



From the MixCache.com library

SAMPLE COPY

Eclipse Over Emberdale

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1:** Shadows in the Stacks
- **Chapter 2:** Whispers Before Dusk
- **Chapter 3:** The Empty Chair
- **Chapter 4:** Secrets in the Margins
- **Chapter 5:** The Forgotten Legend
- **Chapter 6:** Doors Beneath Ash and Vine
- **Chapter 7:** The Council's Insignia
- **Chapter 8:** Allies in Odd Places
- **Chapter 9:** A Map of Lost Things
- **Chapter 10:** Echoes from the Hall of Mirrors
- **Chapter 11:** The Lantern Fox
- **Chapter 12:** The Unwritten Prophecy
- **Chapter 13:** Beneath the Silver Elm
- **Chapter 14:** Phantoms of Emberdale
- **Chapter 15:** The Nightingale's Tale
- **Chapter 16:** Eclipse Eve
- **Chapter 17:** The Bitter Wind
- **Chapter 18:** Midnight Alignments
- **Chapter 19:** Spellbound
- **Chapter 20:** Breaking the Seal
- **Chapter 21:** Eclipse Ascendant
- **Chapter 22:** The Unraveling
- **Chapter 23:** Ashes and Truth
- **Chapter 24:** The Dawn After
- **Chapter 25:** A New Light Over Emberdale

SAMPLE COPY

Introduction

Nestled in a quiet valley, hidden by thick woods and encircling hills, lies the town of Emberdale—a place where magic brushes gently against the seams of everyday life. Here, cobblestone streets wind past crooked cottages and mysterious shadows seem to linger just a little longer than they should. Emberdale is a place out of time, at once familiar and wondrous, where old secrets sleep beneath the roots of ancient trees, and the townsfolk, well acquainted with the extraordinary, maintain a steadiness as if nothing truly peculiar ever happens.

At the heart of Emberdale stands Bennett's Books, a cozy shop crammed with dusty tomes and forgotten trinkets, managed by Lily Bennett. Young and inquisitive, Lily has spent her life surrounded by stories—both those on the shelves and those whispered by the townspeople. She knows every face in Emberdale, from the eccentric toymaker to the shy herbalist, and maintains a quiet reverence for the undercurrents of magic few openly discuss.

On the eve of the town's first solar eclipse in over a century, an unspoken tension crackles through the air. Lanterns along the main square flicker with blueish light, and the old clock tower—always a touch too fast—ticks with an unnatural urgency. Even the birds seem to sense it, their calls sharper, more urgent as the day of shadows draws near. It is then that the town's oldest resident, Elsie Grover, vanishes without a trace. Her disappearance is troubling, for Elsie is as enduring as Emberdale itself, a living archive of its folklore and mysteries.

Lily is drawn into the heart of the mystery. A chance discovery in her bookstore—an old letter, tucked between forgotten pages—suggests that Elsie's vanishing may have roots tangled deep in Emberdale's secret history. As she begins to follow the thread of clues, Lily senses she is on the edge of unraveling something far greater than one woman's disappearance. The growing eclipse seems to cast darkness not only over the sky, but also over the invisible barriers that have long sheltered the town from hidden dangers.

Yet, amidst the foreboding, Emberdale's magic quietly perseveres. Fragrant herbs hang from cottage doors, cats slip silently through alleyways, and the townspeople gather in the evenings, their laughter failing to mask the unease rippling through the community. As Lily's investigation deepens, friendships are tested, old loyalties exposed, and Emberdale itself seems to draw a collective breath, waiting to see if its secrets will finally emerge into the light—or be swallowed by the coming darkness.

In this spellbinding tale of magic and mystery, the stage is set: the eclipse

approaches, secrets stir, and Lily Bennett stands poised at the threshold, ready to journey into a world where the past and present entwine and every shadow may conceal a new revelation. Welcome to Emberdale.

SAMPLE COPY

CHAPTER ONE: Shadows in the Stacks

The scent of aged paper and something faintly floral, perhaps dried lavender, always greeted Lily when she unlocked the oak door of Bennett's Books. Today, however, there was a sharp, metallic tang in the air, a whisper of ozone that seemed out of place among the comforting aroma of stories. The town clock, usually a reassuring chime, struck eight with a discordant clatter, its gears protesting the approaching solar event. Lily shivered, though the morning air was mild.

Emberdale was usually a symphony of quiet routines. Old Mr. Abernathy would be setting out his fresh-baked bread, the smell of yeast mingling with the morning dew. Mrs. Gable from the weaving cottage would be hanging her vibrant tapestries to catch the early light. But this morning, a hush had fallen, broken only by the uneasy cawing of rooks circling high above the Silver Elm, Emberdale's ancient, sentinel tree.

Lily flicked on the lamps, bathing the crammed shelves in a warm glow. Dust motes danced in the artificial light, tiny, shimmering particles like fragmented spells. She ran a hand over the spine of a leather-bound almanac, its cover embossed with forgotten symbols. Her bookstore was more than a shop; it was a sanctuary, a repository of Emberdale's collective memory, both written and unwritten.

Her gaze drifted to Elsie Grover's usual spot. Every morning for as long as Lily could remember, Elsie would be perched in the plush armchair by the large bay window, a steaming mug of jasmine tea beside her, engrossed in a particularly dense volume on local botany. Her spectacles would be perched on her nose, occasionally slipping down as she nodded off, only to be jolted awake by a particularly interesting footnote.

