

# HIGH FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE

**FREE** FOR LOVERS OF TOLKIEN, C.S. LEWIS, URSULA LE GUIN, ALEXANDER MARSHALL AND OTHERS

ISSUE # 4

**The Boy on  
the Beach**  
by Gary Bonn

**AT THE BACK OF  
THE NORTH WIND**  
BY GEORGE  
MACDONALD

*Porphyrean's  
Choice*  
by Alexander  
Marshall

A Window into  
Middle-earth

CLARENDON HOUSE  
PUBLICATIONS

# HIGH FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE

## Welcome to the fourth issue of High Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine!

The magazine is associated with the social media group [High Fantasy and Science Fiction](#). The plan is to have regular issues, and to offer them for free in order to interest and excite anyone interested in the above genres.

Please feel free to write to Clarendon House Publications via this email address if you'd like to comment or have any questions!

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We hope to hear from you!

-Clarendon House Publications

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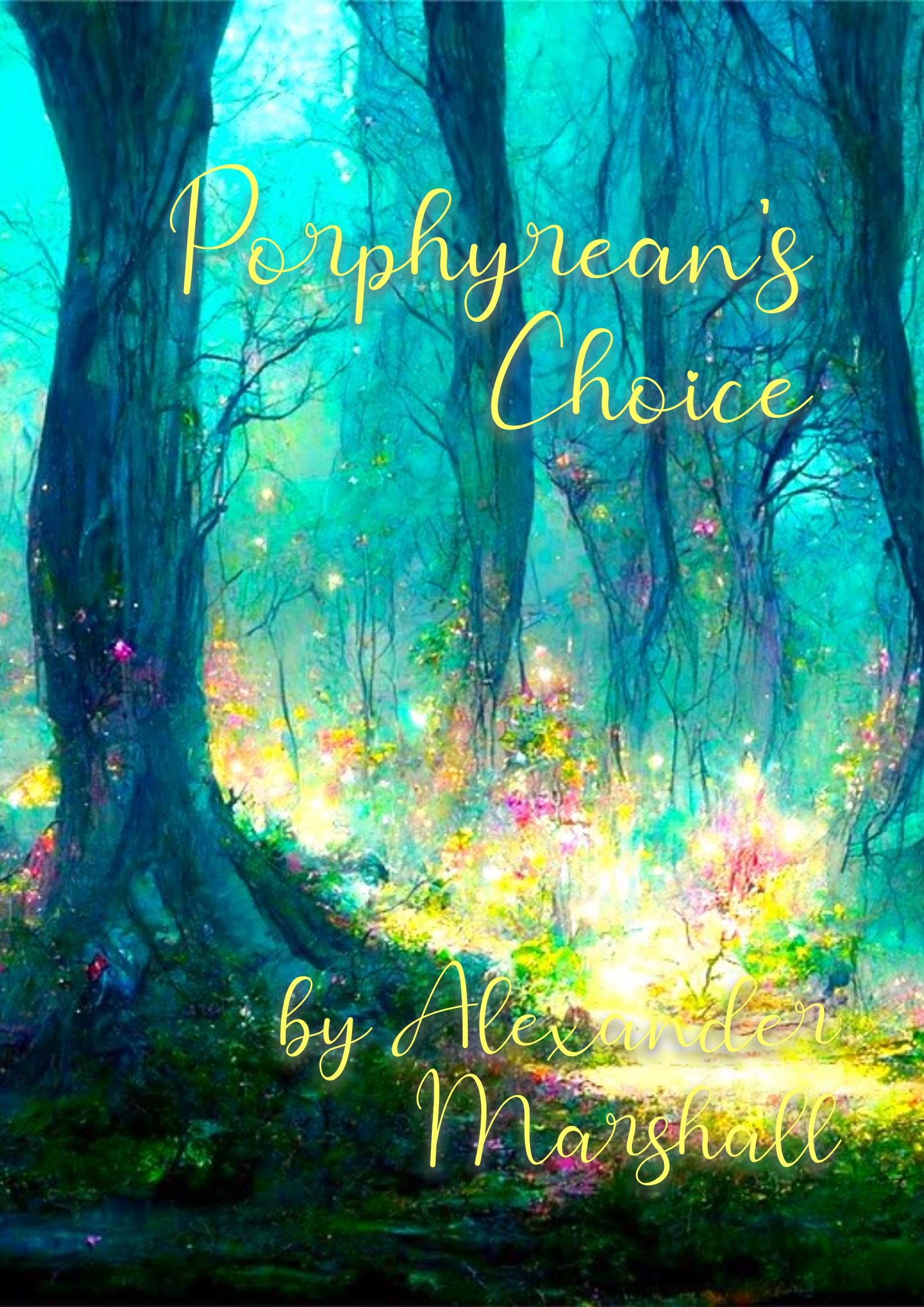
# HIGH FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE



WELCOME TO THE  
HIGH FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE!

