



# The Last Spell Breather

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This is story about the magic of words to empower and heal.

Rayne, last in a line of spell-breathers, is apprenticed to her mother Maleri, whose job it is to keep their village safe from a plague that turns people into monsters and counteract everyday problems and illness by breathing spells. But Rayne has no interest in magic and would much prefer to be at school with her friends Tom and Jenna. Tom does not believe in magic and much to Rayne's surprise tells them he has already visited the outside, without protection. He has been digging a tunnel every day after school.

When in quick succession the protective barrier is breached by a mysterious stranger and Maleri leaves the village on a quest to visit the Great Library, Rayne begin to realise there is a lot her mother has not told her. Frustrated at her perceived lack of magical skill, Rayne accidentally drops the family spell book in the fire and the words of the spells start to fall from the pages. One by one the villagers begin to turn into monsters before her eyes. Determined to make amends Rayne decides to follow her mother to the outside for the answers she needs and she and Tom escape down the tunnel with the broken spell book.

Once outside Rayne breathes the spell of finding and they are met by a talking fox, Frank, who Rayne ends up wearing as scarf as he has no bones. Frank leads them into a perilous adventure but far worse danger awaits them at their destination in the form of evil nemesis, Mali who turns out to be Maleri's twin sister.

There are twists and turns aplenty to satisfy readers and the world building is well-crafted and inventive. I especially loved the grotesques living in the spell book and nipping prying hands. The story follows familiar tropes but with a freshness and charm although somehow it didn't quite rise above the sum of its parts. The characters are plucky and believable: sceptical Tom with his cheeky sense of humour, Rayne, insecure yet a little too trusting and the loveable and roguish Frank

**Links:**