Today, the armchair was empty. The cushion retained a faint indentation, a ghostly echo of Elsie's presence, but the tea mug was nowhere to be seen, nor was the current book she'd been devouring—a treatise on indigenous fungi. Elsie was punctual to a fault, a living timepiece in a town that often ignored the conventional passage of hours. Her absence was a gaping hole in the fabric of the morning.

Lily tried to rationalize it. Perhaps Elsie had overslept, an unthinkable notion for the sprightly centenarian. Perhaps she'd simply gone for an early walk, though her usual morning constitutional always included a stop at Bennett's Books. But a prickle of unease snaked its way up Lily's spine. The ozone smell intensified, and a faint, almost imperceptible tremor ran through the floorboards.

She walked behind the counter, her fingers tracing the worn wood. Underneath a pile of returned novels, she found a small, folded note. It was written in Elsie's elegant,

slightly shaky script. "Lily, my dear. If you seek me, look for the 'Shadows of the Forgotten,' but be swift, for the eclipse brings more than just darkness." The note was not dated, but the ink was fresh.

"Shadows of the Forgotten?" Lily muttered, her brow furrowing. It sounded like the title of a book, but nothing immediately came to mind. Elsie had an eccentric way of naming things, often referring to objects or concepts by obscure titles from ancient texts or local folklore. This was classic Elsie, cryptic and tantalizing.

She started her search in the folklore section, a particularly dusty corner filled with volumes on Emberdale's history, local legends, and cryptic prophecies. The shelves groaned under the weight of forgotten tales, each promising a glimpse into the town's enchanted past. Lily knew this section intimately, having alphabetized and cataloged every single one. Yet, "Shadows of the Forgotten" didn't ring a bell.

As she scanned the titles, her fingers brushed against an old, unmarked journal tucked behind a collection of children's fairy tales. It was thin, bound in faded green leather, and its pages were brittle with age. There was no title on the spine, no author listed. Curiosity piqued, Lily pulled it out.

Opening it carefully, she found the pages filled with swirling, unfamiliar script. It wasn't Elvish, nor any known ancient tongue she recognized. Interspersed among the elegant symbols were rough, charcoal sketches: a peculiar, many-branched tree, a stone circle bathed in moonlight, and what looked disturbingly like a celestial alignment—a sun, a moon, and a third, smaller orb.

Her gaze snagged on a familiar drawing near the back of the journal. It was a crude sketch of the Emberdale clock tower, but with an important difference: beneath the familiar four faces, a small, intricate symbol was carved into the stone base, almost like a secret fifth face. Lily had never seen this symbol on the actual clock tower. It was an arcane symbol, resembling a stylized eye nestled within a crescent moon.

Could Elsie have left this for her? It felt too coincidental, too deliberately placed. Lily flipped back to the front of the journal, her heart beginning to pound with a frantic rhythm. Tucked inside the front cover, almost invisible against the dark leather, was a small, dried forget-me-not, its delicate petals still a vibrant blue. It was Elsie's favorite flower. This was undoubtedly hers.

A strange warmth spread from the journal into Lily's hands, almost as if the book itself was alive. The air in the bookstore grew heavier, charged with an invisible energy. The metallic scent of ozone intensified, making her eyes water. She felt a distinct shift, a subtle but profound change in the very atmosphere of the room. It was as if the boundary between the mundane and the magical had thinned, growing translucent.

Lily continued to examine the strange script. While she couldn't decipher the words, the recurring symbol from the clock tower appeared several times, sometimes alongside another, equally enigmatic symbol: a serpent devouring its own tail, the Ouroboros. It was a symbol of cyclicity, of rebirth and destruction.

She remembered a fleeting conversation with Elsie a few weeks prior, an offhand comment about "the old ways of seeing." At the time, Lily had dismissed it as one of Elsie's usual whimsical pronouncements. Now, it resonated with an unsettling clarity. Elsie hadn't just disappeared; she had vanished into something, into a narrative that was far older and more complex than anyone in Emberdale openly acknowledged.

A faint scratching sound came from behind the old grandfather clock near the entrance. Lily froze, straining her ears. It was too regular to be a mouse, too deliberate. It sounded like something tapping, a rhythmic whisper against wood. The clock, usually silent except for its chimes, seemed to hum with an internal vibration.

Driven by an inexplicable urge, Lily cautiously approached the clock. Its ornate wooden casing, usually a solid, unyielding presence, now seemed to ripple slightly in her peripheral vision. The tapping continued, emanating from the back of the clock. She reached out, her fingers brushing against the cool, smooth wood.

To her astonishment, a small, almost invisible seam appeared on the side of the clock. It wasn't a crack or a defect; it was a deliberate line, outlining a narrow, rectangular panel. As she pressed against it, the panel swung inwards with a soft click, revealing not clockwork, but a dark, narrow passage. A gust of cold, damp air, smelling of earth and ancient stone, washed over her.

Beyond the passage, she could just make out a faint, phosphorescent glow, illuminating what looked like a winding staircase descending into darkness. It was a hidden passage, a secret door within the very walls of Bennett's Books. Elsie, the quiet archivist of Emberdale's past, had left her a trail, a thread to follow into the heart of the town's deepest mysteries. Lily clutched the green journal, its warmth a tangible comfort against the sudden chill emanating from the hidden opening. The shadows in the stacks had just taken on a far more literal, and terrifying, meaning.

This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.

Visit MixCache.com to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY