Mary had heard this story before. She had read enough books, seen enough movies, to know how the story went. What she didn't understand was why she was here. She had always seen herself as more of a Steve Trevor than a Diana Prince, or a Luna instead of a Harry. She was always happy to help but wasn't meant to be the center of the action.

"So, what am I doing here?" she asked, the question that had been weighing on her since she had woken up in those hills.

"We don't exactly know," Mikeala said. "We have tried anything we could think of to turn the tide of this war. Loey Cody has a theory that this is connected to the Shadowlands. Your world and our world are connected in a way that we don't really understand. We began sending beacons to the Shadowlands to attract a great warrior to help us."

"The beacons. The little man I met. The one that was in my attic and sent me here. He said I was the first person who had paid attention to the beacons in months."

"Do you mean Rickface?" Bobble laughed. "He's a keeper like us! Yes—Rickface has not been too pleased with being in the Shadowlands for several months. He says that it stinks down there."

"Rickface," Mary murmured to herself. She filed the name away for later, in case she met the strange little man again.

"Regardless," Van Clare said, giving Bobble a good-natured shove on the shoulder. "You saw them. You responded to them."

"What does that mean?" Mary asked, twisting her hands in her lap and wondering where her headband was. How was she supposed to fight monsters without it?

"It means that you are here, Mary Jingo," Mikeala said with a small smile.

"Because you chose to be. And that is a powerful thing," Bobble finished.