

**Eli and the Shadow**  
By Lucas Fadamiro, grade 5

Eldergrove is a quiet little town surrounded by big forests and mist. People live simple lives, and everyone knows each other. The town feels safe, but there are old stories that talk about hidden magic and forgotten times. Eli is a young farmhand who helps his family with their farm. He likes to dream about adventures and wonders what's beyond the town. He doesn't think the old stories are real, but one day, he finds something strange that changes everything. Kaela is the blacksmith who makes tools and weapons for the town. She's strong and always busy, and she thinks Eli's dreams of adventure are silly. But even she starts to notice something isn't quite right as strange things begin to happen. Mira is the healer who helps people when they're sick. She can feel things others can't, and she's worried about Eli. She knows something big is coming, but she's not sure what. Ivor is a quiet man who lives in a big, old tower on the edge of town. He reads lots of old books and knows things about the town's past. He knows Eli is important, but Eli doesn't know it yet. And there's The Shadow, a dark figure from old stories. No one really believes it's real, but it's starting to wake up, and it's coming for the thing Eli found.

One day, while Eli is working in the fields, he stumbles across something strange hidden under a pile of rocks. It's an old, shiny object, a relic from the past. It feels powerful when Eli touches it, like it's calling out to him. He doesn't know what it is or what it means, but he can't stop thinking about it. As Eli brings the relic back to the village, things start to feel different. The air grows colder, and the wind starts to pick up, like something is stirring. The people in Eldergrove notice, and some of them start to whisper. There are signs that something old and dangerous is waking up. Eli doesn't know it yet, but the relic he found is important. Very important, and it will change everything.

Eli keeps the relic hidden in his home, but strange things start happening. The wind howls at night, and shadows move near the town. The mist from the forest grows thicker, and it feels like something is watching him. One evening, Eli shows the relic to Mira, the healer. She gasps and steps back. "This is no ordinary object," she says. "It is part of an old story. A story about The Shadow." She warns Eli that The Shadow will come looking for it. Ivor, the old scholar, visits Eli in secret. He opens a dusty book and shows Eli a drawing of the relic. "This has been hidden for

a long time," Ivor says. "And now that you have found it, The Shadow will awaken." He tells Eli that the relic has power—power that Eli must learn to use. Eli doesn't feel ready. "I'm just a farmhand," He says. "I don't know how to fight something like The Shadow." "You don't have to do it alone," Ivor stated. The next day, Kaela, the blacksmith, notices Eli acting strange. When she asks what's wrong, Eli hesitates, but finally, he tells her everything. At first, Kaela laughs. "Magic? Shadows? That's just old stories," She says, the ground shakes beneath them and a cold wind rushes through the town, she stops laughing. "Okay," She says, gripping her hammer. "Tell me what I need to do." That night, the town fell silent. The mist is thicker than ever, shadows move between the trees. Eli, Kaela, Mira, and Ivor stand together, watching. Then, from the darkness, something steps forward. The Shadow has arrived.

:The Shadow steps out of the mist. It is big and dark, like a storm cloud with glowing red eyes. The air turns cold. The ground shakes. Eli holds the relic tight. His hands shake. He is scared, but he knows he can't run. If he does, the town will be in danger. The Shadow speaks in a deep, scary voice. "Give me the relic," It says. Eli shakes his head. "No." The Shadow lifts its arm, and a wave of darkness rushes toward Eli. He jumps out of the way just in time. Kaela swings her hammer at The Shadow, but it goes right through. "I can't hit it!" She yells. Mira holds up her hands and whispers old words. A soft light glows around her. "Eli! Use the relic!" She shouts. Eli looks at the relic. It feels warm now, it started to glow. He doesn't know what to do, but he trusted it. The Shadow attacks again. "You are too weak," It growls. Eli closes his eyes and thinks of his home, his friends, and the people who need him. He won't let The Shadow win. The relic shines bright—brighter than the sun. The Shadow screams and covers its face. Its dark mist starts to fade. The Shadow reaches for Eli, trying to take the relic. Cold darkness wraps around Eli's arms. He feels frozen. "No!" Eli shouts. He holds the relic tight and pushes forward with all his strength. The light grows stronger and stronger. The Shadow lets out one last scream. Then, with a loud *whoosh*, it disappears into the air. The darkness is gone, the town is safe. Eli looks around. The wind has stopped. The stars shine again. He did it. But deep inside, he knows this is not the end.

The Shadow is gone. The dark clouds clear, and the stars shine in the sky again. The wind is calm, and the town feels safe once more. Eli falls to his knees, tired but amazed. He did it, he stopped The Shadow. Kaela helps him up, smiling. "You're stronger than you think," She says. Mira checks on everyone to make sure they are okay. Ivor looks at the relic and nods. "The danger is not fully gone," he warns. "But tonight, we have won". The people of Eldergrove step

out of their homes, looking around. They don't know exactly what happened, but they can feel that something has changed.

**The** Shadow is gone, but the town feels different. The people come outside, looking around. They are safe, but they don't know what really happened. Eli holds the relic in his hands. It feels heavy. He won, but it doesn't feel like a victory. He knows The Shadow is not truly gone. One day, it may return. Kaela stands beside him. "You did good, Eli," She says. But her voice is quiet. She is tired too. Mira looks at the relic and frowns. "This power will always bring danger." Ivor nods. "You are part of something bigger now, Eli." Eli looks around the town. This was his home. But now, it feels different. He wanted more than just a simple life, but he didn't know it would feel like this. He saved the town, but he lost something too—his old life. As the sun rises, Eli wonders if he still belongs here. For now, he stays. But deep inside, he knows—this is only the beginning.