

A Moth
And
A Flame

***May O'Halloran had always considered
herself to be an odd little caterpillar, who
never intended to be a butterfly
And so, she was turned into a moth***

By: Sharon Guthrie

SYNOPSIS

May O'Halloran is a young woman living in Greenwich Village with her boyfriend, Johann and her cat, Seven.

Although she is happy most of the time, she feels disconnected somehow, and wonders how she ended up in New York City.

May has special "gifts" such as flying and making predictions about what people are actually thinking. She suspects that she is peculiar or different, but has always been this way.

Unbeknownst to her an evil witch, Jurusha is bent on capturing May again and turning her into a moth to live out the rest of her days staying warm by the light of the streetlamps.

Jurusha will have to get past Johann, however, who has pledged to protect May at all cost. Who will win in the battle between the man who truly loves her and the witch is anyone's guess.

About the Author

First time novelist Sharon Anne Guthrie brings the magical and surreal together in this mysterious tale of love and loss. Born and raised at Ft. Monroe, Virginia, she grew up with a love of books and theatre. In college, she majored in nursing and has worked as an RN for 20 years. She recently obtained her Bachelor's degree in Psychology. She is currently working on her Master's Degree.

When she has free time, she enjoys writing novels and running on the beach or on the trails. She spends as much time with her mother, 4 children and 3 grandchildren as she can. She is currently working on the sequel to A Moth and a Flame, called Witch Wars. The sequel will continue to

utilize fantasy as well as magic in this suspense
filled 2nd novel.

CHAPTER 1

May and Johann

It is dusk, and the marshmallow moon throws showers of sparkly white dewdrops down on throngs of villagers below. Although the heavens are missing the sun tonight, the star filled sky is distracted with the activity below.

Sleepy cafes spring to life with young urbanites just getting off work. Couples hold hands. They kiss or whisper endearments while strolling along sidewalks with synchronized steps, as if they are part of a beautiful ballet. Young families with small children, hurriedly scurry inside to get warm.

"Where are you going, Joey? Be careful, Melissa! Watch the waiter, he has a full tray!"

The mother tries to corral the children into the booths before they get in the way.

Soon a crowd of locals, some walking teacup poodles or Dachshunds with Burberry coats, rush to covered patios of neighborhood restaurants. The café railings are draped with potted geraniums and tiny lights that twinkle around the gingham dressed tables. Electric heaters are positioned in strategic areas to keep the diners warm. The night opens her dark, brooding eyes and gazes down at the Village beneath. The bustling city glows gorgeously, arching its head in the basking moonlight, bringing out the night revelers of Greenwich Village.

But way off alone, in her candle lit apartment, May O'Halloran likes to keep her own company and that of her boyfriend, Johann, and her cat, Seven. She is twenty-six and sometimes wonders how she ended

up in New York City. She sees the villagers from her balcony while taking in the sounds of a city that never sleeps. The glow from street lamps cast shadows on heads of patrons below. Her feet feel the rumble of the subway as it rushes by a few blocks away. But still she feels disconnected and silently walks back inside.

She sees Johann and Seven curled up on the couch in front of the fire.

"Ah this is what I like the most, my two favorite guys!"

Johann smiles and pats the couch cushion beside him.

"Well then, come here, Love. Come sit beside one of your favorite guys."

May slips in beside Johann and picks up Seven. She puts him in her lap and leans across Johann to slide her red, velvet throw across the three of them. Seven meows and crawls on top of the blanket in annoyance.

Humans! Can't she see I have a fur coat on? Seven thinks.

Even though it is still late summer, when dusk falls a chill descends and covers the Village, May likes to keep their fireplace burning. It is so cozy and warm. She reads while Johann sketches the kitty stretched across the two of them. After a few hours, Johann yawns and then puts his arm around May.



He asks, "Are you ready for bed, Hon? You didn't sleep very well last night. Were you dreaming again?"

"I can't remember really, I just woke up tired this morning. Sometimes I have these dreams, and I

don't want to wake up. But then when I try to remember them, they drift away and I lose all of the details. But yes, let's go to bed. I want to try to wake up early so I can get started on my writing before it gets too loud in the Village."

"Alright, here take my hand." May grabs Johann's hand and he pull her up from the couch.

"Did you want to come with me in the morning to get our vegetables and fruit in the marketplace, or would you rather I go and bring you your tea as well?" Johann asks.

"You go. I have been putting off my writing for a week and I feel like I need to get started again."

They hold hands and walk to their bedroom. It is decorated with several dark, teak furniture pieces they found at the antique shop in the Village. They

keep all of their clothes in an ornate armoire built in the 1800's. May also has a vanity that she keeps a vase filled with white oleander flowers. She had read that although they are beautiful, they can also be deadly if ingested. For some reason, that makes her like them even more.

She has a silver mirror, comb and brush set centered in the middle of a glass tray. In the corner of the room is a wooden rocking chair with a wine covered pillow that Seven likes to nap on when it gets too warm for him to cuddle with May and Johann. A ceiling fan sends gentle breezes over the couple on hot summer nights. On either side of the bed are night stands with various fiction books May has written and a sketch Johann drew of the Village. Their room is filled with candles mostly of lavender

and some vanilla. May keeps them burning making the room smell like a spa.

Johann and May snuggle up on their soft, mattress topper and pull the fluffy, down comforter over themselves. May loves her feather pillows and squishes one around her neck. Seven positions himself at May's feet and soon everyone is asleep. But May begins to stir as the light tiptoes in from the billowing, lacy curtains. A brisk breeze blows with pursed lips and extinguishes the candles. The wind begins howling. Seven looks up and hisses at nothing and then lays his furry head back down at May's feet. His whiskers twitch as he looks up at his mistress. She is dreaming again.



In her dream, May is walking in a faraway place,
with emerald hills and an azure sea. She is small
and sitting in a garden surrounded with
honeysuckle, roses and sage.

She is preoccupied with a kitten with white stripes
and black paws and doesn't hear the approach of
footsteps behind her. May raises her small face and

turns toward the sound of a rustling petticoat, but the amber sun is too bright to make out who is near. She tries to run back to a castle in the distance, and then feels hands on her tiny waist. She cannot move and screams out, although no sound comes from her mouth. Suddenly, everything turns dark and May falls to the ground.

When she wakes up, her heart is racing. She wonders where she is. Her breathing is ragged and a cold fear engulfs her. May finally realizes she is in bed, safe beside Johann. She slides closer to him and waits for sleep to beckon for her again.

When morning comes crashing in May is tired. Her memory of the restless night is blurry, but she still feels anxious and decides to accompany Johann down to the marketplace.

Maybe I should see someone about this. I have to get some sleep, she thinks.

Because May feels like she does not belong in Greenwich Village, she sometimes complains in a quiet, whispery voice to Johann,

“I don’t feel like I fit in here. I’m not sure what it is, but the Village feels strange to me.”

She leans down toward him.

“I mean, I love you, Johann. But I feel like I came from somewhere else, maybe a different time or place.”

Johann listens with his eyes on her and nods attentively. When she turns from him, he gives her a quizzical look, with one eyebrow raised, above lidded eyes.

How could she not know that she is enchanted? He thinks.

"Where did I come from Johann? I mean, what am I? I know I'm American, but what else?"

"Your heritage is Irish and your parents lived in County Cork, Ireland, in a small hamlet along the sea. The village is called Skibbereen. The locals there call it "Skib."

"How do you know what they call it, Johann?"

"Because my parents came from Ireland, also. That is how I knew your family. I grew up in the same town."

"You never told me that!" May exclaims.

"You never asked."

"Johann, that's not fair. I have known you most of my life. You have told me before that I am Irish, but you have never said that you were. Why?"

"It never came up, I guess. And you have never asked me where I came from."

May stares at him for a moment and wonders,

Why haven't I ever asked Johann where he came from? Am I that selfish? That's not good. What is wrong with me?

"I mean, didn't it bother you that I never asked?"

"May, it's no big deal. I'm sure it would have come up. I am not close to my family. I haven't been for a long time. You are my family now, you and Seven!"

He smiles down at her.

Curious about her ancestry, May strolls to the local library later that afternoon. She asks the librarian if she has any books on Cork County, or specifically Skibbereen. The librarian, who has stark white hair, reading glasses perched on the end of her nose and rosy cheeks, says,

"Why yes dear, we do."

Coming from around her desk, the librarian walks with a slight limp by the table that has been set up as a display with books for preschoolers.

I remember that book, The Velveteen Rabbit. That was my favorite!

The elderly lady guides May to the back of the library and searches for the numbers D2348.

"There you are. Just browse through this section. I am sure you will find what you need. If you need anything else, just ask."

There May finds all sorts of books on Ireland.

"Why thank you! You're really helpful!"

"Of course, that is why I am here."

May watches as the elderly woman makes her way back to the library desk walking slowly and gingerly, stopping every now and then to lean against a bookshelf.

I like it here with the smell of these old books and that sweet lady.

May picks up a thick book that is entitled "Southern Ireland." She gingerly browses through the table of contents until she finds Skibbereen. The book has

illustrated pages that display brightly colored buildings with nostalgic stores lining the streets.

She reads that “Skib” has plenty of coffee shops people want to duck into "for a chat and a catch up." It means “little boat harbor.” There is also a saying: "you can't throw a stick in Cork County where it doesn't land a few feet from a pub." Basically pubs are on almost every corner of town.

Skibbereen is not far from Baltimore, which borders the Celtic Sea. Feeling drawn like a magnet to the colorful pictures of the small villages and rustic retail stores, she turns the pages of the book in her lap with anticipation. Her eyes are wide and a smile is on her face.

Although she does not remember her parents, the sparkling, blue ocean has always beckoned to her,

like an old friend on her infrequent trips to the Chesapeake Bay. She later is told by Johann, her last name of O'Halloran, roughly translated from Gaelic to English, means "from beyond the sea."

As May is getting ready to leave, she replaces the book on Skibbereen. She notices a small, thin book wedged in between too thicker novels. The title is "Witches of County Cork." Her heart freezes. She stares at the jacket for what seems like an eternity. She hesitates, and then reaches for it with trepidation. The cover is dusty and looks like it has not been read in a long time. She slowly and carefully opens it to the first page. It is entitled, "Hedge Witches and Sidhe Fairies." There is a faded picture of a woman with golden hair and sky blue eyes. She is gazing up at a man with blonde

hair who also has eyes the color of the ocean. Those eyes seem to be staring right at May.

The man is a younger version of the kindly gentleman in May's dreams. Tears come to her eyes. She feels like she has come home. He is smiling, and has the same kind smile as in her dreams. She tries to make out the names of the couple, but it is too faded. The male is said to be half Hedge Witch and half human. The woman is a Sidhe fairy from Baltimore. Although May has never met her parents, she sees the resemblance in the woman's face and her small frame.

Mama? Could you be my mother? I don't remember you, but something about your face, reminds me of me. Why did you leave? Johann told me you were in an accident. Did you think of

what would happen to me without you? I hope you didn't suffer!

Mama, I have always felt out of place. Am I a Sidhe fairy or Hedge Witch as well? Papa? Is that you? Why do you still come to me in my dreams? Are you trying to tell me something? Did you lead me to this library, to this book of you and Mama?

She slowly runs her fingers over the faces of the couple. After several minutes, she carefully closes the book and holds it against her chest as she walks up to the front of the library.

"Are you okay, Dear? You look upset. Is there anything I can do?" The librarian asks her gently.

"No, I just saw a photograph in this book, and the couple look familiar to me," May says quietly.

"In what way, Sweetie?" asks the kindly woman.

"It just seems like I knew them a long time ago."

"I feel like that sometimes too. In this life, you will meet so many people, and after a while they start looking like each other. Some people look like people we may have known. It happens. Are you going to be okay?"

"Yes. They looked like my parents, maybe. I don't remember them, but I think my father comes to me in my dreams. I just wish I knew what they really look like," May says sadly.

"Oh course you do, Honey." Aw, poor child. Well, any time you need to talk, I am always here."

"Thank you. You are so kind."

After May checks out her book she waves goodbye and heads for home.

She walks with a contemplative step back to the apartment. She decides that she will talk to Johann about the book when they go to bed tonight. She wants time to think about what she has seen and read today in the library.

Johann is cooking on their little stove. The apartment smells like simmering tomato sauce with garlic and hints of oregano. Because they are vegan he has cut up a vegetable sausage and also added fresh tomatoes for the sauce that he pureed first in the blender.

"Mm mm... How long have you been cooking?" May asks. She can feel her stomach start to grumble and she suddenly realizes how hungry she is.

"It is almost ready. I thought we would eat out on the balcony tonight since the breeze is so warm," Johann says.

"Okay. Let me get a tablecloth and some more candles," May replies.

She goes to their small closet and pulls out a white lace tablecloth and gathers a few small candles and matches. She throws the cloth across the patio table on their terrace and lights the candles. She turns on their radio to a classical station playing Miles Davis, a jazz singer.

Johann brings out the spaghetti and garlic bread and places it in the center of the table. The smell of warm, baked bread permeates from the kitchen. They hold hands and say a blessing. "Thank you

Lord for this food that we are about to receive from
Thy bounty, through Christ, our Lord, Amen."

"You are such a good cook. Be careful or you are
going to make me fat, Johann!"

"Oh May, you need a little meat on your bones,
especially if you are going to have my baby one
day!" He says with a mischievous grin.

"One day, Johann, but right now I just want it to be
me, you and Seven."

She notices that he has lost some of his playfulness
after she says that. But she thinks:

*I can barely take care of myself, let alone a child.
And I don't even know if I want to stay here. How
can I leave if I have a child to think about as well?"*

She does not say any of this to Johann, knowing she
will hurt his feelings. She loves Johann, though the

idea of being tied down with a child is more than she can imagine.

Seven, her fat cat, looks at her with adoration and "purrs" as May talks.

"Oh, Johann, why am I so peculiar?" she laughs, then gives her kitty a lingering pet on his head.

When she pets Seven, tiny sparks fly from her tapering fingertips and he purrs even louder. She isn't sure why this happens, but whenever she feels anxious, like her heart is thumping too fast in her chest, or her mind is racing at a million miles a minute, everything she touches has static electricity.

She likes to tap Johann's arm when he isn't listening to her and sometimes he gets shocked.

"Darn you, May, you zapped me again!"

He grabs his arm and rubs it with a frown on his face.

“Ha, ha! Well that’s what you get for not listening!” She then smiles sweetly. It bothers Johann that she turns from cold to hot like that.

Her favorite trick is to predict what Johann will say before he says it. Then when Johann starts talking she finishes his sentence.

"I see this woman wearing a red velvet hat, with white fur that lines her face, and while she is looking down at her yappy dog that she is walking..." Johann is saying.

“The wind picks up and takes her hat off her head and down the alleyway!” May finishes Johann's sentence.

"That's a cute trick May, just don't do it with people you don't know," he says with somewhat of a frown on his face.

"I know Johann! Geez! Everyone probably thinks I am weird already."

She gets up from the table and steps over to the edge of the terrace. She runs her fingers across the smooth surface of the balcony railing. Looking down at the people strolling along the street with tears in her eyes May tastes bitterness in the back of her throat.

She turns toward Johann.

"Why do you say things like that? You already know I feel uncomfortable living in this place. How do you think it makes me feel when you point out that I am different?"

"May, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings! Come here, you know I love you!"

Johann walks over to May and wraps his arms around her. She resists for a moment, still feeling the sting of his words. Finally she snuggles her head in his chest and sighs.

"I know, sometimes I wish I didn't have these gifts. Where did they come from? I wish I knew who my parents were. They could tell me."

She closes her eyes and leans against Johann. She feels safe when he holds her like this, and for a few moments they remain in this embrace, forgetting the small argument that brought them together.

They sit down and finish their dinner. When they are done they bring all of their dishes into their tiny kitchen. They have a porcelain sink surrounded

with a shelf covered with herbs that May and Johann use for cooking. Rosemary, cilantro, oregano, basil and thyme emanate with their pungent smells and fill the kitchen.

May and Johann cuddle up on the couch. Night is falling. Every now and then, when the smiley moon is especially bright, May “hovers” in the apartment. She can feel herself start to levitate, and Johann tries to grab her ankle before she flies too high, but she is quick, and flutters to the other side of the room, giggling the whole time.

Johann tells May she has special "gifts" and it isn't unusual.

"But I don't know anyone else who can do what I do," she says to Johann wistfully.

"There are a lot of people like you, you just haven't met them yet," Johann says.

May detects a forced lightness to his tone, and she feels uncomfortable and uncertain.

"I am twenty six years old. If I haven't met them yet, when will I meet them?" May says with a slight tinge of sarcasm.

"Johann?"

"Yes, May?"

"Today, when I went to the library, I found this book. It was about Irish witches. I know this sounds crazy, but there was a photograph of a couple. It was really faded, but the woman in the picture looked like she could be my mother, and the man looked like the man in my dreams. They were witches, though. Can I show you their picture?"

Johann's heart begins to race. He feels nervous all of a sudden.

"Sure, let me see," he says.

May turns to the page with the couple.

"See? That woman has my hair, and my eyes. And the man, he looks like the man in my dreams."

"Hmm....I do see a resemblance now that you mention it. That is odd!" Johann says. "Maybe you are a witch!" he laughs, but his eyes are serious and he doesn't look at her.

"I mean, I know I am not a witch, but why do I feel so connected to this couple?"

"Probably because you wish you had a mother and father, Honey. It is okay. I am here for you." He reaches over and pulls her to him.

"I suppose you are right. I do wish I had parents to talk to. Well, at least I have you, Johann. I love you!" And she gives him a tight hug.

Johann knows May is magical. He also recognizes her parents, Queen Lenore and King Thomas as the couple in the picture. It is a much younger version of them, when they were newly married, but it is definitely them.

He knows the time is coming near to sit down and talk to May. He just isn't ready to tell her where she came from yet. He likes their normal, peaceful life in the Village, and knows that everything will change once she learns the truth.

He looks down at May as she gazes over the balcony. She is small-boned, with tiny feet and delicate, expressive hands. May's eyes are

sometimes brilliant blue, the color of the sky, at other times speckled, with hints of green, brown and grey. Oddly, though, she seems distant, as if she hears what he says, but is far away in another place, another time.

Johann notices that May's face is heart-shaped, with high cheekbones and high forehead. Her skin is fair, but becomes flushed in the heat of the city during the summer months. Although she has been told that she has been faired-haired all of her life by Johann, May's locks are dirty blonde with small hints of gold throughout.

Johann lovingly follows May's sparkly mane cascading over her small shoulders and down her back. Sometimes the wind catches her hair when she runs beside Johann on grassy trails in the local park, and her locks looks like spun gold to him. He

likes to watch her as she gathers her hair and twists it into a thick bun on top of her head. She wears long dresses and gold sandals that show off her tanned feet in the summer. When it is especially hot, she puts on a floppy hat to cover her face so she won't get burned. He thinks that her movements are graceful and catlike. To Johann, May is lovely and has an ethereal quality about her, as if she might vanish if he looks away for too long.

Johann is a painter. May looks down at his fingers and observes that they have stains on the tips that never seem to wash off. He picks up his brush from the pallet and mixes the colors of brown and green, and uses it to draw the buildings in shadows. Using a small cup of water, he swishes the brush just for a minute and adds a blurred line along the edges to indicate the dimension of the structure.

Most of his paintings are of the vibrant Village and the artsy people living there. Many of the Villagers are writers, poets, actors and dancers. He is very interested in humanity, and spends hours sketching the people milling down on the sidewalks below their balcony.

Johann has a long, curly, dark brown mane he pulls back with a band. His movements are quick and to the point. He doesn't waste time pulling all of his hair in. It is so unruly, he has long since stopped trying to tame it, so when it is down, it swirls around his face and his neck.

May watches as a breeze from the balcony lifts little tendrils off his face and across his forehead. He brushes the stray locks back impatiently with his paint stained fingers. May studies Johann's olive-colored skin, and large, almond-shaped dark eyes,

which sometimes turn to a meadow green or dark grey, depending on the lighting.

When May looks up at Johann he is tall, and towers over her. She is over a foot shorter than Johann. He tries to stoop over to put his arms around her, but she floats up to give him kisses and hugs around his neck.

Lately, however, Johann feels May has been distant and cold toward him. She turns her head or looks down at her writing as he talks. At times he gets frustrated with her. It is as if his innocent little May has a sinister side of her personality that is beginning to emerge. It is during these times when they disagree that May gets a defiant look in her eyes, refusing to look at him, which Johann notices more and more.

“Love, why is it that you argue with me on every point?”

She cannot answer him, and continues to look away with her eyebrows furrowed and the corners of her mouth turned downward.

No matter how much she disagrees with him, however, Johann loves May. It does worry him, though, that she seems to be changing into this person he does not know. He isn't certain if he labels her behavior sinister. Maybe it is more mischievous.



CHAPTER 2

Magical May

Once in a while, when Johann comes home after shopping in the Village, he finds May hovering behind the front door, close to the ceiling. When he looks up, she comes crashing down on top of him.

“What the heck!” he yells, and May laughs and laughs until her stomach hurts.

“One day you’re going to give me a heart attack!”

“Oh come on Johann”, May can barely get out between giggles, “I’m just playing!”

One of her favorite tricks is to pretend that she is sleeping beside Johann. When he closes his eyes, May creeps out of bed and stands beside him. She taps him gently on his nose, and he opens his eyes

and looks up to see her hovering over him in her white nightgown.

“Whoa!” he yells out, and she bursts out laughing and crumbles to the floor.

What is going on? Johann is beginning to wonder. Is she just playing? Is she angry with me? I don't get it.

When he asks her if anything is wrong, May brushes his questions off and says “everything is fine,” and “it isn't any big deal.” May is beginning to get an attitude of annoyance with him if he questions her too much about this new behavior.

Her mood gets especially dark and morose when it rains and then quickly gets sunny again.

Johann thinks, *she can't remember the weather in Ireland. She was too little when she was taken. I*

don't understand. Maybe she is feeling stress about living here in the Village, and being cooped up. I think we should get out more. I could always paint at the park while she writes.

But when he suggests this to May, she says,

"I'm fine writing in the apartment. You know I don't like to be around all of those people. Why are you imagining things?"

Imagining things? You are anti-social and I feel like I am walking on egg shells around you.

Something is not right, he thinks with a growing uncertainty as to where this is all going.

Johann is beginning to wish he had someone to talk to about his mounting uneasiness concerning May's behavior, but he pretty much keeps to himself and isn't used to complaining. He is grateful, however,

that they still have many peaceful times in their little flat.

May and Johann live in a charming rustic apartment on the 3rd floor of a nineteenth-century walk-up with 15-foot ceilings. They have a grated fireplace made of burnished wrought iron. On either side of the mantle are recessed shelves filled with books, from the swirly ceiling down to the unfinished wooden floor. In one corner of the room, May can actually sit surrounded by her novels and a softly lit lamp. May likes to call this area "her library."

Two overstuffed chairs are angled in front of the fire, so May can keep her feet warm. The window in their living room reaches from the lofted, ornate ceiling down to a pillowed, window seat, in which May's cat Seven lounges.

On their patio are pottery planters with geraniums and ivy. May has a gift for growing all sorts of vegetables and flowers. She whispers to them out on the balcony under the milky moon. The wisteria and blue bells unfold to turn their tiny little faces up to her. She smiles and whispers and coos little lullabys, and the blossoms lean toward her as if to listen closer.

This is where she feels peaceful, with her mysterious perennials in the middle of the bustling Village. Although she is surrounded by people, buildings and sounds, she creates her own tiny oasis with Johann and her cat in their little flat surrounded with her fairy garden.

When May is not tending to her potted plants, she is writing, but often Seven tips the ink well over, and splatters the newly written page. “Oh, Seven, you

fat cat! What have you done? Again! You better watch yourself, or I may just dip the end of your tail in the ink!”

She never does, of course, because she does not want Seven to poison himself licking the ink off.

“Purr.....” meows Seven and he jumps on her lap.

“Mmhmm, you think you are so cute. Well, you are!”

Seven gives May a smiley, Cheshire cat grin. He is a crème-colored Himalayan Ragdoll with chocolate-tipped ears and feet. He has majestic lion's paws and a sweet, pixie face.

May named her cat Seven after winning a dice game she played on a cruise she went on with Johann. The game is called "craps" and the object is to roll a 7 or an 11. Each time May won, she

saved her chips, and then by the end of the night she had enough to buy the Himalayan kitty that she wanted. She persuaded Johann to take her to Rhode Island where she had found a cattery. After meeting the cat breeder, the owner brought out Seven. He was the biggest kitten of the litter, and May fell in love. She named him Seven and they have been inseparable ever since.

Since then, Seven is always purring or sleeping. May watches him tap his paw on her leg or hand trying to get her to pet him. Other than that, he is content to lie in front of the crackling, chestnut fire on his favorite pillow, or on the windowsill, while he basks in the warmth of the summer sun that has fallen low in the sky.

Johann's love for May is unconditional and selfless. May loves Johann, but there is always a

small part of her that does not completely give herself emotionally to Johann. Sometimes this disconnect that she feels causes small rifts in their idyllic apartment. The distance that she keeps is unconscious, but something about their life in New York seems off balance and wrong to May. She tries meditation and even goes to a spiritual guide to understand her irritability and discontent, but nothing is revealed. The mystic gives her a questioning look, however, and then just smiles.

When May leaves, the fortune teller thinks to herself,

This young woman is not human. I wonder which fairy or witch tribe she comes from and why doesn't she know? Well, there must be a reason no one has told her.

May feels even more confused as she walks away with her head down. Perhaps because she feels so off kilter being where she is physically, May loses herself in fiction and writes stories of faraway places, especially places by the sea. She has known Johann since childhood; at least that is what he tells her.

She can't remember her childhood for some strange reason. Any memory before the age of five is blurred and surreal. The main thing that stands out when she gets flashes of the past is a little kitten that she plays with and marsh grass that surrounds her and the cat. A warm, rosy feeling engulfs her and she feels love.

Johann had told her that she had been in a car accident with her parents when she was a child and they had been killed. Since he was close with her

family, and because there was no one else to be found that was related to the girl, he became her guardian. He had sent her to a boarding school in Upstate New York because he felt it was safe and also had an excellent reputation. In addition, he wanted her close enough so that he could visit her every weekend.

May believed his story at times, but every now and then she was haunted in her dreams by an image of a handsome man, with sandy, white hair, and a brilliant smile. It seemed that in these dreams with this fatherly figure, she was about three or four and they were sitting in the sand by the ocean. When she caught a reflection of herself from the sleepy ocean, she saw tiny wings attached to her back.

“Ah, Lassie, do not venture too close to the sea, or you will surely get the hem of your gown soggy!” he shouts, in a hearty, robust laugh.

“Oh, Papa, please, I will only get my feet wet!” she replies. Besides, if the waves get too high, I will just fly above them!”

“Aye Mistress May, as you wish, but be careful!” But then he gets in a boat and starts to row away from her.

She calls out, "Papa, where are you going? Take me with you!"

But he says, “No Lassie, you cannot go where I am going. I will see you again one day.”

May tries to hold on to these dreams, but when she is awakened by the sounds of Johann turning in the bed, or Seven purring beside her, she tries to

quickly fall asleep again, so she can continue where she left off. But the reverie is gone and she often has a feeling of something lost. Her heart feels heavy and she wishes that she had someone to call “Papa”.

On these nights, when she cannot sleep, she gets up and tiptoes across the worn, wooden floors of the bedroom and gently turns the doorknob to open the door.

Seven jumps off of the bed and follows her out into the living room with his big paws making clicking sounds on the wood. May makes her way to the balcony and sits on her white, wicker chair. She reaches over and starts absently pulling off the withered petals of flowers in their pots. She then flips the dirt over with her little garden shovel. The rich, earthy smell of the aromatic soil comforts her

and Seven rolls around on his back waiting for her to pet him.

She runs her hand down his back, and scratches under his chin.

"Meow...." He says loudly, and May picks him up and cuddles with him. She stares at the stars up in the sky and wonders how old they are.

Have they always been there? Why did they seem so much brighter in her dreams?

Finally feeling sleepy, May gathers Seven and uses small steps to tiptoe across the floor. She climbs into the bed beside Johann, fluffs her pillow and puts it under her neck. She practices her breathing to lull herself to sleep.

One, two breaths in. One, two, three, four breaths out.

Seven doesn't leave her much room as he scoots in between her and Johann, but she is used to it and eventually falls asleep.

When May questions Johann about details of her past, he tries to brush off May's inquiries, but at times he worries she has to be told what had really happened. She has questions about her extended family.

He says he does not know.

"It doesn't make sense Johann! I must have some family, somewhere. Do I have any brothers or sisters? Maybe they live in Ireland and we could go visit?"

"Johann, there is this older man, I don't know who he is, but I keep dreaming about him. Are you sure my father is dead?" she asks.

She looks at him with anticipation, her head cocked to one side.

“Yes, dearest May.”

Johann doesn't look directly at May; his gaze is just a little above her head. She feels somewhat disconnected and unsure.

“Well maybe he is in Heaven and is trying to communicate with me?”

Her voice trails off slightly.

"I have heard that when someone dies, they look extremely handsome or beautiful. I feel that it is my father and he wants to talk to me.”

She waits for him to reply. Johann takes his time.

He shuffles his left foot a little, and appears uncomfortable. Eventually he says with a forced enthusiasm,

“One day we will take go to Ireland and we can look to see if you have relatives there, how about that?”

"That would be amazing!"

But May again feels like she is on shifting quick sand and doesn't quite believe Johann is being sincere. She brings the topic up often, but he manages to put her off each time she asks. He knows eventually, though, he will have to tell her the truth about her parents and what happened to her when she was five years old.

When May was younger, Johann had visited her on the weekends at the boarding school. She'd wait for him at the end of the willowy, windy lane, lined with thick maples and majestic, oak trees. When he would round the bend, he'd catch her eye and she'd

break out in a grin and giggle with delight that he had finally arrived.

“You’re here! I have been waiting for you all day!” she'd squeal and back up, make a running jump, fly above the ground, and leap into his arms.

“Be careful Mistress May, we are not alone, little one. Someone could see you,” he'd say.

But May could not help flying when she was excited.

“Did you miss me?” he teased her.

“I always miss you! Are we going to the park again?” she'd ask excitedly.

“Well, of course, Mistress May, anywhere your little heart desires. And look what I have brought for you.”

“What is it?” May would ask breathlessly.

“Well, take a look.”

And when May opened her package with her little fingers, she found a small silver locket with a picture of Johann on one side and her on the other.

“I love it! I will wear it forever!” she'd say excitedly and give Johann a big kiss on the cheek.

“Well, whenever you miss me or feel sad, look at your locket and know that I am close to your heart,” he'd reply.

Johann liked to take May to Central Park or riding horses in the country side. She loved the Park with its crispy, clear smell.

“Oh, Johann!” she'd whisper breathlessly, “We're here!”

Their first stop was the zoo, where there were Disney characters waiting to get their pictures taken with the little ones.

May had taken so many pictures with Snow White, her favorite character, that the actor wearing the costume called her by name. The zoo included a children's section that adults could not enter unless accompanied by a child.

Johann and May loved the old building that strongly resembled a castle, on the zoo grounds. Sometimes they watched Shakespeare in the Park, a theatrical production that played at dusk, while eating popcorn and drinking lemonade. They often sat on one of the rolling, green hills and could feel the warm wind of summer and smell cotton candy.

When he took her to ride the horses she'd say,

“Can we stay a little bit longer? Please!”

And so they'd take the longest, trail rides they could find through the sparkling, emerald pastures and rolling hillsides in the sleepy countryside.

The horses were drawn to her and lowered themselves so she could climb aboard their backs. May rubbed her hand on her mare's fur, warm from the autumn sun. She liked to lay her face against its neck and smell its musky, pungent skin. May loved anything having to do with the horses, the smell of their leather saddles, the hay in the barns, even the dusty dirt that flew around when the majestic creatures walked about.

Upstate New York was far enough away to enjoy nature, but close enough that they could be back before dark.

As May got older, they started taking road trips down to the sun-drenched beaches in New Jersey. Johann parked the car on one of the streets alongside of the colorful, beach cottages. The smell of cooking, Philly subs from the local vendors emanated along the boardwalk and the couple followed the wafting fried and salty deliciousness to the booths that lined the sidewalk.

Usually May and Johann liked to buy their subs, stacked with onions, green and red peppers and provolone cheese. They brought their sandwiches, French fries and Coca Colas to one of the benches facing the ocean and leisurely took their time, enjoying the sweet, buttery taste of the bread with the mix of grilled vegetables, stuffed in between. The French fries were made fresh and had a mixture

of salt and vinegar crunchiness that they washed down with their icy, fizzy Cokes.

Feeling full and sleepy, Johann and May made their way down to the inviting, sparkling beach. After dozing on their blankets with their toes curled in the warm sand, Johann would yawn and look toward the sparkling, diamond ocean that called to him, like a child wanting to play. He loved to surf, and especially liked the longer, wooden surf boards. He'd carry the board on his head toward the breaking surf at the shoreline, and then lower himself onto the board and out to the frolicking, white-capped waves.

The summer days lazily drifted by, and May began to have feelings for Johann that she had not had before. She started to notice when he surfed that his skin was a burnt bronze and the muscles in his back

glistened in the sparkling blue of the ocean. She began to fantasize about what it would be like to live with Johann and spend all of their time together.

She loved looking at his strong profile, and the gentle curve of his smile. Sometimes, when he laughed, the left side of his mouth turned up a little more than the right, and she adored it. He had the deepest dimples, that seemed to have been permanently etched into his cheeks, and his hearty laugh made her feel cherished and loved.

May did not know how old Johann was, since he never appeared to age.

“Hmm...I think I’m about 2000 years old.”

She teased him back, “you’ve been saying you are 2000 for the last ten years! Don’t you ever age?”

Every now and then Johann gave her a sideways glance to see if she had caught on yet.

Johann had fallen in love with May as she got older, and he felt that she'd become his soul mate. She had such a kind spirit most of the time, when she was not being mischievous, and he loved everything about her; from her beautiful locks, to her small frame and delicate feet.

But mostly, Johann loved May's energetic spirit and zest for life. They could talk for hours about anything, or just sit together in silence, completely content. He also knew that she was part Hedge Witch and Sidhe fairy and could live forever, just like him. She would always be young and beautiful.

This eventually had to be explained to her, when she realized she wasn't aging. But he could cross

that bridge when they got to it. He loved the life they had, and didn't want to spoil it by possibly frightening her as to her true heritage.

And because Johann wanted to spend the rest of his life with May, he waited until she graduated from boarding school and asked for her hand in marriage. But because May was so ambivalent about what she wanted to do with her life, she refused to marry Johann.

“Johann you know that I love you! Can't we just live together for a while and then decide?”

Since Johann adored May so, and knew she was plagued by indecision, he agreed. In addition, there was no rush, since they might never die, he thought. And so, they lived in the little flat together.

Johann knew he had to tell her that she had not always lived in America, and that her father was still alive. He dreaded this day, because he also knew that not only would May grieve the fact that she had missed so many years with her papa, but could be hurt knowing that Johann had intentionally deceived her.

He hoped that she'd be able to see that he had taken her from a place that could have ultimately destroyed her, and he had pledged to protect her from any harm. The pledge had been given to her father a long time ago.

Because Johann was an artist and May loved to stay home with him, she decided to begin writing. She dabbled in various jobs such as waitressing in the Village, but always was too distracted to get any of the orders right. Besides, she didn't like to work.

She liked to daydream and read her books. So it just seemed natural that she would love to write fiction, and once she started, she just couldn't stop. She could get lost in her stories, and they just flowed from her soul like a fast moving brook.

Because of her interest in writing, May decided to enroll in a local community college near Greenwich Village. She chose journalism and spent her afternoons doing her homework at one of the local cafes.

While she was there studying one day, she met a young woman named Leah. May looked up one day as this woman was walking by her in the library. May noticed that she was also small-boned, with auburn hair and gold highlights. She wore her hair in a loose bun on top of her head, and as she turned it fell loose and pieces drifted absently in the air.

Leah went to the community college as well, and was studying drama. She was trying to break into show business, but so far had only gotten bit parts in independent films and local theatre in the Village. She also liked to sing and had a raspy voice.



She reminds me of old shows I used to see on television of Janis Joplin in the '60s. What was that place? Oh yea, Woodstock, May thought.

They became friends and May frequently invited Leah over to the apartment to study or just hang out.

On the weekends when Leah came over she played her guitar and sing while her boyfriend, Joe, played the saxophone. Johann and May listened with their fat cat, Seven. The four of them would talk about everything, from traveling to cooking, to the next gig Leah and Joe were scheduled to play.

“Leah and Joe, when will you be playing at the café again? I want Johann to see you,” May would ask.

“This weekend as usual, unless I get picked up by Hollywood before that!” Leah laughed.

“You never know my friend. Maybe I will sprinkle some gold dust on you and you will make it big in Glitter Town!” May giggled.

"Johann, let's go and watch them play and then we can all get something to eat when they are done."

“That sounds good. You know that is my favorite place to paint. Who knows, maybe I can sketch out a drawing of you two and the band.”

"Great idea, Johann," Joe would say.

"Then we could display it out in front to get more people interested in your music," Johann said.

“That would be awesome, Johann! Thanks! Hey, May, I kind of thought you were a witch. Work your magic girl!” Leah said.

Johann turned toward Leah, giving her a quick look, and then averted his gaze away from her. The two women kept chatting.

Does everyone see that she is magical besides May? Thought Johann.

Johann knows the time is coming to tell May of her royal heritage. But not quite yet. These are the most precious of days, hanging out with May, Joe and Leah, and just having fun.



CHAPTER 3

A Witch in the Village

May is happy with Johann most of the time, and feels drawn to him, almost attached physically. They have one remarkable, physical feature in common. May has a mark on her back. Some might call it a birthmark, but it resembles a moth.

It is faded, and part of its left wing looks broken somehow. It has an unusual mix of colors of brown and gold. Some people think that May had a tattoo placed on her back, and she becomes tired of saying that it has always been there.

So, it is just easier to keep it covered as much as possible. When the dog days of summer come, however, she throws caution to the wind and pulls her hair up in a loose bun. Because her tattoo is

noticeable then, she politely agrees with people who say it must be a tattoo.

The unusual thing is that Johann has an image of a moth as well, on his left ankle. He also claims that he was born with it, but like May, he says thank you when people comment about how beautiful his “tattoo” is. Johann’s mark is a bit peculiar though.

Just as May’s moth has a broken wing, Johann’s moth has what appears to be burnt or singed wings, mostly at the tips. And every now and then, when the weather changes suddenly and the winds pick up around the city, Johann complains that his ankle burns. It is also at this time, he feels a sad pull on his heart toward May and he does not know why.

Johann and May spend most of their days in their apartment off of Bleecker Street. It overlooks the

market place. It is also a street many musicians perform where many impromptu plays take place.

This is also where most outdoor events are held such as art exhibits and food shows. As May and Johann sit or stand on their balcony enjoying all of the festivities, with Seven cuddled up between them, May exclaims,

"We can see everything from our balcony. We don't even have to leave!"

The smells of the just baked bread waft up, along with the citrusy tang of oranges and apples in the fresh market below.

May and Johann stroll down and linger at each stall in the mornings before choosing their fruits and vegetables. May prefers to do her shopping early in the day, before the noonday shoppers converge on

the Village. And because they frequent the market every morning, they are well known and loved by all of the locals.

Johann spends his early afternoons, while May naps with Seven after her classes, going through the market to get to his favorite bookstore. He likes to buy old leather-bound books that have been sold to the local, used bookshop. The store is slightly overstuffed with magazines, paperbacks, tables and chairs. It has a dusty, papery smell to it. He often finds aged, weathered paintings in the flea market.

“Aw, the joy of a bargain!” he thinks.

He could spend hours in these places, perusing the aisles for any new finds to bring home. He especially likes the unvarnished, wooden, creaky floor. Because it is so quiet, as he moves from aisle

to aisle the floors complain loudly in their loud, creaky way.

As he peruses the books lined along the windows, sometimes he has to brush them off, just to see the title. Johann usually buys those old, forgotten stories, and lovingly uses a soft cloth with oil to restore them to their original condition.

He can almost hear the words of the authors thanking him for taking the time to refurbish their works and making them come alive again.

“There is no friend, as loyal as a book,” says Hemingway. And, “There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.”

“I don’t want just words. If that’s all you have for me, you’d better go,” says F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Johann imagines the two authors sitting down together smoking a cigar and having a brandy as they discuss their novels. He especially enjoys Hemingway's writings because his style is simple, direct, and unadorned. And because Hemingway avoids using the adjective whenever possible, since he is so adept at describing emotion, without the flowery poetry of other writers, the effect is far more dramatic. Johann feels that Hemingway's writing is the way people actually talk.

If Johann isn't searching for novels and paintings, he is in the market looking for soaps and perfumes for May. May adores her bath oils and shampoos. Johann has learned which toiletries that May loves, and he spends hours getting just the right ones.

Once he gets them home, May acts like a young girl, so excited to get her gifts. She stacks all of her

shampoos and perfumes along her claw-footed bathtub, on little shelves Johann has set up.

In addition to her soaps, May has candles of all sizes and shapes and scents around the tub, along with her tiger lilies and ferns squished between. The plants thrive in the bathroom, because above the shelves is a window with old shutters, that May flings wide in the day time.

She could easily spend hours in her bathroom oasis, and many times does, especially on rainy, cold mornings, while Johann stokes the fire in the living room. Once the fire has warmed the room, May wraps herself in a big cotton towel, slips on her robe and slippers, and comes to sit with Johann.

She drinks chai tea with cardamom, cinnamon, vanilla creamer and almond milk, and Johann drinks

his coffee with vanilla soy milk. And of course, they never forget Seven, who laps up his bowl of milk.

Because May and Johann are both artists, they spend many mornings with May reading to Johann, and Johann painting scenes from the apartment, of either May or Seven, or the bustling Village below the balcony.

Johann loves to hear May's soft, excited voice when she is caught up in her storytelling.

May begins with a hushed tone:

“Scarlett follows the fluttery butterfly into the forest. Suddenly she is surrounded by a dozen or so of his friends. Uh oh, how am I to know where you are, Butterfly? And as she turns around, the trees

converge on the opening of the woods and she is caught in the otherworld."

May looks up at Johann.

"Well, go on! What's next?"

Johann is leaning toward May expectantly. May continues.

"At first Scarlette is confused, not knowing if it is day or night, because twilight has come, and the shadows engulf the trees and forest beyond. As she gets her night eyes, she notices at her feet, tiny white orbs that change shape when she touches them."

"I love your stories. Where do they come from May?"

"I just imagine what it would be like, living somewhere else, in a different era."

“Well when this novel comes out, will you autograph it for me?” Johann smiles.

“That depends on how well it sells. You may be my only buyer!” May laughs.

“I doubt that May. You are an amazing storyteller.”

Johann begins to sketch. May feels warm and cozy as she watches Johann. He dips the brush into the white and then grey paint, and uses a light touch and flick of his wrist to make an arching, curved line.

"Viola, a seagull!"

He then uses his thumb and paints four dots on each corner and creates a turtle.

"You are so talented, Johann. Do you think you could show me how to paint people? I know how to

draw their faces; it is just their bodies I can never get right."

"Of course Mistress May, whatever you wish."

He takes her hand and kisses it. Other than the occasional wistfulness May feels when she thinks of the sea, and the handsome, fatherly figure in her dreams, she experiences happiness with Johann in their little flat, most of the time.

One day, as May is napping, Johann goes to the market as he usually does. He has heard of some lavender-scented, essential oils that May has been talking about, and he thinks he might find some in the marketplace. After he has bought some espresso from a coffee shop on the edge of the square, along with a croissant, Johann feels drawn

to an area of the market that he does not usually frequent.

The stall is set up off of the main street, at the entrance to an alleyway. Although Johann hasn't been in this area of the market before, it strikes him that this booth is out of place. But it does have brightly colored scarves, and flowers. The flowers are unusually vibrant and colorful for this time of year, since it is early fall.

In addition, Johann can smell the sweet odor of vanilla, lavender and a fragrance he has not smelt for a long time. He cannot place his finger on it, but he thinks it is Frankincense. He remembers that smell when he was living in Ireland. He is drawn to the little outdoor shop.

When he gets to the booth, Johann notices an exotic looking woman arranging her flowers on a table.

She has flowing black hair, the color of a raven, and crystal blue eyes, the shade of a sapphire stone.

Her skin seems to have a glittery tint to it, as if she has covered herself with pixie dust, or at least gold powder. She has full lips and startling white teeth that look razor-sharp to Johann.

The woman beckons to him, and smiles, while waving Johann toward her. She moves in a fluid, snake-like motion, and before he knows it, she is upon him. She asks him what he is looking for, and surely there was some oil or flower that he likes.

When the woman touches his arm, Johann immediately pulls it away, as if he has been burned.

The woman exclaims in an Irish accent,

“Oh, sir, I’m so sorry! Here, takes a flower for your girlfriend, or one of me oils. I be seeing her at the marketplace, and I like the way she smells of the lavender and the spice. I have all of those spices here. Please, take a flower, Love, it will bring you back to me one day. Jurusha’s the name. We’ll go to the pub and have a pint!”

Her lips curl up in a slithery grin as he walks away. He catches a fleeting glimpse, out of the corner of his eye, of her grin turning into a sneer.

Johann takes the flower, walks away, and throws it in the alley.

Why doesn't she recognize him? He wonders.

He knows her as Jurusha, a Daayan witch from County Cork, Ireland. Although the last time she

had seen him, he had been a Hedge Witch, most
witches recognize each other.

*Perhaps it is because she is getting older. It seems
like she isn't as crafty, he thinks.*



CHAPTER 4

Jurusha

What Johann does not know, is that Jurusha does recognize him, but she chooses to feign ignorance as to his identity. She is not ready to make her move toward May yet, but when the time is right, she will swoop in and whisk her away.

You see, because it has taken Jurusha much longer than she expected to come across the cozy couple, she is more than willing to bide her time until they are both caught unaware.

I may have let May escape through my fingers before, but I will not let her go so easily again, of that you can be sure!



While Johann and May had been living their peaceful lives in Greenwich Village, in their happy flat, Jurusha had been roaming miserably through the forests of Cork County, and then all of Ireland looking for Princess May. She converted to a raven and flew from Dublin to Galway and even to the Cliffs of Moher, but could not find May and Johann.

Finally, Jurusha called upon her Daayan witch sisters to open up a vision of where the girl could be. There was a coven of eight witches sitting in a circle around a fire, and they were chanting in a low, melodic rhythm. As they swayed back and forth, the mantra got louder. Suddenly, a witch stood up, and with eyes closed, said,

"I see the couple in a New Land, with a statue of a woman with a torch. There are a lot of people and

buildings, some so high they seem to touch the sky." And then the witch says, "Green Witch."

"Green Witch? Where is that? Sounds like my kind of place," Jurusha laughs.

"Close to the statue of the woman," replies the witch.

But as Jurusha asks around the hamlet, she is told the place must be Greenwich Village, and it is in New York.

America! He has taken her far. But not far enough away that I will not capture her again!

That is when she planned to set up shop in the marketplace. She suspected Johann had taken the girl, because he had been the king's closest confidante and friend. Jurusha also knows Johann is not only a Hedge Witch, but a shapeshifter as well,

and it will be tricky figuring out what form he has taken now that he is with May.

When she gets to the Village, she decides to take up residence in a flat along a cobble stone street across from May and Johann. From her front window she can see their comings and goings in their apartment. Although this place is quite different from Ireland, and especially Cork County, she likes the smells and rhythm of the Village.

Her apartment sits on top of a Japanese sushi restaurant, which is beside a tattoo parlor. From her balcony she can see the people on the street below. When the lighting is bright, she oftentimes sees May curled up in front of the fire with a beastly cat, and Johann pretending to be some kind of artist, with long, black hair she wants to yank out!

Who does he think he is taking away her most prized possession? Does he think that she will just let May go and forget about her? That will never happen! May is the one-person King Thomas, May's father, loves more than anything, and I am bound not only to destroy Thomas, but May as well!

There is no wrath as violent as a woman scorned, and Jurusha vows to not only take down King Thomas and his daughter, but any Hedge Witch standing in her way.

She decides the only way she can capture May again, is to be where she frequents every day, the market place. Because she knows May has always loved perfumes and soaps as a child, she decides she will pose as a peddler of lovely fragrances May adores. By catching her unaware, Jurusha surely will be able to draw her in.

The witch also knows May likes to go to yoga on Saturdays, at a meditation studio in the Village. She has seen her with the actress, entering the building. That works out perfectly. She decides to apply part-time as the yoga instructor.

“The other instructor will have to go. Hopefully she will leave without too much of a fuss. I hate to make humans disappear.”

The only problem she is encountering, however, blasted Johann is always by May's side, and it just will not do. For she knows what a powerful adversary Johann will be if she threatens to take his May away from him. She also knows Johann is in love with May, by the way he looks at her in the market place and holds her hand.

*Darn blasted that Johann! He shan't keep me
from capturing that child again, on that you can be
sure!*

Although this child has grown since the last time
Jurusha has laid eyes on her, when she was a small
child of about five, she still has the same heart-
shaped face and delicate frame.

*She is the spitting image of her mother, Lenore
O'Halloran, with similar graceful mannerisms and
style of dressing. Although her mother's hair had
been jet black, May's hair is fair like her father's.*

*Too bad I had to get rid of the children and Lenore.
The little brats were easy enough to capture and
throw into the forest. I thought I would have
trouble killing Lenore, but she was a weak Sidhe
Fairy, no match for a Daayan like me!*

When May passes Jurusha in the marketplace, and Jurusha hears her speak, the witch notices the young woman does not have an Irish accent, but it is because she had been taken from Ireland by Johann as a very young child. Sometimes May passes so close to Jurusha in the marketplace that the witch can easily grab her. But she wants to make sure that no one sees her capture the princess, especially not Johann. When she takes May this time, she plans on it being forever.



CHAPTER 5

King Albert

King Albert O'Halloran, May's grandfather, had been born in Skibbereen. He was a human, but had fallen in love with a beautiful Hedge witch named Maetilda who had red hair, the color of burnished leaves in the fall, and fair skin, with cheeks that were rosy. Her eyes were emerald green and twinkled when she laughed, which was all of the time.

They had met at one of Albert's lavish parties on the castle grounds. Maetilda was one of the servants in the castle, and one day, as she was watering the roses growing in the garden on the front lawn, Albert spotted her from his latticed window. She reminded him of a fairy princess.

Her hair appeared to be on fire in the brilliant sun, and when she turned to him, her face looked like an angel.

“Who is the fair lass on my lawn?” he inquired of his male servant.

“That is Miss Maetilda, your Majesty. She is a servant in your castle.”

“I must meet her! Please, arrange for a meeting with her tonight at my party.”

So, that night, as Albert was greeting his guests, the lovely Maetilda, a bit bewildered, arrived at the party in a sparkling, azure gown. It was simple, but showed off her hour glass figure perfectly, and her porcelain skin. King Albert had to catch his breath.

“Oh my, you are the most radiant creature, my lady that I have ever encountered! May I sit and talk with you for a bit?”

Maetilda became extremely tongue-tied at that moment, but graciously took his hand as he led her to the balcony overlooking the garden and the sea.

They talked for hours, and by the end of the night, King Albert’s heart was utterly taken by the beautiful maiden. Although the witch, Maetilda, was poor and had no social standing, Albert could not help himself from being smitten by her, and asked for her hand in marriage.

An engagement commenced, and Albert courted Maetilda for a year. They spent many peaceful moments in the garden where Albert had first

spotted her. And just as King Albert had fallen in love, Maetilda fell head over heels for the king.

A lavish wedding was planned and all of the townsfolk and local witches were invited to attend.

Lanterns were placed in the trees, and flowers floated in the pond in front of the castle. The fairies and the fauns from the forest ventured out, including the people known as the Sidhes or “people of the mounds.”



Whenever a group of Sidhes gathered, a strange humming sound, like a million bees, reverberated as the winds picked up. Because of this lovely sound, the wedding had a natural rhythm of music.

The winds brought the sweet smell of roses and hibiscus to the wedding party, and on this wedding night, the fireflies danced and hung in the air around the beautiful bridal couple.

Maidens with harps and children with brilliant flowers in their hair played on the castle ground. The villagers all congregated and wished the king and his new queen happiness and prosperity. They were happy and at peace that their beloved king had finally found a woman, who could be a good and kind queen, to the townspeople, fairies and fawns.

A year went by, and Maetilda announced that she was with child. She had a bewitching, baby boy named Thomas, who was born half witch, half human.

The O'Halloran family's castle was full of love and merriment, and Maetilda enjoyed performing magical tricks every now and then for the amusement of Albert, her husband, and Thomas, her child.

She taught Thomas, when he was old enough, how to become a shapeshifter, so that he could turn from human, to animal or bird, and back again. Albert, being used to all of the Hedge Witches in the County, found all of this magic enchanting, and encouraged Maetilda to extend her healing and herbalism to help the townsfolk when they were sick.

The small boy, Thomas, was well loved by everyone in the hamlet, and when he was a young boy, he had many playmates. Among them was a young witch named, Jurusha. She was a breathtaking beauty, with raven colored hair and startling, crystal blue eyes.

She had a smile that could break hearts, and an endearing laugh that sounded like tinkling glass. She was quick-witted, and could draw all of the other witches in with stories and her gift of gab. Everyone loved being around her and her infectious enthusiasm for fun and merriment.

More than anything, Jurusha loved being around Thomas, and his family in the castle. She did not come from wealth, and was mesmerized by the vastness and ornateness of the royal family's home. But more than the castle, the grounds, the

sumptuous parties and the lavish holidays, Jurusha felt the love and adoration the O'Halloran family had for each other.

Because she was being raised by a single mother who was becoming elderly and frail, she did not have the attention of two parents, and often wished she had been born an O'Halloran and even a Hedge Witch.

Since she did come from a Daayan Cult of Witches, which were usually malevolent and cruel, the kindness of the Hedge Witches enchanted her and she felt happiness and joy at the O'Halloran estate. The O'Halloran's took Jurusha in as their own, knowing her family circumstances, and she spent most of her days and nights with them. Because their castle was so large, she stayed the

night in her own enchanting room on many an occasion.

As Jurusha grew into an adolescent, she began to have stronger feelings for Thomas. She could gaze at him all day, with his white blonde hair and light blue eyes. She felt without him she would be lost.

As they got older, Jurusha began to dream of the day they would wed, and the beautiful children that they would have together. Because they loved the beach so, she planned on a beach wedding with all of their witch friends in attendance. She did not yet know the law concerning Daayans and Hedge Witches.

Hedge witches were unlikely to become involved with Daayan witches within the community, and depending on the individual's personality, were

more likely to prefer maintaining friendly relations with them, rather than get involved in witch relationships. Thomas and Jurusha, however, were very young, and did not understand the law of the witches at that time.

Their favorite game was playing together on the beach and flying over the ocean. Since they were both shapeshifters, they could turn into eagle and raven, in which O'Halloran, being the eagle, would chase Jurusha, the raven. They could fly all day, and sometimes did. When they were tired, they'd rest on the beach and begin again the next day.

Although Thomas had feelings for Jurusha, he had seen a side of her that few had witnessed. When she did not get her way, she would fly into a rage and barrel over the sea. Sometimes she would disappear for weeks, and Thomas had heard rumors

she was capturing Sidhe Fairies and casting them out in the forest. This alarmed Thomas. Being a peaceful Hedge Witch, he was not aware of how volatile a Daayan Witch could be. Because of this occasional display of anger from Jurusha, Thomas knew that he could not marry her.

As much as he loved her, his concern was for the children that he planned to have and he did not feel Jurusha would be a good mother to the eventual heirs to his throne. In addition, he feared that in one of her rages she might hurt the children, and he knew that he could never bear that.

Thomas O'Halloran turned eighteen, and it was time for him to pick a wife.

A beautiful Sidhe fairy had come to the castle many years before and had spoken to his father, King

Albert. She was heartbroken because her children had been taken by a Daayan witch. She wasn't sure who the witch was, but someone had seen a raven scoop the little girls up and take them off toward the forest.

When Thomas heard the story, his heart reached out to the young woman. He discovered her name was Lenore, and that her little girls' names were Anna-Kate and Rachel. His father the king had employed an army made up of Hedge Witches to find the little girls, but the children could not be found.

When it was time to pick a wife, he remembered Lenore, and sought her out in the neighboring town of Baltimore, along the sea. She had never remarried. He learned that her husband had been a fisherman, and had not returned from the sea.

Later, stories were told that his boat had capsized and he had drowned.



Lenore was as fair-haired as Thomas, with hazel eyes and slight build. She had a humble spirit that Thomas had been looking for. He felt certain that

she would be a good mother to his future children. After courting for about a year, he asked for her to marry him, and she accepted.

A marriage soon commenced in which the Sidhe Fairies and the Hedge Witches all attended. The guests all agreed that Lenore was a much better match for Prince Thomas than Jurusha, the Daayan Witch. Many of them had seen the cruelty that Jurusha had displayed when Thomas was not around.

When Jurusha learned of the engagement, she was not only shocked, but devastated, and remained bedridden for weeks. No one could comfort her. Her elderly mother was worried her daughter would never recover from her broken heart. She stayed in the bed for days, inconsolable.

Eventually, her mother coaxed her out of the bed with a few pieces of toast and tea. As Jurusha regained her strength, her heartache turned to a steely hatred, and she plotted how she would destroy Thomas and everyone in his family.



CHAPTER 6

May Elizabeth

Thomas and his new wife, Lenore moved into the west wing of the castle. Although Thomas' heart was still bruised from the broken relationship with Jurusha, he was determined that he'd make his marriage with Lenore work. She did not have the fiery spirit that Jurusha had, but her kindness and gentleness captured Thomas' heart. The king and queen loved her and felt that she was a good fit for their son.

Lenore eventually had a baby girl and named her May Elizabeth. She was a beauty with flaxen colored hair, and eyes that twinkled with merriment when she giggled. She was a chubby baby and was either sleeping or cooing most of the time.

Her grandfather, Albert and her grandmother, Maetilda, adored her. They lavished her with a beautiful nursery that had a whimsical cradle. Maetilda would rock the baby slowly while singing a lovely lullaby. Albert was smitten with the baby also, and when she grew older, he took her for pony rides and long walks by the sea.

Shortly after the baby was born, however, Thomas's wife, Lenore, began to feel ill. She tried to breast feed the baby, but sometimes she was so weak, she was afraid of dropping little May.

Thomas stepped in and tried to prop the baby on Lenore's lap on a pillow while she was in the bed, but Lenore was too weak eventually even for that.

The town doctor was called in and he was perplexed about what was wrong with Lenore. He prescribed her extra vitamins and encouraged the

family to get her to eat and drink as much as possible.

Lenore was becoming less and less responsive to the baby and to her family's pleas to try to eat. She could no longer fly and her wings began to shrivel. Eventually she lapsed into a coma and shortly thereafter died. Thomas was mortified.

“How could this have happened? She was so young and healthy.” His heart broke for little May, for she was now motherless.

A huge funeral was planned and everyone from the county attended. The townspeople were saddened by Princess Lenore's death. Gifts poured in for the baby, May, and all of the nursemaids volunteered to continue nursing the baby.

Thomas was so upset that he didn't know what to do, so his mother Maetilda, took over. She hired a young nurse maid named Paula, who had just given birth to a baby boy. Paula and her son were given their own chambers near May's room, so that Paula could tend to little May whenever she was hungry. Spring turned into summer and then fall, and May was thriving in the castle with her loving family. But soon there was another turn of events. May's grandparents, King Albert and Queen Maetilda were taken ill. Thomas went to look for them one morning in the dining room where they usually ate together, but they were not there.

He knocked on his father's bedroom door and was let in by the king's aide. King Albert lay in his bed sweating profusely and incoherent. "Papa, what is wrong?" Thomas asked nervously. But the king

could not answer him. He was delirious from a fever.

The aide warned Thomas to leave his father's side, in case King Albert was contagious. When Thomas went to his mother's room, she was deathly ill as well. The elderly couple soon passed. There was no one left of the royal family, except Thomas and May.

Thomas was so grief stricken by the loss of his family that he became despondent. He lost interest in everything, including his baby girl, May. The nurse maid, Paula, took care of May and as the months went by, her son, Ian, who had just turned two, and May, became playmates. Paula made sure that she took May to see her father in his chambers every day, but he took no notice of the baby princess.

After the winter and the spring passed, Thomas began to make plans to close off the West end of the castle and sell the livestock and cattle that freely roamed the estate to the West. Now that his parents had passed he had become king. It was everything that he could do to rule his kingdom, but one day Paula came to him with news that something disturbing was happening in the kingdom. The Hedge Witches were beginning to disappear.

Paula did not know what was going on, but she had heard that Jurusha had cast a spell on all of the Hedge Witches and they were vanishing from the kingdom. Thomas became alarmed, and suddenly took an interest in his people. He realized that they needed him for protection, and he also realized that his baby girl needed a father.

Once Thomas decided to rule his kingdom, he enlisted the aid of the Sidhe Fairies and remaining Hedge Witches to form an army to protect the castle and its inhabitants. He opened up the West Wing and allowed anyone who was fearful of Jurusha and the Daayan Witches, to stay with him until all danger had passed.

He knew that the witch was violent, but he had powers of his own, and she did not dare come on the castle grounds. Although he had chosen not to use his craft most of his life, other than shapeshifting as a child with Jurusha, he felt that it was his duty to step in and protect his subjects.

The castle became merry again and the remaining Hedge Witches and fairies had frequent parties and festivals to celebrate the happiness of their king. Thomas began to smile and laugh, and he felt

blessed to have such a loyal kingdom and beautiful baby girl.

May became the center of his world, and he spent all of his free time with her. He had her dressed in the finest dresses and bonnets and loved to take her down to the sea to play by the shore. Her hair was a spun gold that sparkled with the sun. Because her skin was so fair, Thomas positioned an umbrella over her most of the time, to keep her from getting burned. Sometimes they would build sandcastles together and eat the small sandwiches and drinks that Thomas' maid had prepared. The little inlet that they had found was surrounded by craggy rocks and emerald green hills.

The sand was white and brilliant, and Thomas and May enjoyed the mild weather in the summer. The days were warm until midafternoon, and then

Thomas would notice a chill beginning to creep up around them from the rolling hills and mountains to the East. He would wrap May in a sweater, and they would pack up their picnic things and beach toys and make their way back to the estate.

When May was around three years old, Thomas got her a kitten. It was a tabby cat with stripes. May named her kitten, Stormy, because Thomas had found him after it had been raining all night. The kitten had been curled up in the door way of one of the barn and when Thomas went to check on the horses and cows, Stormy came and wrapped himself around Thomas' legs. His heart was taken and he brought the kitty to May.

May and Stormy were inseparable. She had the job of feeding the kitten and she was very careful not to spill his milk. She played with Stormy in the long

silver grass and watchful trees surrounding the stable for the horses.

Sometimes when the sun was particularly warm and hazy, May brought her little blanket and had a picnic with Stormy near the rose bushes. Thomas always looked on, but he knew May liked to think she was independent, so he kept an eye on her from the front of the castle.

Because of the rumors that were going through the kingdom that Jurusha was up to no good, Thomas decided to employ the service of a young Hedge Witch named Johann, who was said to be powerful and strong, to keep an eye on May.

Thomas also knew that Johann's family was spiritual in nature, and he wanted the powerful forces of good to protect his daughter from Jurusha.

Thomas decided to employ this young Hedge Witch as a protector of May.

When the king approached Johann, he said,
“My fine young man. How goes ye? I have a favor to ask of you, that I do. As you know, me daughter, Princess May, is all alone in the world, ‘sept for me. I aim to keep her safe, as much as possible, and I heard you were a strong and powerful Hedge Witch. Could I ask you to watch over me daughter for a large sum, when I cannot be with her?”

Johann loved his king and readily obliged. He had grown up in Cork County as well, and was familiar with the clashes that sometimes occurred between the Daayan Witches and the Hedge Witches. Although he did practice his Hedge craft, he engaged in Earth-based spirituality and believed in

God. He only used his craft when it was absolutely necessary.

Most of the Hedge Witches in Johann's family were powerful midwives or healers. There were also shapeshifters that frequently turned in to ravens or geese. The term "Hedge" signified the boundary of their village. Most of their practice was limited to their small town. Johann, however, was a time traveler as well, so he could migrate out of the County. In addition, he could turn into any sort of creature that he desired. He also worked with the flowers, trees, the elements, the gnomes, the fauns and the fairies, for extra protection.

While Johann was busy protecting the little girl, Jurusha was frequenting the forests and Irish glades looking for unsuspecting Hedge Witches and Sidhe Fairies to capture. Her hatred toward everyone had

grown so fierce, she decided to defeat and rule over them all.

This was no easy feat, being that the Hedges and Sidhes were very powerful and spiritual. But because Jurusha was so full of rage over being rejected by Thomas, her powers had increased and she felt that she could easily defeat the Hedge Witches one by one. Her plan was to turn them all into forest animals to live out their lives scavenging for food.

Jurusha's favorite form to shift into was the black witch moth. Most of the black witch moths that she knew were nocturnal, and were called the Butterflies of Death. Because the legend was if a black witch moth enters the home of someone who is ill, the person will die, Jurusha chose this tribe.

She had entered the chamber of Lenore one summer night, and about a year later had flown into King Thomas' bedroom where the king and the queen were sleeping. That is how she killed the royal family. She chose to not kill Thomas or May because she had other ideas for destroying them. Jurusha's ultimate plan was to capture the child, May, and turn her into a moth. Her goal was to make May spend the rest of her days flying only at night, during the light of the moon, and eventually dying from getting too near a flame. And Jurusha meant to provide that flame when she had finished toying with little May.

One night, during a party that Thomas was having for Princess May's fifth birthday on his castle grounds, Jurusha shapeshifted into a servant girl and presented Johann with a spirited drink to help

celebrate. Johann did not realize that the drink was a sleeping potion, and he fell fast asleep.

While he was sleeping, Jurusha found the little girl playing in the garden with a striped, grey kitten, and sat down with her.

She said to the little girl,

“Aye, me little pretty Mistress May. That is a fine kitten you have there. I have noticed that you love the animals. There is a place just beyond this garden that has fawns and hares like you have never seen. Would you like to see them with me?”

The little girl was intrigued and followed the witch to the edge of the garden. Jurusha quickly covered the little girl's nose with a handkerchief dipped in sleeping potion and May fell fast asleep. Jurusha shapeshifted to a huge black moth, swooped down,

grabbed May around her little waist, and flew off deep into the woods with the little girl.

When May came to, she was confused and disoriented. Her body felt different to her. When she looked down, her arms had turned into powdery wings. She could feel herself fluttering high about the ground. Beside her was a huge black moth.

“What has happened to me? I want me Papa!” she cried.

The black moth answered her, “I have turned you into a moth. You won’t be seeing your papa again, so you had better get used to it!”

May wailed, “I want me Papa!”

“No one can hear you ‘sept me, and that won’t do you any good. You will spend the rest of your days flying alone at night near the gaslights to stay warm.

Hopefully you won't get trapped in someone's home or by a window, or you will surely be killed or die. So, my advice to you, Lassie, is to stay away from people as much as possible. They are not your friends. Everyone hates the moths, so you are all alone now, 'sept for me. You better mind me, or I will leave you as well! Now follow me. I will show you where you will be staying."

May followed Jurusha as best she could, but Jurusha's wingspan was much bigger than May's and Jurusha appeared annoyed and impatient.

What has happened to me? May thought. *I have to make my way back to my Papa's. He is going to miss me.*

May tried not to cry and to be brave, like Papa had always told her, and she stayed as close to Jurusha as she could.

Finally, they stopped at a small glade in the forest.

“This is where you will sleep during the day. At night you will be drawn to the torchlights and the lamps for warmth. But be careful not to get too close, or you will surely be engulfed by the flames!”

May suddenly felt tired, and all she could think of, was curling up in the coolness of the glade. She fluttered down and nestled into the soft blades of grass.

When May awoke she was alone, except for some rabbits that were grazing nearby. But there was something different about these rabbits. They seem awfully big to the little girl.

Oh my, they look huge! May thought.

As she began to stir, the bunnies noticed her and hopped closer.

“Hello little girl moth. You finally awoke?” they said.

“You can talk!” May exclaimed.

“Aye, but not everyone can hear us. My name is Patrick and this here is my brother Joseph. We watched that evil witch Jurusha bring you here a few hours ago, and we knew you needed our protection. She does not know that we can communicate with you, but we once were peaceful Hedge Witches, and because of her cruelty, she turned us into rabbits to graze in the forest the rest of our days.”

"But you, your poor soul, have a much worse fate than us. You will always be looked down on, just because you are a moth. At least, some people find us cute. But not you little Lassie. No one likes a moth. We will protect you as much as we can."

May started to cry.

"I want me Papa!" she whimpered.

"Who is your papa, little miss?" Joseph asked.

"Me papa is King Thomas and I am Princess May. Or I used to be! Now I am nothing but a little moth!"

And she began to cry again.

"King Thomas?" Patrick exclaimed. "Oh my! The witch has really crossed the line this time!" he said.

May's wails became louder. "Aw little lassie, please don't cry!" Joseph pleaded.

"We will find a way to get you back home."

"You will? Really?" she hiccupped.

"Of course we will Princess. We can't leave you like you are. You just rest a while more and let us talk to our friends the Sidhes. They will know what to do."

"Okay, I am still sleepy."

May said and curled up again in the soft grass and fell back to sleep.

"Aw, the poor dear. She does sleep a lot, though," Patrick said.

"Well, when we were shapeshifted from Hedge Witches into rabbits we were tired too. It takes a lot

out of you to change form like that,” exclaimed Joseph.

While May slept, the bunnies covered her with some brush so no one would harm her. They hopped off to the fairy mound further in the forest, and looked for the Sidhe fairies. They were not hard to find, for they ruled the Irish forest.



CHAPTER 7

Sidhe Fairies

The Sidhes were called the “good people” who settled in Ireland hundreds of years ago. They were also warriors, who had battled against the Milesians, and retreated to another dimension in time and thus, became time travelers.

Throughout the years these fairies had been called upon to offer protection for mortals, give healing, and even teach some of their magic. Unlike other fairies of other European countries, Irish Sidhes were tall and either very handsome or very beautiful.

They dressed richly and their homes were lavishly decorated. Their kitchens were filled with sumptuous food and drink. Although most Sidhes

were slow to anger, they could place curses on their enemies.

If anyone disturbed their fairy paths, some type of misfortune would befall them. King Albert chose to have the Sidhes around, in case any of the Daayan Witches were lurking in the forests or glades, trying to make trouble for the Hedge Witches.

The Sidhes had heard of the kidnapping of the princess. One of the female Sidhes by the name of Anna-Kate, exclaimed,

“King Thomas must be devastated that his little May had been kidnapped! We need to join together and find what has happened to our darling princess! We will split up and ask all around the County if anyone has seen her.”

Anna-Kate was one of the most beautiful Sidhe fairies and she was also very powerful. She had raven black hair, with a lovely face. She was always smiling. Although she was powerful, she was kind, and it hurt her to know that her king had been suffering from the loss of his beloved daughter.

She had a lovely daughter, by the name of Layla, who was a smaller version of herself. She had dark hair as well, with curls that ran down her back.

Anna-Kate kept her close after she learned of the kidnapping of the princess. She was fierce when it came to her daughter or any of her Sidhe family.

“Now listen, me little Layla,” she said. “Don’t you ever wander away from me where I can’t see you.”

There are Daayan Witches around and they cannot be trusted!”

“Aye Mama, but can I play with me cousins, Michael and Henry on the fairy path?” Layla asked.

“As long as I can still see you, and if it is okay with your Auntie Rachel,” replied Anna-Kate.

Rachel Marie was Anna-Kate’s sister, and she was powerful and fierce, like Anna-Kate. She had brown, dread locks that ran down her back, and crystal blue eyes.

Rachel replied to Anna-Kate, “Aye, the children can play close to me. I will watch them while you look for the princess. Be careful though, and if you need me or any of the Sidhes, get word back to me quickly, and we will come to your aid. I am ready

and willing to battle any of those Daayan Witches!”

Rachel exclaimed.

“Aye, Rachel, I shouldn’t be gone too long,” Anna-Kate replied.

Just as she was beginning to venture out, the two rabbits came hopping up to her.

“Well, hello Patrick and Joseph. What brings you to this part of the forest?” Anna-Kate asked.

“Aye, Mistress Anna-Kate, we have been looking for you. We have good news, but not so good news also. We have found the Princess, but that evil Daayan Witch, Jurusha has changed her into a moth. She is sleeping deep in the glade, but we are afraid that Jurusha has plans to harm the princess. And we don’t know how to get her back to the king,” said Patrick.

“Interesting,” Anna-Kate mused.

“When did you last see her?” she asked.

“We just left her about an hour ago. She is very tired and we covered her up in the glade,” said Joseph.

“Well, lead me to her. I will find a way to get her transformed back. I need to have her with me here, though, and away from that witch.”

Anna-Kate had heard rumors that somehow the princess was related to her and Rachel. She knew that Lenore had been a Sidhe fairy, and word had spread secretly that May was in fact a sister to Anna-Kate and Rachel. Anna-Kate had never known her mother, and had just assumed that she had died a long time ago. She and Rachel had been raised by the other Sidhe fairies in the forest.

However, when Anna-Kate had attended the wedding of Lenore and Thomas, she had seen a family resemblance with Lenore. Although Lenore was fair, she had the same face and nose as Anna-Kate.

Lenore had stared at Anna-Kate throughout the festivities and tried to get away to talk to the fairy. But Thomas kept Lenore by his side throughout the wedding, and they never got the chance to speak.

Rumor also had it that Jurusha had taken the little girls, Anna-Kate and Rachel, when they were little, and had cast them off into the forest to fend for themselves, after Thomas had rejected her.

To Jurusha, everyone was her enemy, not just the Hedge Witches. She attacked as many Sidhe fairies

as she could get her hands on, and most of them avoided her as much as possible.

If those stories are true, then Princess May is my sister, and King Thomas is my step-father, thought Anna-Kate.

How wonderful it would be if we could reunite our family and little Layla could get to know her Auntie May.

As Anna-Kate was contemplating these thoughts, Patrick and Joseph led Anna-Kate back along the path in the woods that ended in the glade. But when they got there, the brush had been pushed aside violently and the princess was gone.

“Oh no!” Joseph exclaimed. “Where can she be?”

Unbeknownst to the little group, Jurusha had gotten wind that the Sidhes had been notified of the

whereabouts of May, and she had hurried back to scoop May up.

“This will not do, Little One. I am going to have to keep a better eye on you. I will not let ye escape through my clutches again. And I will not let your darn blasted sisters find you either!”

May’s little heart sank. She knew that her new friends, the bunnies would be looking for her.

But then she thought,

I have sisters? Who could they be? What do they look like? Papa, why didn’t you tell me? What is going to happen to me now!

A still voice in her head whispered to her,

Stay calm little one.

And suddenly, May felt that her papa was with her. She tugged on one of Jurusha's moth feathers quickly, and when it came loose, she tucked it in the brush. She hoped that the bunnies would recognize it as Jurusha's.

Once the rabbits and Anna-Kate noticed that the princess was gone, they felt sadness at the loss of their princess.

"Wait a minute, what is this?" Joseph held up the large black feather.

"This looks like it came from a moth. Doesn't Jurusha change into a moth sometimes?" asked Patrick.

"Aye," said Anna-Kate. "She takes the shape of a moth often."

"She must have taken her!" Joseph exclaimed.

“Well, at least we know if we see a big black moth with a little shimmery moth it is probably Jurusha and the princess,” he said.

They all agreed and set out telling the other fairies and forest animals to be on the lookout for the black moth.

Anna-Kate was also aware of a Hedge Witch named Johann, who had been at the wedding of King Albert and King Thomas. She knew that he had been employed to watch over the princess. She must get word to him immediately of what had happened to May, before Jurusha caused the little girl any more harm.

She made her way over to the castle and asked to speak to Johann. When she was led to the king’s

chambers, she found Johann and King Thomas together. Johann was trying to console the king.

When Thomas realized that his little girl, whom he adored, was gone, he was heartbroken, and because of his grief, he lost all interest again in his Kingdom of Cork County. He refused to leave his room or be consoled. This was a loss that he could not endure.

“Please, King Thomas!” Johann was saying. “I will find your daughter, Princess May, if it is the last thing that I do!”

The king was not listening however, and was staring absently out of his window. He couldn't eat, and he was beginning to have dark circles in the hollows under his eyes. He looked like he had aged considerably in the few days that May had been gone. He no longer knew how to use his hedge

witch powers, since he had not practiced the craft in so long. His little May meant everything to him, and without her, he could not go on.

Johann was determined to find the princess, and after leaving the king in his chamber he set out.

That is when he ran into Anna-Kate coming up the steps.

“Aye, Johann, is it? I am Anna-Kate. I’m so glad to find you here. I have gotten word of the fate of the princess. The Daayan witch Jurusha has kidnapped her and turned her into a moth. I almost had the princess, but Jurusha must have gotten word of our coming and fled with the little girl. I know that you will know what to do. Just remember that you have all of the Sidhes looking out for her and all of the fairies in the forest. I feel especially close

to her and I want her found. You will not be alone on your quest for her.”

“Thank you Anna-Kate. You are a loyal friend of the royal family and I appreciate the risks you have taken by coming here. I am grateful. Now, though, if you could leave me for a bit, I need to think what I am going to do," he said.

“Aye, Johann, but if you need me at all-please we are all ready to help find the princess.”

And with that she left Johann to develop his plan to rescue May.

After Anna-Kate had left Johann pondered on his rescue plan for May. He could easily shapeshift into a moth, but he needed to get to May as quickly as possible and flying with moth wings was very slow and tedious. If only he knew the whereabouts

of the princess, he could form a plan on how to best rescue her.

Then he remembered how fast he had traveled when he shapeshifted to an eagle as a lad. Once he found May he could turn into a moth, so as not to frighten her, and persuade her to follow him. That was his plan at least. He knew that Jurusha was crafty and cunning and he had to work fast.

Meanwhile, Jurusha had taken May to the heart of Cork County and instructed her that if she wanted to stay warm and alive, she would fly near the torchlights and stay close to the middle of the town square, because that is where the other moths flew about.

“But I don’t want to be like the other moths!”
wailed May. “I am a princess and I want me papa!”

“Listen little moth, I am your mother now, and I will be watching over you. If you need anything, always come to me. You cannot trust anyone else. But most importantly, don’t get too close to the humans, for they will surely swat at you and smoosh you like the bug that you are!”

Since May did not have a mother, she began looking at Jurusha as a maternal figure after a few months had gone by. And although Jurusha was bent on getting her revenge on Thomas, she began to develop a fondness for the little moth. She would never admit this to herself, however, and treated May with disdain and kept her at a distance.

I will not fall for that little bug!

But as much as she tried, the princess was beginning to capture Jurusha's heart. She made sure

that, although May had to fly near the torchlights to stay warm, she did not get too close to the flames.

As the months moved on, Jurusha began teaching May the ways of the Daayan cult. May did not know that this was a vengeful cult. She only knew that Jurusha was a mother figure to her. She was taught how to cast the best Daayan spells and how to play tricks on people just for the fun of it.

Sometimes when a man laid his hat down beside him while he was sitting on a bench, May fluttered down and gently pushed it off of the bench. When the man looked around he wouldn't be able to find it at first, and then when finding the hat on the ground, he'd be confused. May looked down on him from her perch and smiled.

Jurusha took May under her wing, and even began to instruct her on how to recognize the enemies, the Hedge Witches and the Sidhe fairies.

“But me papa and I are Hedge Witches and my mama was a Sidhe fairy!”

“But your papa doesn’t use his powers anymore. Hedge Witches are weak and ineffective against the Daayans,” said Jurusha. And your mother is dead. I will teach you how to be a powerful Daayan Witch. Then you will never have to count on anyone or anything again! No one will be able to hurt you!” Jurusha exclaimed.

May began to believe the witch and started to think of herself as a Daayan. She liked the fact that they were powerful. Maybe it was because she felt as small and ineffective as a little moth. But she never

stopped loving her Papa and longing for a mother.
She prayed at night that one day she could be with
him again.

*Don't you worry Papa, you will have your little
May back again, and I will never leave you!* She
thought.

But because Jurusha was all that she had, she stuck
to her as close as possible.



CHAPTER 8

The Rescue

After pondering the fate of May, Johann set out in search of her. It took him several months until he finally got a tip as to the whereabouts of the princess and the witch. There had been a lot of unusual activity going on in the town of County Cork, such as things being misplaced or the sounds of moths whispering, as if they could actually talk. People were beginning to feel that the town was haunted, but instead of being afraid, more and more people began to flock to the County's square.

There were two moths in particular that everyone was talking about. Although most people disliked moths, and had the tendency to try to swat at them when they got too close, these moths were different.

There was one big black moth, which was actually eerily beautiful. She had a gracefulness about her, and glided rather than fluttered from street lamp to street lamp. But the smaller, golden moth was the most intriguing.

The smaller moth would flutter up to the flames, and then barrel down to the ground, and right before it looked like she was going to crash into the earth, she would turn and soar up to the lights again.

Sometimes it looked like she was playing hide and seek with the black moth, as if they were related somehow. The townspeople would gather just to admire the acrobatics of the two moths.

Johann had heard about these goings on, and wondered if these moths were his beloved Princess May and the evil Daayan Witch, Jurusha. He also had been told by the Sidhes and the fairies that May

was in the main city of County Cork. That is where he first spotted her. He noticed a large black moth was perched on a fence at the edge of the square. She was busy cleaning her wings.

He felt that it must be Jurusha. Just above her was a tiny moth with gossamer wings that was flying around a torchlight. Something about this moth was familiar. On closer inspection, he could see that it had clear blue eyes, the color of the ocean.

Hmm, that is strange. I did not know that moths could have blue eyes.

And he also noticed that her wings were the same color as Princess May's hair, a shimmery golden blonde.

This must be her!

He waited until nightfall, then turned into a large black moth himself, much larger than Jurusha.

When he finally could get the moth alone, he flew up to her.

“Mistress May, it is me, Johann,” he whispered. “I am here to rescue you!”

May looked at this big black moth with fear.

She had been warned about the Hedge Witches changing form and she knew that Johann was a Hedge Witch. Jurusha had failed to tell her that she was half Hedge Witch as well.

“Get away from me!” she shrieked.

“May it is me!” he whispered forcefully. “I am here to bring you back to your papa. He misses you so! I have promised him I would find you and bring you back to him. Please come with me quickly.”

Suddenly Jurusha looked up and saw Johann fluttering near May.

“Get away from my little bug!” Jurusha screamed.

“What are you doing here?”

Johann bellowed, “She is not a bug! She is a princess! And I am not leaving without her!”

The two witches faced each other and began to fight. Because Johann was bigger and stronger than Jurusha physically, he easily overpowered her.

Although she was powerful, when they were done, she lay on the ground with half of her right wing torn and broken. When she tried to follow him she could not manage to get off of the ground.

But her hatred burned so brightly that she looked at May and turned her into a flame.

“Ha! There! Try to rescue your precious May now!”

When Johann realized that May had been turned into a flame, he did not hesitate, but flew straight into the fire. He wrapped his large wings around her and quickly extinguished the flame. In the process, May’s left wing was also broken, but she was still alive. Johann’s wings were singed, but he flew quickly with her toward the forest.

Jurusha could not follow them, but screamed at the top of her lungs,

“No!”

Once she could make her way back to the forest she gathered her Daayan Witch friends and sent them searching every glade and every fairy mound for the princess and Johann, but no one could find the pair.

“As God is my witness, I will find that little bug again, and this time I will not let her get away!”



CHAPTER 9

America

Johann chose America as a place that he would hide out with May. He changed her form back into a little girl. Because Greenwich Village was crowded and busy, Johann felt that he could easily get lost with May in this big city.

Johann also decided to live in the Village because it was artistic and colorful. He was an artist, and was mesmerized by the sights and sounds of Greenwich Village. When he felt it was time, he would return with May to Cork County. Hopefully, by that time Jurusha would have forgotten about the princess and it would be safe to return her to her father.

As soon as Johann got settled into his new apartment, he had taken May to the boarding school

that he had found in New York State. It was very peaceful and the staff welcomed May with open arms. She had no recollection of her life before arriving in America.

When Johann had shapeshifted her back into a human, the shock had taken away any memory that she had other than a faint recollection of flying near a torchlight. The school master in charge was a kind elderly man and promised to watch over May while Johann was away.

Once she got settled in, Johann asked May how she liked the school and the other students. At first she was rather shy and quiet, but when she met the principal, there was something about him that made her feel like she was coming home. He had white hair and clear blue eyes. He laughed all of the time and always made sure May was included in all of

the activities. The school itself rested on a large estate with lavish green rolling hills, and just beyond the school was a lake with canoes and small sailboats the students were allowed to use on the weekends.

The classrooms were small and cozy, with old-fashioned wooden desks, and big windows that were thrown open in the spring and summer. In the winter the snow drifts covered the lower edges of the windowsills and the children were encouraged to bundle up and play outside and make snowmen or have snowball fights. Once they came inside they were given hot chocolate and cookies.

Because she was so beautiful and quick to laugh and have fun, she made friends fast with her schoolmates and was rarely alone. She had a whimsical little room she shared with another girl

and they would stay up for hours and tell stories about forests and the sea.

May was a natural storyteller, and sometimes on the weekends when she got home from being out with Johann, they would sneak into her bedroom and hop on her bed. She would weave fantastic stories of princesses and dragons and brave kings. Sometimes when she pointed at the lights in the bedroom they magically turned off or on. The little girls found this fascinating and were drawn to May like little butterflies.

She also seemed to know what each one of them was thinking and they played guessing games with her. She always won, but the children didn't mind. They knew she was enchanted. But their favorite trick of all was watching her fly around her room.

“You must not let anyone else know that I can fly, or I may be kicked out!” she whispered to the little girls.

Before long May was the most popular little girl in the school.

As soon as he had May safe and settled in the school, Johann got in touch with the king. He told him that they were safe in America. He regularly reported on May’s progress in school and her accomplishments in sports and academics. He made sure that the king was kept abreast of any milestones, such as birthdays and holidays that he was missing with his daughter.

Johann longed to tell May about her father, but he was terrified that she would insist on going back to Ireland to be with him. He knew that Jurusha

would harm his May, and he would not allow it. He realized that one day he would have to tell her, but for now, she seemed content in her new school with her friends.

Her father, the king, was ecstatic that his daughter was fitting so well in America, but he missed her so and longed to see her again! The pictures that Johann sent helped a lot, but he prayed for the day when he could one day take his May in his arms and be with her again. He missed their days together on the beach, and how her hair sparkled in the sun.

But just knowing that she was safe gave him enough happiness that he could manage to carry on in his kingdom.

Because he had lost his only daughter, King Thomas began to welcome the children of the County more and more into his castle. He quickly

became known as the children's king and they would fight to get a turn to sit on his lap or be near him. He surrounded himself with the Sidhe fairies, especially Anna-Kate, Rachel, Michael and Henry.

He had also learned through Anna-Kate that these fairies were Lenore's long lost children, and he fell in love with all of them. Anna-Kate was the spitting image of her mother and Rachel had Lenore's eyes and quiet spirit. Rachel was fierce as well, and he remembered if anyone crossed Lenore she could be fierce too.

Although his heart still felt a terrible ache for May, to have his daughters and grandchildren with him gave him peace and joy. Anna-Kate and Rachel were his constant companions and the grandchildren made him laugh and feel that his life was blessed. The boys, Michael and Henry gave him comfort as

they would dart in and out of the glades and hills playing together all day. When the day was done, the king would invite everyone in, and the cooks would prepare a lavish feast and laughter and merriment were once more heard in the castle.

King Thomas taught the boys how to fish and he brought Layla down to Baltimore to the seaside.

Layla was such a joy to be with and reminded him of May, with her love of the sea. Layla could also dance and do flips in the air, and sometimes took off across the fields and flew high above the boys as they were playing.

“You can’t catch me!” she shouted to Henry and Michael, and they took flight as well, but could never quite catch her.

“Well, maybe when you are six like me you will be as fast as I am! I can run faster than anyone and jump higher than you!” She would yell.

“Oh yeah?” Said Michael. “Well I can build sandcastles bigger than anyone and swim faster than you!”

“That is true,” Layla would say, and they would take off again around the castle grounds.



CHAPTER 10

Greenwich Village

Meanwhile, in America, Johann had just had his second encounter with Jurusha in the marketplace. After throwing away the flower Jurusha had given him for May, he began to feel a new and unusual apprehension that he had never felt before. This witch was powerful and he knew that she was cunning. He would have to stay one step ahead of her to protect May.

He still carried guilt about May being captured the first time when she was a small child and had been turned into a moth. Although he knew he couldn't be with her twenty-four hours a day, he felt nervous that he had been going out in the day while she napped. With Jurusha so close now, he couldn't

afford to leave May's side again, at least for a while.

He didn't exactly know what to do.

Now that the witch has found us, should we move again?

He felt that it was getting to the point that he would have to destroy Jurusha, but because he had given up his Hedge Witch powers many years ago, he did not know how to battle a Daayan. And he didn't want May to be caught up in the witch war.

As he was contemplating what was happening with the witch, he decided to go to his usual booth and get May more of the lavender soaps that he usually bought, so that he did not come home empty-handed. He was still feeling unsettled when he arrived home, and could not seem to shake it.

A he enters their bedroom, May is still sleeping, with Seven curled up on the pillow beside her. He feels afraid for her, and decides that if he were to go out anymore, he will take May with him. For the next hours, until she awakes, Johann sits on the chaise next to the bed, and watches May sleep. He prays for her protection, and, for the first time, that he can ever remember, he feels he has lost some of his powers of battle.

May is dreaming again. She is fluttering around the county campfires and beating her powdery wings against the orbs of streetlights. She frequents torch-lit garden parties.

But what is it about the lamp on the porches that I find so irresistible? Is it the warmth? The pleasing glow? Why am I attracted to the light?

In her dream May often uses the moon to orient her night flight. When May awakes from her nap, she cannot tell if she is still dreaming, or if she is awake. She cannot shake her dream, and wonders if there is meaning hidden in her reveries.

Recently, when talking to a fortune teller in the marketplace, the seer had prophesied,

“You my dear, are undergoing a transformation, and your dreams symbolize a need for change from your normal routine. You are not quite ready for this change that you will undergo, but it will come when you least expect it.”

May often ponders the meaning of the fortune teller’s words.

It was while she is trying to shake off the last vestiges of her sleep state that May notices Johann

is sitting near her, with a forlorn look on his face. May reaches for Johann. She has never seen him act this way, and it makes her heart hurt.

“What is it, Johann? Why do you look so sad?”

Johann moves closer to his May.

“May, promise me that you won’t walk around the Village alone!”

“What? Why do you say that? Has something happened in the Village?”

She is trying to rouse herself from her sleep and still feels like she is dreaming. She pushes herself up on one elbow and tries to focus on what he is saying.

Why was Johann acting so strange?

Something about his demeanor is beginning to alarm her.

“Johann, what is wrong? Tell me!” Her voice begins to rise.

“I can’t say May. I just want you to stay close to me for a while. I’ve had an uneasy feeling lately. Don’t ever leave me! Promise me May!”

May gives a nervous laugh.

“Silly, what is wrong? I have no intention of ever leaving you!” She pulls him toward her, and he gives in and cuddles with her on the bed.

And although May means what she says, she feels Johann has changed, and it frightens her. She knows he adores her, but sometimes, it is a bit overwhelming. With living in the Village and his

constant companionship, she is beginning to feel like she is suffocating.

“Okay, May,” Johann said in a forced light tone.

“Let’s you and I take in a show at the theatre! We haven’t been out in such a long time and I want to treat my beautiful girlfriend. I love you!”

“And I you. But before we do, could you show me my presents that you got me?”

Johann gives her the soaps and she hugs him tightly, while admiring her gifts.

That night, May and Johann go to the local theatre, which is on the edge of the Village. The theatre is over 100 years old, and still has red velvet curtains and balcony seats. At the ticket booth, the elderly gentleman asks what shows they want to see.

There are two classic movies playing, "Gone with the Wind", and "The Man and the Sea." Because May has seen "Gone with the Wind" at least ten times, and because anything having to do with the sea draws her in, Johann buys tickets for the "Old Man and the Sea" with Ernest Hemingway.

Although May's first passion is writing, her second joy in life is going to the theatre, surrounded by the sound of the Big Screen. The girl at the counter sells them a bag of buttered popcorn and a large Coca-Cola to share.

They both immediately make their way up the spiral staircase to the balcony upstairs. Because it is a weeknight, and the movie is so old, there is no one else in the theatre, and May and Johann have the balcony to themselves. This makes them both extremely happy, and they settle in to watch the

movie. May finds herself falling in love with the main character, because she feels and senses a feeling of loneliness in the old man, Santiago.

He also reminds her of someone she may have known long ago, who resembles the main character. She sees this person in her dreams, with a white beard, and a kindly face.

She puts her hand on Johann's leg and he puts his arm around her. She leans into the crook of his arm and settles her head on his shoulder. The sounds of the movie slightly vibrate the chairs and the floor beneath, and May feels like she has been transported to the small island. When Santiago catches the marlin and the fish eventually dies, she feels the pain of the fish and that of the Old Man.

When the movie ends May and Johann sit in their seats for a while, feeling melancholy and contemplative. They finally rise, and make their way out of the movie house quietly. May always identifies with the characters in the movies and tonight she feels pensive and sad.

Night has fallen, but May and Johann decide to stop by an old coffee house and get their favorite cappuccinos, to sip on while walking home. There is a cut-through alleyway that is close to the shop, and before Johann realizes where they are, May has spotted the woman, at Jurusha's booth.

“Oh, Johann, look! This booth has flowers and scarves. They are beautiful and so colorful! And I think I see essential oils! Can we please stop and look?”

“Oh gosh, May, it is late. We can come back tomorrow!” Johann has raised his voice.

May is startled, and looks at him in surprise. He tries to hide his look of bewilderment and fear, but May catches it. “What’s wrong, my love?”

But before he can answer, Jurusha has appeared behind a curtain in the booth. She takes one look at May, and glides toward her in a serpent-like fashion. May is mesmerized by her beauty, and feels drawn to the dark woman. Jurusha smiles a brilliant smile and says,

“Finally! I thought your husband had forgotten about me! I gave him a flower for you yesterday. Did he give it to you?”

May feels confused, as if in a trance. Johann shifts uncomfortably and feels a primal fear and an urge to grab May and run.

“Um, possibly. There was so much going on today. I had this strange dream, which I usually have, and then when I awoke, Johann was sitting beside me with his usual presents of soaps and perfumes, but I don’t remember a flower.”

For some reason, May can't stop talking to this beautiful woman, and all the while the woman smiles at her knowingly.

“What is wrong with you?” Johann says to her brusquely.

“You don’t even know this woman, and you are telling her your whole life story!”

May is quickly drawn out of her trancelike state by Johann's harsh words.

She looks at him with hurt and shock. He has never yelled at her before. She thinks she is going to cry, and begins to walk away, while she stumbles back to their apartment. When she gets home she bursts into tears.

Why did he yell at me? What did I do wrong? I am so confused! She thinks.

When Johann catches up with her in the apartment he finds her in their bed sobbing loudly.

“I am so sorry, May! Please forgive me! I don't trust that woman.”

He reaches for her but she pulls away.

“Please May, I can’t tell you why right now, but you need to understand that I am just trying to protect you.”

“Protect me from what? From whom? I’m tired of you treating me as if I am a child! I am twenty-six years old! I don’t need your protecting!”

At this point, May is even alarmed with herself.

She has never raised her voice to Johann, and she is frightened. But her disappointment in Johann is the greater emotion she feels.

She turns her back to him, and for the first time in her life, she doesn’t say goodnight to Johann or give him a kiss. Johann lays there miserable.

How can I explain to her what is going on? I don't want to frighten her, but Jurusha is getting way too close, Johann thinks.

The next morning when he awakes, May is not in the bedroom. He feels panic creeping up in his stomach and jumps out of bed. He finds her sitting in front of the fireplace, but it is not lit.

She has Seven on her lap, and she is staring out of the window. When he comes close to her, he can see her eyes are swollen from crying so much the night before.

“I am so sorry May. Please let’s not argue today.”

She turns and lashes out at him,

“I am tired of you following me all of the time, Johann! I feel like you are smothering me!”

It is Johann’s turn to feel hurt. He walks away from her and goes back to the bedroom. As he is sitting on the side of the bed, she slowly comes up to him.

“Johann, I didn’t mean that. I know that I am lucky to have you. That woman, I don’t know, she made me feel all confused. I couldn’t stop talking to her. It was like she cast some kind of spell over me. I know that sounds crazy, but that’s what it felt like.”

Johann again feels apprehension and fear. He turns to May. “Listen, my Love. That woman is dangerous. Trust me. I don’t want you talking to her again.”

“Okay, Johann, I won’t- if it makes you that upset. Come here and lay down with me.”

He smiles and wraps his arms around her, and before long he can feel her soft, rhythmic breathing and he knows she is asleep again.

It is a long while he laid there and just holds her, but he cannot fall asleep. He knows his worst enemy is just down in the market and she has revenge on her mind.

As fall drifts lazily along, May continues writing and Johann paints. Since the weather is turning cooler, they can leave their windows and balcony door open to the warm air that drifts into the apartment. Johann often paints sitting out on the balcony with Seven curled at his feet.

He notices how the dresses of the women walking on the sidewalk are the same colors as the leaves on the trees; dark oranges, yellows and browns. He finds it interesting that the color of their clothing coincides with the changing of the seasons.

May joins Johann on the balcony and writes about her princesses and villains that interact in various countries and continents. She has recently taken an interest in Asia, and lately many of her stories take place in Thailand or Cambodia.

She is fascinated with these cultures and has a plan of traveling overseas so she can get a taste of what life is like in other countries. She has always been interested in Europe, especially Ireland, but she has decided to go outside of her comfort zone and explore Eastern culture.

And especially since she has begun meditating in the mornings, she wants to learn how to practice as the yogis do. Although she is Christian, she has been exposed to Buddhism through her readings, and is fascinated and drawn to the gentle science.

On Saturdays, May and Leah meet at the local coffee shop and walk to their yoga class. At the entrance to the studio, everyone removes their shoes and grabs their yoga mats. The studio has hard wood floors and a high warehouse ceiling. All around the room and interspersed throughout are candles and incense of lavender and sandalwood.

“Ah, I love that smell”, May sighs. “It reminds me of a spa, so relaxing.”

“Yea, I know what you mean. It always feels peaceful in here,” Leah replies.

An instructor from India is usually the yoga guide, but on this day there is a new teacher. It is Jurusha from the market place.

“Oh wow!” May exclaims.

“What?” Leah asks her.

“I keep running into this woman from town and now she is here as the yoga guide! That is so strange!” May whispers to Leah.

“And Johann does not like her at all. I don’t know why, but he freaks out every time I talk to her.”

“Why?” Leah asks.

“He says that she is dangerous. I don’t get it. She seems ok to me,” May replies.

"Hmmm..., that is interesting," Leah replies.

May and Leah set up their mats and begin stretching for the class. Leah is as limber as a gymnast and can easily touch her toes and even lays her cheek on the ground with her legs straight out in front of her.

May is impressed. She can barely touch her ankles, and even that is a struggle. She doesn’t know why she is so stiff, but she has always been that way.

Maybe it is because she is a runner, but she knows Leah runs as well.

“Oh well, what are you going to do?” May thinks and continues to try to touch her toes.

The room is beginning to fill up and Jurusha turns on tapes from India. The smell of incense and the music are very relaxing to May and she closes her eyes and practices her breathing.

She has been told that by taking a deep breath in and then letting all of the air out, and then exhaling a little bit more, clears the lungs of excess carbon dioxide. She practices this technique to a count of four and finds herself falling more and more into a trance.

Just then Jurusha says to the group that she has studied holistic medicine and has made her own

concoction of essential oils that she uses for
massage. She asks everyone to close their eyes.

She then says that she will walk around the room
and anyone who wants her to massage their back or
neck to release stiffness should put their hands to
their hearts. Those who do not want massage
should just sit with their arms to their sides, that
there is no judgment.

May feels that she needs all of the help she can get,
so she puts her hand to her heart. She has no idea if
anyone else raises their hands to their hearts
because her eyes are closed.

As the stretching continues and everyone's eyes
remain closed and the meditation gets deeper, May
can smell lavender and vanilla. She feels the
warmth of Jurusha behind her. And then she feels

her hands on her back and on her sides as May stretches down toward her toes.

The heat of Jurusha's hands are hot, and May can feel her muscles loosening up on the back of her thighs. All of a sudden she can stretch much further.

Jurusha whispers in her ear, "Well hello, May. Fancy meeting you here."

May is in such a trancelike state, she cannot respond, but a warm sense of tranquility washes over her.

This is so relaxing, May thinks, and feels even more peaceful.

"If you get a chance, stay after the session and we will have herbal tea made with artisan water," Jurusha whispers in May's ear.

May nods her head and Jurusha moves on to the next person.

When the session is over, Leah draws May to the side.

“What did she say to you?”

“She invited us to stay after the class and have tea.”

“Don’t you think that is kind of strange May? She didn’t ask anyone but you.”

“Well, I am sure she wanted you to stay as well.”

“May, I need to talk to you. Tell her we will stay next week.”

Again May feels like she is in a trance, but since she has promised Johann that she will stay away from the woman, she agrees with Leah.

She comes up to Jurusha and tells her that they will stay late next week. Jurusha gives a quick glance at Leah, and Leah stares back at her.

"Okay, Lassie, that is fine. Next week it is!" she smiles, but Leah can see her eyes have turned darker.

"Let's get the hell out of here," Leah says under her breath to May.

Once they get outside Leah says, "I can see why Johann wants you to stay away from that woman. She is bad news."

"Why do you say that?"

"Listen, May. She didn't ask anyone else to stay. You had your eyes closed the whole time, but I didn't. I watched her come over to you and give you that massage. She didn't give anyone a

massage except you even though there were quite a few people who had raised their hands.”

“Are you serious? That is weird. Why did she choose me?”

“I don’t know. Maybe she is gay or bi-sexual or whatever, but she definitely targeted you and she does not like me. If looks could kill, I would be six feet under.”

May laughs nervously.

“You are crazy Leah, but that is why I love you! Hey, let’s go get some vegan pizza down by the market. I heard it is amazing!”

“Okay, May. But seriously, you need to stay away from that woman like Johann says. She gives me the creeps.”

The two women walk downtown to a café close to the waterfront. They order their vegan pizza and teas and sit outside at the patio table. There are a lot of pedestrians milling about, walking by the shops and fresh market. The sounds of fishing boat horns are off in the distance. Two blocks down is a small inlet with a trawler tied up to the dock. Seagulls screech overhead. May and Leah talk about May's writing and Leah's next singing gig in the Village. They talk for hours, until a chill starts creeping up in the air, and they decide to leave.

“Call me Leah. Maybe we can go for a run tomorrow.”

“That sounds good. I heard the weather will be warm,” Leah says.

“Ok, love you!” May says.

“Love you too!” says Leah.



CHAPTER 11

Change of Seasons

As the days are beginning to get shorter, the smell of crackling leaves are in the air. The trees in the Village are brilliant, and each breath is of burnished crispness, and sounds of crunchiness underfoot. The Monarch butterflies flutter lazily in the autumn sun.

Seven naps almost continuously on the balcony as the sun begins to set lower and lower in the autumn sky. At night, the harvest moon hangs over the Village with colors of orange, pink and yellow.

Even the trees watch quietly and wait expectantly for the first snap of winter. These are the days that nature presents her last, most beautiful smile.

Before long winter has arrived. The Villagers are beginning to pick up the pace. Everyone walks with

a faster step. The temperature is dropping quickly as November turns into December. Thanksgiving has come and gone, and now the Village is beginning to take on a festive look.

Christmas lights are being strung up in the trees and the Villagers seem happier and full of holiday cheer. May and Johann decorate their small balcony with boughs of holly and red ribbons. They string tiny white lights along the railing and position a thick blanket for Seven near the corner of the railing so he can peer out at the passersby below.

May and Johann sit in a white wicker chaise lounge on the balcony wrapped in their robes and blankets and talk and talk about their holiday dreams and wishes.

“Johann, if you could have anything this Christmas, what would it be?”

“Well, Love, I know it sounds corny and cliché, but just being with you, all snuggled up, makes me happy.”

“Oh, Johann, you are such a romantic! Here, give me a kiss!” Johann grabs her and kisses her.

"Oh Johann, what has happened to us lately? I miss how we used to be. I love you, Johann, my big teddy bear."

"Hey, I have an idea!" May says after a little while.

“Let’s get bundled up and go down to the market for some coffee and maybe a little Christmas shopping.”

“I’m kind of liking our cozy little night up here,
May.”

“Just for a little while?” May whispers in Johann’s
ear.

“Okay, Mistress May, as you wish.”

She stands up quickly and reaches down to pull
Johann up. He is much too heavy for her and she
giggles. He pretends to be pulled up and gives her a
hug.

They put their winter coats on and boots and
venture down to the market. Later after shopping a
bit, they are both beginning to get hungry and dip
into a local restaurant to get a bite to eat and a
coffee to go.

This is their favorite restaurant because many times
at night Leah and Joe are playing here along with

the rest of the jazz band. There are outside booths as well as tables in the restaurant. At the bar, cigars are sold and patrons partaking in cigar smoking can sit in the outside section of the bar with frond like ceiling fans whisking the smoke away. This place reminds May of what it would be like in Cuba or Key West.

There are just a handful of people in the restaurant, probably due to the snowfall. After eating their lunch, they get their coffees to go. Once they have their warm cups in hand, Johann and May make their way to the bookstore that Johann loves to frequent.

May pretends she is browsing through a romantic novel, so Johann wanders around and soon became interested in a book on Renaissance art. Once he

put it down and moved on she grabbed the book.

She hurried up to the cashier and purchased it.

When Johann comes back, he says,

“Oh, you got your book. I would have got it for you, Love!”

“That’s okay, Sweetie. You are always buying me things. You make me feel like a kept woman.”

“Oh do I now?” Johann says, and tries to tickle May but she scoots away, laughing.

Once they make their way out of the bookstore, the two wander over to the middle of the market square.

There is a play going on, with characters from Charles Dickens, “A Christmas Carol.”

A few benches are set up around the makeshift stage, and May and Johann take a seat at the end.

The actors are speaking with Cockney accents and

are dressed in period style clothing. The women are wearing long petticoats and the men have on top hats. They are quite entertaining and May is enjoying the play.

All of a sudden, the actor playing Scrooge, points to May, and says,

“Woman, come along, join us for supper! Don’t dawdle. And close the door. It’s freezing outside, it is!”

May doesn’t know what to do but Johann says, “Go on May, it will be fun!”

So May gets off of the bench and climbs up to the stage and sits with the Cratchet family.

A little boy passes her a glass and she toasts with her apple cider to “...and Merry Christmas, Everyone!”

The audience cheers and May takes a bow, and goes back and sits with Johann.

“Bravo, May, I didn’t know you were an actress!”

“Ha ha, Johann. Very funny! I had no parts, I just raised my glass and toasted and then it was over.

You are silly!”

“Well, I thought you did a fine job of raising your glass! That takes talent. I probably would have dropped my glass and been kicked off of the stage by Scrooge!”

May laughs.

Unbeknownst to Johann and May is a woman with a black cloak and a big hood covering her long black hair. She is sitting on a bench two rows behind them. Her eyes gleam when she catches sight of May.

It is Jurusha.

Finally, she thinks.

May is close enough I can grab her, but I have to be careful. I have to get her away from that darn Hedge Witch.

Jurusha makes her way up to the couple and taps May on her shoulder.

“Well, hello! Fancy seeing the two of you here on this lovely night!”

May turns and gasps at the beautiful, strange woman with the dark piercing eyes who is standing so close behind her.

“I’m sorry,” May exclaims. “I didn’t even hear you behind me. You startled me!”

May gives a nervous laugh.

Johann quickly puts his arm around May's waist and steps between her and Jurusha.

"May we help you?"

"Johann, what in the world has gotten into you?"

May asks with alarm.

"I am sorry ma'am. He didn't mean any disrespect. It's been a long day."

"I understand Miss," Jurusha says.

"I shouldn't have crept up on you two so suddenly, but I couldn't help but notice what a sweet couple the two of you make. And I noticed you got on stage. That was very brave. I don't know if I would have done it!"

"Ha, ha! Thank you! I didn't get much of a chance to refuse. Johann just about pushed me up there!"

Johann isn't amused or entertained by the conversation the two women are having. All he can think of is getting his May away for this evil witch.

"Come on, May, we have some more shopping to do. I don't want to stay out too late with all this snow coming down."

"Okay, Honey," May said.

"Well, it was nice to see you again!" May says to the woman.

"Aye!" Jurusha says.

"Hey there. If you two would like, I'm having a little Christmas party tonight at me booth over there on the edge of the alley. I would love to have the two of you there."

"We would love it!" May exclaims.

May doesn't know why but she feels drawn to this woman like a magnet, and it makes her feel confused and out of sorts.

“Well, we better be getting along now,” Johann says loudly.

“Hope to see you soon!” May says to the woman.

“I look forward to it!” Jurusha responds.

“She will come to back,” Jurusha thinks. “She remembers, and will find a way to be with me again. Just like a moth to a flame.”

That afternoon when May and Johann get home they notice a heavy snow is beginning to fall. The streets, car and bicycles are quickly being blanketed by the white powder.

“Look how beautiful!” May exclaims. “I love snow! Everything looks so clean and pretty when it’s covered.”

Johann comes up behind May and wraps his arms around her. “It is romantic”, Johann says as he kisses her neck.

But then he begins to cough.

“When did you start coughing like that?”

“I don't know; I feel like I have been coming down with something since this afternoon.”

Which is really weird, since I never get sick unless I run into a Daayan Witch -Darn it! Jurusha, she must have made me sick! What is she up to?

“Honey?” May says. “What’s wrong?”

“Oh nothing, Sweetie. I’m just going to lie down for a little while. Do you mind?”

“Of course not darling! Do you want to lie down in front of the fire?”

“No, it's too hot. I'll lie in the bedroom.”

“Ah, poor baby! Can I get you anything? Tea, honey?”

“No, Love. I just want to take a little nap.”

“Okay Sweetie. I hope you feel better.”

She gives him a hug.

“Oh Wow Johann. You are really hot! Do we have any medicine?”

“I’ll be ok. I probably am just tired,” Johann says.

He goes to lie down and it isn’t long before May can hear Johann snoring.

He must be really sick! He never gets sick. And it came on so quickly.

Little did she know that it was indeed Jurusha who has cast the sickness on Johann. She had to get him away from May, and it was the only way she knew to get rid of him for a while. Hopefully, May will venture out on her own she thinks.

As May stares out at the softly falling snow, she gets a sudden urge to go out.

I know. I will pick up some cocoa for Johann and maybe some cold medicine. I don't think that we have any here.

She quietly puts on her snow boots, her hat and coat.

As she slips out the door, she can hear Johann snoring in the bedroom.

As she makes her way down the snow covered sidewalk she has to walk gingerly, because of the slickness of the pavement.

Wow, it is so beautiful! And quiet. Too bad, Johann can't be with me right now. I bet he would love it also.

May starts to make her way over to the coffee shop to see if they have hot cocoa by the packet. Just as she is about to cross over to the side of the street, Jurusha appears.

“Well, hello again! May, is it? Fancy seeing you again! This is such a small neighborhood!”

“Huh? Oh, hi! How are you?”

I keep running into this woman!

“Isn’t it beautiful, this snow? I love it when it snows. It makes everything look so beautiful, don’t ye think?” Jurusha asks.

“Yes, it does! Most people around here complain about the snow, but I love how it makes everything seem so quiet and magical!”

Again, she feels drawn to this woman, and can’t stop talking.

“Aye, it reminds me of my home in Ireland that it does!”

“You are from Ireland? Wow! I should have known with your accent. I love Ireland! I have been told that my parents and grandparents are from there.”

“Oh yea? What part, Missy?”

“County Cork,” said May.

“That is where I am from!” says Jurusha.

“You have to be kidding! That is crazy! I have never met anyone from Ireland before.”

“Aye Lassie, born and raised. I miss it!”

“I bet you do! It must be hard here for you with no family. Do you have any relatives here?”

“No, it is just me. It is okay though, Lassie, I have started meeting new people, especially here around the market. Look, you and I are fast becoming friends!”

Jurusha smiles her most beguiling smile.

“That is true. We have had a few conversations already!”

“Which reminds me, May. I told you I am having a little get together tonight at me booth. But since the

snow has started falling I have decided to just have it at me apartment. So much warmer there. Would you like to help me finish setting it up? Me guests should be there in an hour or so.”

“Oh my! That doesn’t give you much time! Are you almost ready?”

“Aye. I just have a few things I was getting here, and then I was going to head back. Could you help me for a little bit?”

“Well, I guess I could. I left Johann sick at home, but if it’s just for a little bit, that should be okay.”

“Great! We better get going then?”

May follows Jurusha to the other side of the street from where she and Johann lived.

“Hey, we live right across from you!” May exclaimed. “We are so close!”

“Well, that is good I guess May. Just in case I need to borrow some sugar or something!”

“Come, follow me. I just live up this first flight of stairs over the restaurant.”

“Oh, that is cool. You live above the sushi restaurant. Johann and I come here and order out a lot.”

As May enters the stairwell, she begins to feel strange, as if she can't quite catch her breath.

“What is wrong, Missy?”

“I don't know. Must be the cold air. I'll be alright.”

As May enters Jurusha's apartment, however, she quickly notices there is no party set up! In fact, there is no furniture. The apartment looks completely vacant and it is freezing cold.

“What the...” she turns to face Jurusha and suddenly everything goes black.



CHAPTER 12

County Cork

May turns around and Jurusha covers the young woman's mouth and nose with a handkerchief that has been dipped with a sweet smelling sleeping potion.

Finally! I have me little princess back. Let's go, little one.

Jurusha quickly transports May and herself back to Ireland through a portal with her time-traveling magic.

When May awakes, she is sleeping in a strange bed. The room is cold and looks old-fashioned to May.

“Where am I? Johann!”

But no one came. She looks down and she is dressed in a makeshift nightgown that is rather rough and thick.

“This is strange. Where did I get this gown?”

Just then, the woman Jurusha walks in the room.

“Well, it's about time you woke up! You have been sleeping half the day!”

“Where am I? - What do you mean sleeping?”

“You must have hit your head Missy. You have been sleeping since yesterday. I brought you here to my house. You will be living with me now.”

“What? I live with Johann! What is going on?”

May starts to panic.

“Not anymore Love. I brought you back to Ireland where you belong, and you will be my charge now.”

“You are crazy! Where are my things? Where are my clothes, my hat, and my coat? Where is Johann?”

“Your screaming won’t help you here Missy. I am all you got. So you best be kind and grateful that you have a bed to sleep in and food to eat. Not everyone has it so good!”

May began to cry.

“I was so kind to you! I trusted you!” she sobbed.

“Johann tried to warn me about you, but I wouldn’t listen to him.”

“Don’t talk to me about Johann! He is worthless to you now. Do you know that he is a Hedge Witch? Little good that did him against a Daayan witch like me! If he loved you so much, why didn’t he find a way to protect you from me? You want to know

why? Because he has grown tired of watching over you! You have become a burden to him. Now he is free to live his life, and return to being a Hedge Witch. You have been like a rock around his neck. I have set him free!”

“That is not true! Johann loves me! He has always loved me! And you are an evil witch. I should have listened to him. Now look what has happened!”

May feels her anxiety rising through her chest. All she can see is black.

All of a sudden the room starts to glow. Static electricity goes from May across the floor, around the window and straight to Jurusha. She is knocked off of her feet.

"You little witch!" Jurusha screams.

"There I said it! You might as well know; you are a witch as well as a Sidhe fairy! Your father is a Hedge witch and your mother was a fairy. That is before I killed her!"

May's eyes turn dark black-blue. Her face becomes red. She flies at Jurusha and knocks her down again.

"You horrible woman! You killed my mother?! How could you? What did she ever do to you? Well guess what? I am going to kill you!"

But all of a sudden May feels weak. She has lost all of her anger and just feels sad and empty. She climbs off of Jurusha and crawls back to her bed.

"I don't feel so well," she says.

"I bet you don't. I have just stripped you of your special powers. You are much weaker than me

anyway. You can no longer "hover". So don't try to fly out of the window, because you will break your neck. Now, you can lie in here and think about what you have said and done. And tomorrow I may let you out, after you have apologized to me. Good night!"

May bursts into tears again. She begins to wonder what the witch has told her.

"Is she a burden to Johann? Does he resent her? Why hadn't he told her they are witches and she is a fairy as well?"

I am so hurt Johann! I thought you loved me! What am I going to do?

May falls back on the bed in despair.

By playing into May's worst fears, specifically that she doesn't belong to anyplace or anyone, Jurusha

plants the seed in May's mind she is not wanted or loved, even by the man who has pledged to always be by her side. The witch has May right where she wants her, vulnerable and alone.

Later on that day, Jurusha comes back into the room and continues to talk to May, but May can't concentrate. She tries to listen, but her mind is racing in circles as she tries to absorb what is happening. She can see the witch's lips move, but it is as if May is in a wind tunnel and all she can hear is a roar in her ears.

Suddenly she hears a loud, rumbling voice in her head.

Be calm little one. I am with you. Listen to what the witch says. She will slip up, if you just listen. But you have to stay calm, and bide your time.

All of a sudden May feels comforted. She feels that she is not alone. The voice she hears is the kind handsome man whom she has called Papa in her dreams.

Don't you worry my little Lassie. I'm here for you. I have always been here. Everything will be ok. I love you!

I love you too Papa!

May suddenly feels lightheaded and closes her eyes.

"That's right Missy. Go ahead and sleep. You'll have plenty to keep you busy when you wake up!" says Jurusha.

May falls into a troubled sleep and Jurusha leaves the room, making sure to lock the door behind her.

When May awakes again, she can't tell if it is day or night. Shadows have begun to fall across the floor of the room. For a minute she can't tell if she is awake or asleep, but she soon realizes this is real, and not just a horrible nightmare.

Don't panic. Stay calm.

She begins to practice her breathing she had learned in her meditation classes with Leah in the Village.

Your breath has always been with you, and it will always be with you. No matter what happens, concentrate on your breathing. In and out, in and out.

After a few moments of being mindful of her breath she began to calm down and felt like she could concentrate on this situation that she had found herself in.

Okay. Let me pull myself out of this mess. I will pretend that I am in one of my novels. What would my heroine do in this situation?

May looks around the room. It is so tiny and bare. There is one tiny window. She walks up to it and looks down.

She is much too high up to try to jump down from the window without risking a broken or at least sprained ankle. She tries to fly around the room but was no longer able to.

What about the door? I doubt that it is open. But I can try it.

She tiptoes over to the door and gently tries the handle. It is locked.

I will just sit here, meditate and wait.

After about an hour she hears a door downstairs open. Before long she could hear footsteps outside of her room and the door creaked open.

It is Jurusha.

“Did you have a nice nap, my dear? You look well and rested. Are you hungry for a bit of supper? You have slept through breakfast and lunch and almost dinner too.”

“Oh yes, I am so hungry,” May tries to say sweetly.

“Well, alright then, come downstairs and have a bite.”

May follows the woman down the stairs and notices they are in an old, small cottage. It is plain, with a wooden table, an old wood stove and a cast iron pan on the stove. In it look like fried potatoes and some kind of sausage. May just stares at it.

"Well, I ain't your maid. If you want to eat, you better get a fork and go serve yourself!" the witch exclaims.

May sees there is a plate setting on the table and a fork beside it. The potatoes do smell delicious and she hadn't realized how hungry she actually is.

She fills her plate with the potatoes, but leaves the sausage. She has been practicing veganism for about six months, and doesn't have an appetite for meat. The potatoes are quite good, and she cleans her plate, as Jurusha looks on.

"Hmmm. Well, Missy. You were quite a bit hungry. Once you get your bearings, I'll show you around. We have a lot of work to do around here, and you can get started first thing in the morning."

Work! What kind of work? I don't plan on staying her long enough for you to get used to me, you mean witch!

But she continues to smile sweetly and nod her head.

Just stay calm, she will slip up, a voice inside her head keeps repeating.

"Well, if you don't mind, I am going back to bed. I am so tired." May yawns.

"I don't mind at all, after you wash your plate and fork. This isn't a hotel you know!"

"Oh, I'm sorry. Of course."

May went over to the old-fashioned sink with one spigot. For some reason she cannot get the water hot.

"Is there a hot water spigot?"

"We don't have hot water here, unless you heat it up on the stove."

Oh my goodness, you have to be kidding me!

"Oh, okay. I'll just wash it with cold water."

"Well, you will this time, but from now on, you will clean it with the hot water that you heat up.

Gets rid of the germs you know."

Please, let me find my way out of this place!

She gingerly washes the plate and fork and makes her way back up the stairs. All she wants to do is sleep and hopefully wake up next to Johann back in their apartment in Greenwich Village.

When she awakes, however, May is still in the tiny room upstairs. And because it is December, and

there is no heat, she awakes before dawn from the cold.

It is freezing. I am going to die from this cold, drafty house!

But a small voice within her says,

No, me little May, you shall not freeze. You will get up and make a fire. You were born and raised in this place, and although you did not have to make fires and such, you come from a line of mighty warriors and kings. You will survive this, and you will make it back home!

May immediately feels comforted and full of a firm resolve to survive in this God forsaken place.

Once she makes her way down into the cold kitchen, again she notices a few pieces of wood beside the fireplace.

Well, at least that witch isn't completely evil! She could have made me freeze first and then had me go out and gotten the firewood. At least I can get this place a little warm before I go gather more wood.

Because the wood is well seasoned, it starts quickly with a few pieces of kindling. There are no eggs though, but May does notice some brown liquid sitting in a small pan on a grate inside the large fireplace.

Closer inspection proves it is coffee and May heats it up as best she can on top of the grate in the fireplace.

Well, I am already small, but I will be really skinny by the time Johann sees me again!

She sits down in front of the fireplace and sips on the black coffee.

It isn't so bad without creamer. At least it's drinkable.

She has no idea where the witch is and hopes she will stay gone as long as possible.

She is annoying with that Irish accent, acting like she cares for me, and then tricking me and kidnapping me. What an evil woman, or should I say witch!

After drinking her coffee, she puts on a coat hanging by the door and a pair of old snow boots. They are huge on her small feet, but she figures she can at least shuffle in them.

May finds the woodpile and gathers as much as she can carry. After depositing the kindling beside the woodstove, she ventures out again and makes her way to a barn. May quietly enters so as not to

disturb the hens and roosters and makes little clucking noises. When one of the hens rise, May slowly gathers a few of the warm eggs.

"Oh gosh, I hope you don't mind me stealing your eggs! I hate eating them, but there is nothing else in the house! I promise as soon as I can gather some more potatoes, I won't take any more of your eggs, pretty little hen."

The hen just observes her from a distance, but makes no move toward her.

Once May makes her way back to the thatched covered cottage, she fries the eggs on the grate in the fireplace. There is actually some coarse salt and a little bit of pepper, and they taste amazingly good when May eats them.

I didn't know I could cook!

May smiles to herself.

Johann is going to be happy to know his little May isn't completely helpless.

With thoughts of Johann, May feels nostalgic and tries not to cry.

Why did I take you for granted Johann? You have loved me since I was a little girl, and I didn't appreciate you. I wish I could tell you how much I love you. Don't worry, I will make it home, and we will get married and have a baby like you have talked about. I just have to figure my way out of this mess I put myself into. I promise, Johann, I will trust you and love you the way that you have always loved me!

May began to cry. She cried so long and so hard that she could not catch her breath.

It was just about that time Jurusha walked in.

What is wrong with you Lassie? You need to pull yourself together. Either you are sleeping or you are crying. I'll have no more of it, you hear me?

Jurusha tries to be as stern and as mean as possible, but May is beginning to get to the witch, and she is starting to remember what it feels like to truly love someone.

Jurusha does not want to have these feelings again, but just seeing the princess so forlorn and lost-looking pulls at her heart strings.

"Now come on, little Missy, it is not so bad here. You were raised in this country after all. It is actually beautiful once you get used to it. Let's put the kettle on and 'ave a cup of tea."

May looks up with swollen eyes.

"You don't even know me! How do you know where I am from and why would you kidnap me? I was so kind to you!"

"You do not understand. This has nothing to do with you. This started a long time ago, before you were even born. But, we won't talk about this right now. I want to bring you into town to get you something to eat. We have nothing in the house, and we will have to get some food before the snow comes. After that, we won't be leaving here much."

I won't be here long enough to see the snow, May thinks with anger.

Jurusha grabs a wagon on the side of the cottage to carry the groceries in.

"Why are we walking when I see those red double decker buses everywhere?"

"Walking will do you good. Exercise is good for the soul."

What would you know about a soul? May thought.

May follows Jurusha down a dirt path surrounded by an evergreen forest.

Oh wow! I thought the countryside in New York State was green, but this is the most brilliant green I have ever seen.

There are so many different shades of green in the glades that May is somewhat awestruck by its beauty.

"What, have you never seen a forest before Lassie?

I know it is more spectacular than America.

Everything in America looks faded to me."

Well, I still love it! Wait a minute - You have always complained about New York. Why are you feeling so protective of America all of a sudden?

It was then that May realize how ungrateful she has been and how she had a lovely life in Greenwich Village with Johann and Seven.

She misses the Village and the marketplace. She feels nostalgic for the changing seasons of fall and winter. She misses her meditation class on Saturdays with Leah. And she really misses Seven.

I hope that Johann is taking good care of my kitty! Why did I complain so much? I would give anything to be back in my cozy apartment with Johann and Seven.

Again the tears start to well up in her eyes, but she has to keep up with Jurusha and quickly brushes them away with the sleeve of her coat.

When Jurusha looks back and catches a glimpse of May she wonders,

Why is she always crying and teary-eyed? This is a beautiful place! Why can't she just see it?

She quickly looks away before her heart becomes soft again.

I will not fall for that little bug again!

But she is worried that it is too late.

After about a mile, in which May thinks her legs are giving way, they come across a small town.

There is a butchery, a bakery and a pharmaceutical store. All of the stores are brightly colored but simple, with a small sign indicating what they are.

"Come on Lassie, I'm going to get us some meat and bread, and then we will get some first aid supplies to keep at the house this winter, Jurusha says.

"I am a vegan; I don't eat meat. Don't bother getting any for me."

"Oh my goodness! A vegan you are? Well I never. Fine then, eat vegetables and roots all day, what do I care?"

What is wrong with this girl? America has ruined her brain!

When they enter the bakery, the man behind the counter looks at Jurusha quizzically and with some apprehension.

"Well, Hello Daniel!" says Jurusha.

"I came to get me a few dozen loaves of your bread. I don't know when I will be back in town, so please, put it in a large bag. I will also have a few of those pastries in the case if you don't mind."

"No, no, of course not," stammers the man.

Why is he so nervous? What has she done to him? No telling, she is mean and evil, and I am going to escape from her as soon as possible!

May tries to catch the eye of the baker and make some kind of signal to him that she is in trouble, but he seems so shaken and nervous around Jurusha that he doesn't pay her any mind. Before she knows it Jurusha has paid for the bread and pastries and they are walking to the pharmacy.

"I saw you trying to make eye contact with the baker, Missy. Don' try that again or I will leave you in the cottage by yourself to starve next time!"

May feels her heart sink again, and she quietly follows Jurusha into the pharmacy. This time she does not try to signal the pharmacist, but the man takes notice of the witch and the young woman who seems so out of place.

Although she is wearing normal clothes and is quite beautiful, there is something witchy about her. She seems familiar, and he thinks he can smell a witch's scent.

The way that she keeps her eyes low to the ground and maintained a defeated posture, makes him wonder if Jurusha is up to her evil doings again.

The poor girl!

He does not comment on it, knowing how cruel Jurusha can be. But because he is a moral and brave man, he makes up his mind to find out who this woman is with the witch. He will also let the Sidhes and the fairies know that Jurusha is up to no good again.

The pharmacist as a Hedge Witch. His name is Ronald. He respects the power of Jurusha, but she has turned his brothers Thomas and Joseph into rabbits a long time ago, and he cannot forgive her for that.

Because he is a Hedge Witch he cannot reverse the spell, but he vows that one day he will find a way to change them back to human form. He has been researching the reversal of Daayan spells, but he has not yet been able to find a way to help his brothers.

Jurusha has cast a spell on most of the Hedge Witches after Thomas had rejected her and married Lenore. There are only a handful of Hedge Witches who still had human form in the County.

Jurusha keeps them to serve her, since she needs to get her meat from the butchery and bread and pastries from the baker. The pharmacist comes in handy if she ever needs extra ingredients for her spells, so she keeps him in human form as well.

Other than the seamstress and a carpenter who comes and fixes her roof and makes repairs to the cottage, all of the other Hedge Witches have been shapeshifted into various animals to live out their days in the forest.

As May and Jurusha are leaving the pharmacy, May quickly looks up from lidded eyes and notices the pharmacist is trying to say something to her. In his

hand, on a piece of paper, he has written in large letters, "DON'T WORRY. I WILL HELP YOU. BE PATIENT." She quickly looks down, afraid that Jurusha has seen the note.

The witch is preoccupied, however, with a medicine bottle that she is studying.

"How potent is this sleeping potion Ronald? Sometimes I have trouble falling asleep, and I want a supply just in case I have trouble this winter."

I bet. You just want to drug another unsuspecting victim. That is probably what happened to this poor girl.

"Tis strong enough to do the job you need."

Ronald has a hard time remaining civil to her, but he does not want to jeopardize his own safety, since he is the only one left that can save his brothers.

And now this poor girl. Something about this wee lass pulls on his heart strings. Maybe the way she looks so forlorn and lonely.

Wait 'til I tell Anna-Kate and Rachel, the Sidhe fairies, what the witch has been up to, Ronald thinks, but continues to smile.

"Aye, well, I'll be back," she says.

"I need to stock up on a few of your potions in case the girl and I get sick, mind you."

And with that Jurusha grabs May's hand and pulls her out of the shop.

As May and Jurusha make their way back toward the cottage with their packages of food in the wagon, May thinks she hears a small rustling in the bushes and trees surrounding the path. She has this

eerie feeling that they are being watched, by a hundred little eyes.

I must be seeing things.

It sounds like there are little tiny voices whispering to her from the glades.

"May, May, look over here. At the fairy mounds."

May tries to squint her eyes to get a better look into the green foliage, and thinks she sees fireflies or butterflies fluttering about. But on closer examination, it looks like the winged creatures have little faces, like pixies.

"What, what is it?"

"Eh, did you say something?" Jurusha asks.

"Uh...no, just talking to myself," May quickly says.

"Well, pick up your pace, I haven't all day. We have work to do once we get back home."

May has read about fairies and fauns in her fairytales that she loved to buy, but they were make believe. These tiny winged creatures remind her of her readings, though.

What is it about this place? I feel like I am in a dream. I believe if I look hard enough into these forests, I will see fairy houses and playgrounds! I must be exhausted.

May picks up her pace to keep up with the witch. Not trying to be rude to the creatures she thinks she saw, she gives a quick little wave and mouths, "I will be back."



CHAPTER 13

Into the Woods

Once May gets back to the witch's cottage, her head is spinning.

So many things have happened today! She thinks. When I first started out with the witch to town, I was upset. Now everything has changed! The pharmacist, Ronald has promised he will rescue me if I am patient. The little voices in the woods sounded friendly and even seemed to know my name. Who were those little creatures?

Although May has never encountered a fairy or a faun, she has read about them all through her childhood at the boarding school. In addition, she knows that she is different. She suspects that she isn't fully human, with all of the extrasensory gifts

that she has. The stories of the fairies intrigue her, and when she grew up many of her novels were about magical, faraway places by the sea.

Well, isn't that a coincidence. I am living in one of my stories! Too bad, I am the unfortunate heroine! It wouldn't be so bad, if it wasn't for Johann. I miss him so much; I can barely stand it. He must be so worried and sad without me.

She wants to cry again, but decides she will save her tears for her bedroom, away from the prying eyes of the witch.

I will not give her the satisfaction of seeing me cry.

Jurusha lifts the latch to the gate in front of the cottage and says,

"Make sure you pull the gate securely. There are a lot of creatures around here, that don't care for me much, and I don't want them in my garden!"

May wonders who those creatures could be.

Were they the fireflies and butterflies she had heard on their way home? Why don't they like you? What have you done to them, you evil witch! Don't worry little ones, I will see you again. She can't keep an eye on me all of the time!

Once they got into the cottage, Jurusha lays the packages on the table and disappears into a room on the side of the kitchen.

That must be her bedroom. I bet it is a lot nicer and larger than mine!

Not that May cares about that at all, she deeply misses Johann and just wants to be with him again, even if they live in a tent.

Why didn't I appreciate you more Johann? I hope that you are okay.

Again the tears begin to well up in her eyes and she tries to make herself busy. She notices that there are a few cupboards near the fireplace and she starts to put the food away. They are completely bare.

What did this witch eat? Did she eat? Do witches eat food? Jurusha appears from the side room.

"Aye, I see you are making yourself useful! That is a good lass. Make sure you don't eat more than is necessary for your meals though, because that is all there is until we go back into town next week. I hope you are not a big eater. We do have eggs in

the barn and potatoes in the cellar. They are for you, I don't eat much."

I bet you don't. Too bad, or I might just drug you, like you drugged me! Now that was an idea! Maybe Ronald knows how we can poison this witch, or at least make her go to sleep. I don't want to kill her, but I don't want to be with her the rest of my life either!

The witch is still talking, and May nods her head every now and then, but after their long walk to and from town, it is already mid-day. May begins to feel sleepy.

"I think I will go upstairs and lay down for a bit", she says to Jurusha.

"Listen, Missy. That is fine for today, because we did have a lengthy trek into town and all. But

remember, there are chores to do around here.

Sweeping up the floor, doing the dishes, keeping this place clean. You are living here for free. You will earn your keep, do you hear?"

"Yes, I understand," May says.

"Well go on, then, go take your nap, I'm going out for a bit. And don't think about trying to escape from here. There is no one left to rescue you. I have taken care of that!" Jurusha says smugly.

May makes her way up to her little room. With the sun shining in, it isn't as cold as it has been. She leaves her door slightly ajar so she can get the heat of the fireplace.

I need to find some more blankets for tonight.

She notices there is a small closet in the corner of the room, and she looks inside. She sees two

patchwork quilts tucked on the bottom shelf. She takes them out and lays them on her bed.

This should keep me warm.

She wanders over to the window and gazes out at the woods and the sea beyond. It is quite beautiful and she wishes that Johann was here to see it with her.

I always begged him to take me to Ireland. Well, here I am, but I wanted it to be with him!

Finally, the tears came, and she let them stream down her face as she stood by the window. She began to cry so hard, that she ended up curled up on the floor, the sobs racking her small frame. After a while, she fell asleep on the wooden flooring, not even realizing how tired she had been.

When she woke up, she was covered by one of the patchwork quilts, and a pillow was under her head.

What in the world?

And then she hears footsteps downstairs.

The witch? I thought she hated me. This doesn't make sense. Why would she cover me up?

May feels confused and unsure of what to do next.

She makes her way to the door and peers downstairs. The witch is sitting in front of the fireplace with a melancholy look on her face.

What is she thinking about?

And in that instance, May believes she sees tears on the cheeks of Jurusha.

Why would she be upset, she captured me? I hope you are upset! Look what you have done, to me and to Johann!

She wants to scream, but turns away from the witch and goes back to her room.

The fact of the matter is that Jurusha is having second thoughts about capturing the princess again. She thought that she could make her happy here in Ireland, the country of her birth, but the girl keeps crying, and it is beginning to bother the witch more and more. Her steely hatred she had for King Thomas isn't so strong anymore, and she sometimes catches herself wondering if he is okay. All alone in that cold castle, he must be lonely. And it was all because of her.

Because he rejected me! I could have been his wife and had his children! But no, he had to pick a witch from another county and humiliate me!

Her rage flares up again, and she gets up from in front of the fireplace and storms out of the cottage. She quickly shapeshifts into a raven, and race toward the sea. She lets out a blood-curdling screech, and all of the forest animals ran for cover. May notices the raven flying swiftly in the direction of the sea.

Now that is a strange sight. I have never seen a raven flying over the ocean before.

She looks down at the forest and notices branches and grass have come to life. When she looks closer, there are actually little rabbits peering out from the glade.

Aw, how cute!

Then she notices the rabbits seem to be looking up at her window.

Can they see me?

She waves from behind the glass, but they continue to just gaze up.

I think I will go down and see those cute little creatures.

May makes her way down the stairs and out the front door. She notices that it is not locked, and is curious where the witch is and why she has not locked her in.

Oh well, maybe she is in her room crying! She deserves it, as miserable as she has made me!

Once she makes her way out of the garden and past the gate, she walks over to the edge of the forest. She does not see the rabbits any more. May sits down in the tall grass, and notices that the sun is quite warm in the clearing. The smell of the ocean is salty and refreshing. The pines in the forest remind her of Christmas.

In her reverie, May does not notice the bunnies have hopped quite close to her. She had closed her eyes, but when she opened them after a few minutes, she notices they are only a few feet away.

"Oh my!" She says out loud.

"Well, hello bunnies," she whispers.

May is not used to seeing wild life so close up, having lived in New York state at the school or in Greenwich Village.

The only time she had seen animals really, other than dogs and cats in the Village, was when she and Johann had gone to the zoo, or had rode horses. She can't believe how soft and furry they look.

"Well, hello Princess May," says one of the bunnies.

May screams and then faints.

When she comes to, she is laying alone in the grass. The bunnies are gone. She does not know how long she has been laying there, but she has become cold. There are leaves and brush on top of her, however, as if some creature had tried to cover her up. She quickly gets to her feet and runs back to the cottage.

She does not know what to think, and has a hard time unlatching the gate and making her way back

into the house. Once she gets in, she runs upstairs and hops in her bed.

What just happened? Was I dreaming? I must have fallen asleep near the forest, but I could have sworn that rabbit said my name! Is this place haunted?

May has read several stories about Ireland, since she has always been interested in it. She has read that there are legends of fairies and witches and sprites that live in the forests.

But those were all fairytales. They were not real! I wonder if the witch has drugged me again, and I am beginning to hallucinate.

By this time, night has fallen, and May is beginning to feel hungry. She creeps down the stairs and notices the witch is still not around. The

fire is beginning to die down and the cottage has turned cold. She throws a few pieces of wood on the fire.

May does not want to run into Jurusha again, so she sneaks a few pieces of bread and makes her way back up the stairs. She hops into her bed and covers herself with all of the covers and nibbles on her bread.

She pulls the covers up to her chin and prays to be rescued as soon as possible by Ronald, the pharmacist. "Please, dear God, watch over me, Johann and all of the people in the world that need your help." Please take care of all of us, Amen." And before she knows it, she is asleep.



CHAPTER 14

Johann

Johann is having a nightmare. He is dreaming that he is awake, but can't make his legs move to get out of bed. He tries calling out to May, but he cannot speak. He struggles to get the words out, but nothing happens. He keeps trying to yell out, and when he finally awakes, he is shouting out May's name at the top of his lungs.

"Oh wow!" He says out loud. "That was intense!"

His throat is sore, but he can't tell if it is from the yelling or if he is really sick. He feels extremely hot, and the sheets are soaked from his sweat. He rips them off of the bed and stuffs them into their small stackable washer and dryer in the corner of the kitchen.

The light coming from the window has waned, and the sun is setting low in the sky. Johann wanders over to the balcony, while rubbing the sleep from his eyes, and looks at the cottony snow gently falling in the Village. Everything is pretty much covered up, including his bike that he had left chained to a light post in front of the apartment.

Where is May? He wonders.

She rarely goes out without him, and it makes him feel nervous when she is not around, especially since Jurusha is so close.

I will tell her tonight what happened to her when she was little.

She has to be told, if not, she will be in danger of getting kidnapped again by Jurusha. Why doesn't

that darn witch leave her alone? It was twenty-one years ago, for God's sake!

But he knows that time has no meaning for witches. But in particular for Jurusha, he knows that she has a vendetta against the king and she will not rest until she has her revenge. May is her target, and as long as she is still alive, Jurusha will not stop pursuing her.

What Jurusha does not know about Johann is that his love for May is stronger than his love for his own well-being. Although he is a peaceful hedge witch, when it comes to May all bets are off. He does not want to have to kill Jurusha, but he will if that is necessary.

And the method of killing her will be gruesome. He will have to stab her in her heart. And in order

to do that, he will have to be physically holding her, and that makes him cringe. And the fact that he is a God fearing Hedge Witch, he knows that murder is against the Commandments. But to protect his May against a sure demise, the decision to end Jurusha's life will have to be made. It will be an act of war, good versus evil.

While Johann is pondering these thoughts, a feeling of impending doom begins to creep up in his stomach. May has been gone too long. He knows he has slept for a few hours at least, because of the position of the sun.

He still does not feel well, being a bit feverish, but the anguish that he feels is not physical. Something is not right. He quickly puts on his boots and overcoat and goes out into the winter snow.

Johann asks his neighbors at a local café if they have seen May. No one had seen her today. He rushes to the bookstore and then the coffee shop. The girl behind the counter says that she had seen May a few hours earlier talking to a strange woman with long black hair and a dark cloak. She seemed strange to the girl because she was so interested in May and never ordered any coffee. Johann's heart sinks.

Jurusha!

Oh God, please let May be alright!

"Did you see which way they went when they left here?" He asks the girl.

"Yes, they walked toward the sushi restaurant."

"Thank-you! If you see May, please tell her that I am looking for her."

The girl nods and looks at Johann sadly. She feels something is wrong as well, but she cannot put her finger on it. But looking at Johann's face alarms her. He looks broken and lost at the same time.

I hope he finds May quickly, she thinks.

Johann runs toward the sushi restaurant. The staff know him well since May and he frequent there.

"Have you seen May?" he says rather loudly to one of the waitresses and a cook who are setting up for dinner.

"No, Johann, not today. What is wrong?" the waitress asks.

"Please if you see her, tell her I am looking for her!"

"We will, for sure. Don't worry, she is probably on her way home now!" The cook says.

He goes and sits on the stoop of the restaurant and puts his head into his hands. His heart is breaking. With every passerby that he sees he inquires of May's whereabouts, but no one has seen her. When he looks up at the blood red moon, there is a circle around it.

Trouble is not too far behind.

Finally, one of the waitresses arriving for work says that,

"Yes, I have seen her with a woman with dark hair.

They went into a door beside the restaurant."

Johann jumps up and goes into the apartment. He knocks on the two doors downstairs but the occupants have not seen May. When he gets to the door at the top of the steps to the left, he experiences a strange feeling.

There is a cold wind coming from under the door. It is slightly ajar, which is odd, but Johann gives it a little push. The apartment is completely empty and the windows are covered with cobwebs. The air is damp and musty. He can sense he is standing over a witch's portal, and May and Jurusha have recently crossed through it.

He walks across the living room and the wooden floor boards creaked ominously. He can feel May in the apartment when he concentrates. He tastes her fear. A vision of her turning and trying to run past a clawing witch flashes through his mind.

It is Jurusha but she has let her mask fall. Her eyes are yellow and bright. Her skin has a greenish tint to it. Her teeth look like shards of brown glass. It is then he knows for certain.

Jurusha has captured May again.

He closes his eyes and slows his breathing. He can see May. She is in a small room with a patchwork quilt covering her body. He can see her chest rising and falling, so she is still alive. The light is coming in across the wooden bed at a slanted angle. In the corner of the room is a window overlooking a forest.

He breathes a sigh of relief and whispers to her, "Don't worry Mistress May, I will come for you. We will be together again."

May's eyes flutter open for a moment and then close. Her breathing slows and her blood pressure drops. A peacefulness and tranquility wash over her.

"Ahhh....."

And her breath whooshes out of her lungs. She lets
go and falls into a dreamless sleep.