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS MAGAZINE FEATURING SUCH AUTHORS  
AS ALEXANDER MARSHALL, TOBIAS GREEN, J.R.R. TOLKIEN AND  
OTHERS!

THE MAGAZINE IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOCIAL MEDIA GROUP  
HIGH FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION.  
IT IS COMPLETELY FREE TO DOWNLOAD



# Porphyrean's Choice

by Alexander  
Marshall



Porphyrean turned, his idle gaze pervading the purple twilight of the overhanging emerald vineleaves and procrastinating in the pearly light from the wintrous beads of the many thousand chandeliers that clustered about the globing dome of the voluptuan ceiling. In those violet shadows stirred thoughts unmentionable, eddies in the pool of Porphyrean's divine mind.

Queen Scaramuthe stroked her lover's long and shining hair from the high and stony shelf of his thoughtful brow, her tracing fingers dividing his cascading locks right down to his reclining waist where the winding braids ended in jewels and lumps of chiselled gold. Her eyes flickered fancifully in the half-light, embers of thought fading and flaring in the deep and ash-choked grate of her ancient mind as she watched her lover lick the bitten flesh of a blue and green grape before dropping it whole with a delicate and miniature ceremony of fingers and lips into the ebony abyss of his gullet.

'Wondreth thyself, my full-bodied god of the fire of love,' said Scaramuthe, leaning her frame against him and turning her fingertips round about and round about in the ends of his mane, 'wondreth thyself whether thy darling and honeysweet daughter has yet put her hand to the Fruit of Knowledge in the Garden of the Nether Paradise afore the chiming of the Causator's Bell? For is not this day the Day of the Thousand Tongues, and is not the Dividing of Fruits the Seventh Ceremony of that day, and should not she at this very tick of Great Lucy's tock be prostrating herself at thy feet and presenting thee with the Apple of Horatius Himself?'

She had spoken so quietly, in a whisper like the wind waiting for a door to open, that Porphyrean had neither moved nor breathed for fear of missing a syllable from her worshipped throat — for, as well she knew, she had but to utter a sound, not even a word but only a primeval groan or even a squeak without significance, to send his whole mighty form trembling with the desires that gave birth and meaning to the world. He instigated a motion of muscles, a slow and thunderous stretching of his face, his grape-stained lips straining back across the skeletal stalactites of his teeth in a smile that betokened unspeakable pleasure in that sweet murmur of his lover's voice.

'Ah, my essence of the nectar of peaches,' he said, marking each word on the air as a painter caresses a canvas with his brush, 'thou speakest too little, and my poor and pleasure-starved ears, drowned in the silent music of the spheres, occupied with the frenzied clutter of the seventy-seven thousand palaces, pine to nothing in the absence of thy voice. Put thy licentious lips to my own and let us abandon Burravish to her quest! Let us set fire to the stars themselves with our rampaging and unmitigatable passion! Let the darkness of heaven be dark no longer, but full of my seed and the crimson cries of thy receiving loins!'

The turning of Porphyrean's mighty form was like the upheaval of a craggy and gold-encrusted range of mountains by a tumult deep within the heart of the world; his bejewelled flesh sparkled in the mystic lamplight as his arms embraced slender Scaramuthe, her lithe and splendid shape overshadowed and all but eclipsed by the moon of his body coming between her and the splintered light from the overbrimming suns that hung delicately from the carven sky of the ceiling. But with one tiny, perfectly formed hand emerging from within her drapery of pale blue and silver, with one fragile, taut and curving arm protruding upwards, the diamonds of her gauze shawl twinkling like a galaxy in his shadow, she gave him pause, she ceased the downward bearing motion of his bulk, she halted the god mid-movement, and, smiling at him with the smile that shattered the Plinthmaster's heart and curdled the blood of a thousand sacrificial virgins, she forced him back, and untwined his mind from dreams, calling silently to the purpose of the day and dragging forth from the void of his idleness the intention not to fall upon her but to swing instead to his right, where, spilled with grapes and surrounded by ruby-crusted pillows, the Mirror of Manjle lay strewn as though no more than a toy, a thing to be tossed aside, a bauble. With the ringed talons of her left hand, the Hand Sinister, she drew a wide, dark line across the steam upon the glass, and leaned over it, feeling its crystal iciness upon her half-gauzed breasts, and such was her will that the gaze of the god was drawn thither too, his own powerful fingers stroking his long, brown beard as he peered into the reflecting shadows.





Therein, but a moment had passed and they saw the light-play of a figure dancing across a darkness, paddling naked through a forest stream, sharp and golden sunlight cutting the dawn air until it bled pale mist. It was a girl, a princess — though, as her white flesh pressed into the dripping bark of the massive trees she seemed a wormish thing, small and of no consequence. The trees frowned at her, they loomed at her, they resolved not to be disturbed by her as she plashed about in the dim domain at their feet, like some beauteous dragonfly, a colourful and fascinating but irritating insect that sought escape from their shadows into some brighter and freer world beyond — but try as they might, the tall trees of the ancient Tharlsgirdle Wood could not forget that fateful shape that tickled their beslimed trunks with her nakedness; nor could they put aside their wooden but no less certain knowledge that this day was the Day of the Thousand Tongues. Six of the Nine Ceremonies of that Day had been performed. Of those the trees of Tharlsgirdle Wood knew naught — but of the Seventh Ceremony they had an intimacy of knowledge, for in the west of the wood was the Garden of the Nether Paradise, and in the cleaving of that garden between two low hills was the Clearing of the Broken Spiral, and in the centre of that space, tall, proud and spilling over with silver in the morning sun, stood the Tree of Horatius Himself, and this was the special season when it hung heavy with red and glowing fruits like rubies that seemed lit from within by an fruitish fire: the Apples of Knowledge. It was these Apples that Burravish, glorious princess upon whose skin the sun and moon made love, the very sight of whom had split open the hearts of at least seven hundred mortals, was intent with more than a single portion of her youthful mind. She knew, and was enervated by the knowing, that one of those apples she needed to pluck before the chiming of the Causator's Bell. She glanced up at the whirling sun, and knew that, by its too-swift motion of madness across her heavens, not much mortal time remained.

What would happen to her young self if she failed to grasp one of those rubied fruits prior to the tintinabulation of those heavy bells, she did not dare to contemplate, nor did anyone know, for in the Five Ages of Snorcus-Snarrilus, no one had returned from the Garden of the Nether Paradise if the Bell had caught them out. Would she be burned by an out-reaching flare from her father's sun? Or would the green and wet earth which made her toes shiver as she flitted from shadow to shadow open up beneath her and suck her into its cold muddiness forever? She shook with fear and morning dew as she ran on, slipping on squeaky fronds of dampness and brushing aside the silvery nets of dawn cobwebs.

Then suddenly it was before her — not the slender trunk of the Tree of Horatius Himself, but the bowed-over shape of a man turned to stone. The grey gargoyle form faced away from her, bent as though in perpetual pain, a tall and exceptionally thin man. Anxious with the anxiety of a goddess, she stepped lightly about the dripping rock and looked upon this captive of chronosis from the front. She had to bend to see his face — it

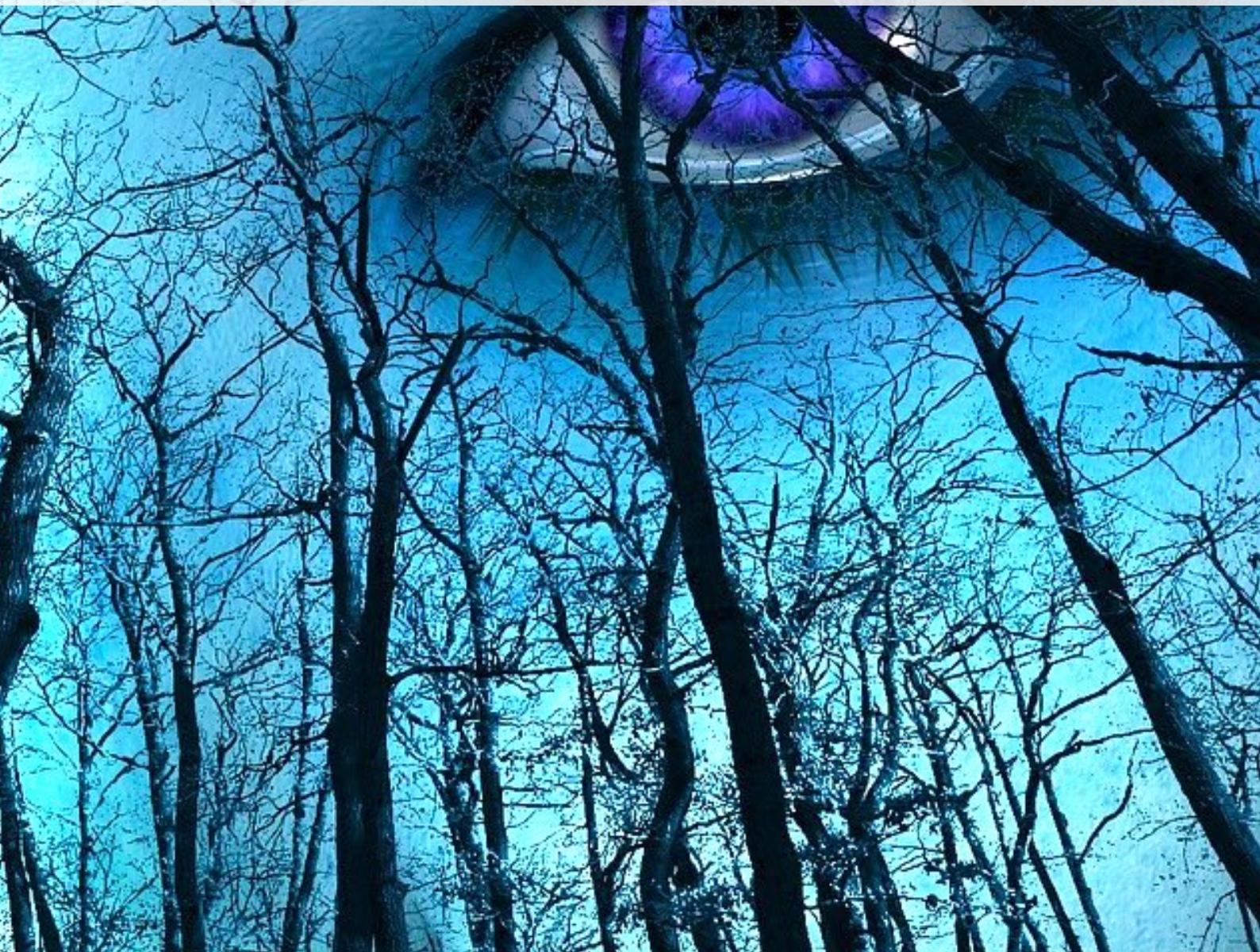
was a twisted visage, its young and frail features spoiled by lines of agony. He had his arms clasped about his naked abdomen, as though frozen in the fraction of an instant when he had received a blow there. He was not beautiful — his arms were taut and bony, his eyes bulging, his nose far too large for his face. A small spider had made a webby home in one of his nostrils. Forgetful of the time, or dismissive of its passage as revealed by the creeping of black shadows across the vernal floor of the wood, Burravish put a delicate hand to the statue's creased brow and at the cold contact between fingertip and stone inhaled an upsurging pity which had already begun to trickle upwards with her hot and youthful blood from the ventricles of her divine heart. Who was this agonised boy? she wondered — and answered herself in the next breath: he was one of those who had come before her to recover an Apple, and this was what befell those who could not beat the Causator's Bell! Her hand jerked away, involuntarily, but that motion with its implication of fear shamed her innocence and she put her sweet fingers back upon that stony head and stroked it.



Then she leaned forward and put her pink lips to the grey and twisted stone mouth, feeling its rough icy grit against the yielding cushion of her own lips. She closed her beautiful eyes, and heard in that silent wood where even the birds were silent for the day of a Thousand Tongues, a sudden and very distinct crack, like the sharp and decisive breaking of a giant's bone, or the clean splintering of a rough diamond under the expert blow of a jeweller's hammer. She opened her eyes again, and keeled over like a fallen tree at her feet, writhing in a cacophony of coughing and rubbing a small spider's home from his face, was a tall and exceedingly thin young fellow who after a moment's collection of himself, noticed her standing there naked and utterly glorious before him, and immediately used his flat and splaying hands to cover his own youthful embarrassment.

No words were spoken, for what words could be found in such a circumstance as a boy lately a statue finding himself in the company of his unexpected saviour, a divine princess who

glistened before him like the offspring of a sun and a moon? He shifted from foot to cramped foot; she looked at him and away from him, her girlish curiosity seeking neither to avoid nor to meet his nervous gaze but looking him up and down as though inspecting a specimen in the late Plinthmaster's cabinets. Nor did she speak when she approached him and drew aside his hands as someone rising from slumber might draw aside a curtain to look through a window. He stood awkwardly as she peered at his exposed boyhood, her mouth a little tunnel of curiosity. Nor did he utter a word when she stepped closer, her small hands stroking his spindly arms, her small breasts touching his newly-restored skin, her staring eyes like a deer's only inches from his twitching face. He could make only an incoherent noise as she pulled him closer to her, and could yell only a meaningless squeak as she put her gentle and warm lips upon his protruding collarbone in





the same purposeful way in which a child puts a coloured bead to its mouth. Nor did he do more than draw breath when her teeth lightly grazed his neck, her nails testing the thickness of his flesh down his back. He trembled, no more than a fitful shake like a dog drying itself, when her hand stroked him intimately; he ground his teeth together when she took it upon herself to make him fall backwards onto the wet and slimy earth; he made no protest of movement or sound as she cleaned the rest of the cobwebs and dust from his face with her wonderful fingers; he fell silent as she bestrode him, her face empty of all lust or feeling, a blank and white canvas upon which a grandmaster might paint a passion, her eyes a staring and forgetful void as she took him in those fabulous and fairy-like fingers, her golden hair sharing something of the sun's morning sheen as she fell upon him.

And then they heard it. Over the tops of the tallest trees it came, defying height and distance with its chilling thunder; worming between the trunks of the forest, it approached like an ambushing army, falling upon their

helpless ears like marauding outlaws might savage a wandering and witless victim — the deadly and perfunctory chiming of the Causator's Bell. And there, not a hundred paces away, gleaming in the mid-morning shafts of shimmering sunlight, in the Clearing of the Broken Spiral, were the precious fruits of the Tree of Horatius Himself, bowing low upon slender branches, untouched, unplucked, unheld. And Burravish woke from her girlish and animal trance and was struck down by terror and guilt and realisation of mortal time, that passage of ticks and tocks that ate away always at opportunity. And the boy looked in her face and his unbidden and uninvited ecstasy ceased as swiftly as his stony form had melted again into flesh, as she leapt from him and pounced toward the Clearing of the Broken Spiral — too late. Even as her fleet foot touched the grass it was golden — there she was, frozen in a golden moment of terrible cognisance, golden rather than stone because of her divinity, the boy surmised, his mind, even with all that it had endured, being of that sort.



Scaramuthe smiled the smile that had tormented and destroyed the armies of the Spotted Witch as she pulled back from the Mirror of Manjle and the phantasmic images that it had shown them. She pulled at the trunk of supernatural muscle that was the arm of Porphyrean, her cosmic lover, and taunted him with her eyes.

‘But my delicacy,’ he protested, ‘my quintessence of the flowing juices of night’s bedlam, what of our daughter Burravish, she of the sparkling eye, the golden mane, the slender and beauteous outspringing of thine own loins? Turned to a frozen image of her former self, doomed for a thousand years to stand cold and unmoving in the heart of that dim dark wood? Thou canst not cast aside thine own with so little regard!’

‘Oh but I canst, and so canst thou, my nub of divine butter,’ replied the honied voice of the queen as she reclined before his overwhelming shape. ‘Come spread thy creamy substance across the dark bread of my unearthly beauty,

and let the adventurous reap the consequences of their adventuring!’ Porphyrean paused and contemplated: it was true that the princess had put herself forward for the Seventh Ceremony unbidden, and despite the perils of the race against the Causator’s Bell. And it was also true that, to a goddess, a thousand years of golden timelessness in a sunlit clearing was a trifle in the Scheme of Things. So he succumbed and heaved his ferocity upon his queen. ‘Let us commence the Eighth Ceremony,’ whispered Scaramuthe as he voyaged within her, ‘and then let us revel in the Thousand Tongues that await us!'

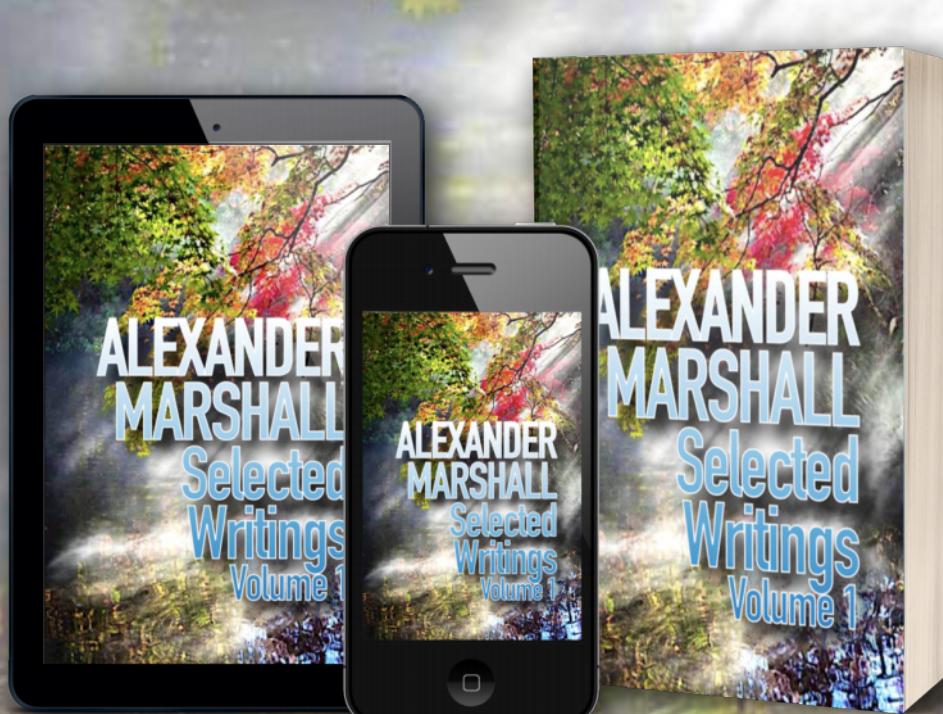
And she laughed an unholy laugh to herself as she pondered how very wise she had been when she had placed that stone-cursed boy in the path of her daughter on the way to the silvery Tree of Horatius Himself.

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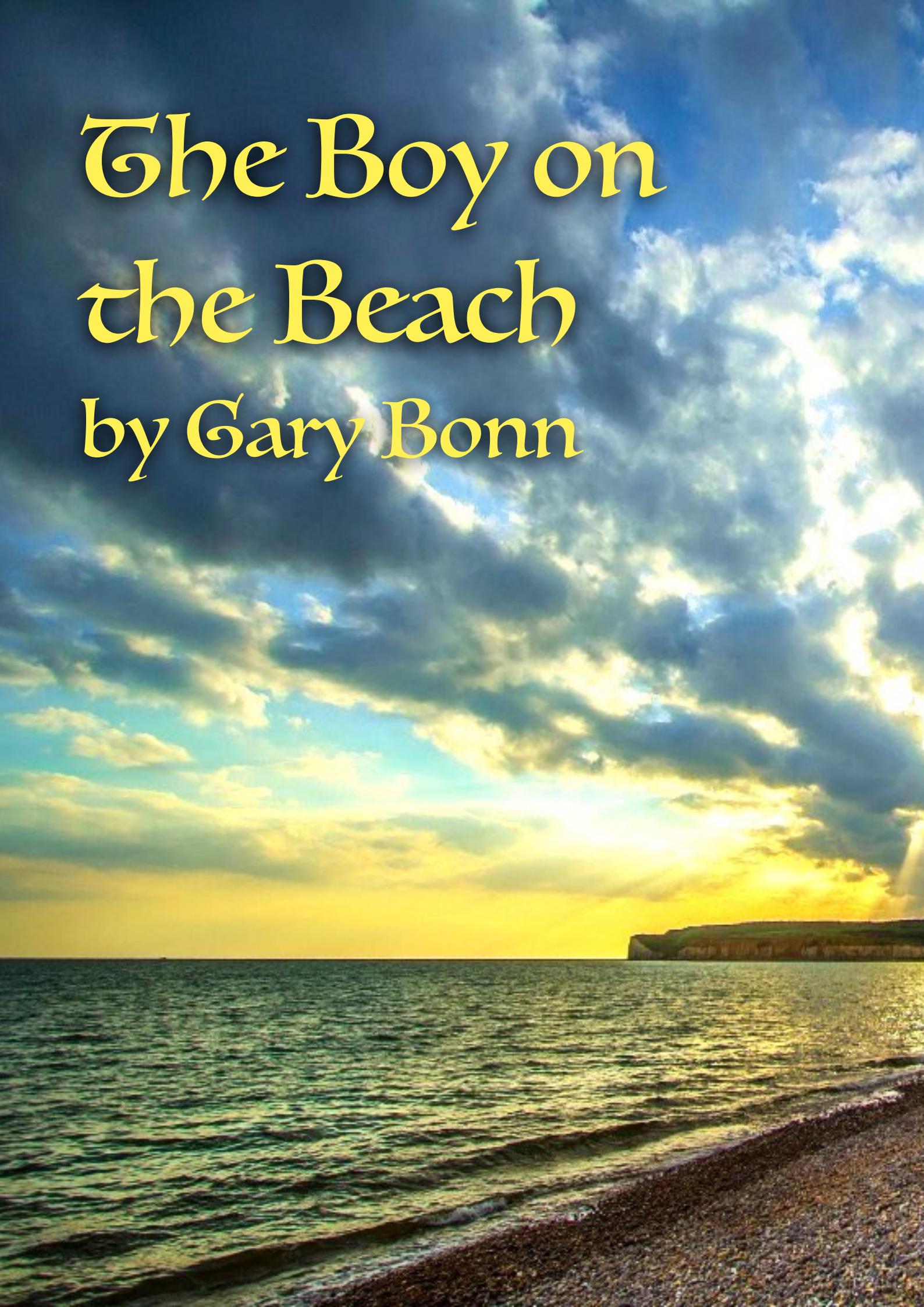
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# The Boy on the Beach

by Gary Bonn





Sunset. Everything blood red. There's a little boy, maybe eight or nine years old, standing on the beach, right at the point where crescents of foam reach his toes. I don't think my husband can see him; he hasn't reacted, though the boy is only a few metres away.

The boy, long-haired and dressed only in a loincloth of seaweed, stares towards the horizon, holding his arms out, snapping his fingers with both hands and talking in a susurous voice, almost mimicking the sounds of the sea. His tone is lighthearted, even joyous. Switching to English he looks back and flashes a huge smile at me. 'Hello, tell Ben to carry on down the beach. Say you want to sit on that rock and think for a while.'

I look at my husband. He's staring at me, confused. He says, 'What are you looking at? Why have you stopped?'

The boy continues singing but interjects to speak to me, 'Please, you need to tell him to go on. It's best that we're alone for this.' His tone is both authoritative and beseeching. 'Give him a kiss first,' he adds, turns and darts towards the cliff, scrambles up impossibly steep rock and disappears among the trees. 'Back in a moment!' he shouts down.

Ben, leaning on his walking poles, says, 'Are you all right, my dear?' The wind whips his thinning but pointy beard, grey and white hairs flicked in the gust.

'Yes. I'm going to give you a hug and kiss and sit here for a minute. You get the ice creams. I'll be along shortly.'

His bushy eyebrows rise in mock horror. 'I'm not going to leave a pretty young lady alone on this wild beach. Anything could happen!'

'Get the ice creams, you old fool.' I plant my walking stick on a stone, lean forward and peck him on the cheek. 'Mine's wild ginger, raspberry if they haven't got that. A cone...one of those with the bit of chocolate at the bottom. Quick now. I have thinking to do.'

'And what would you be thinking about?' !157

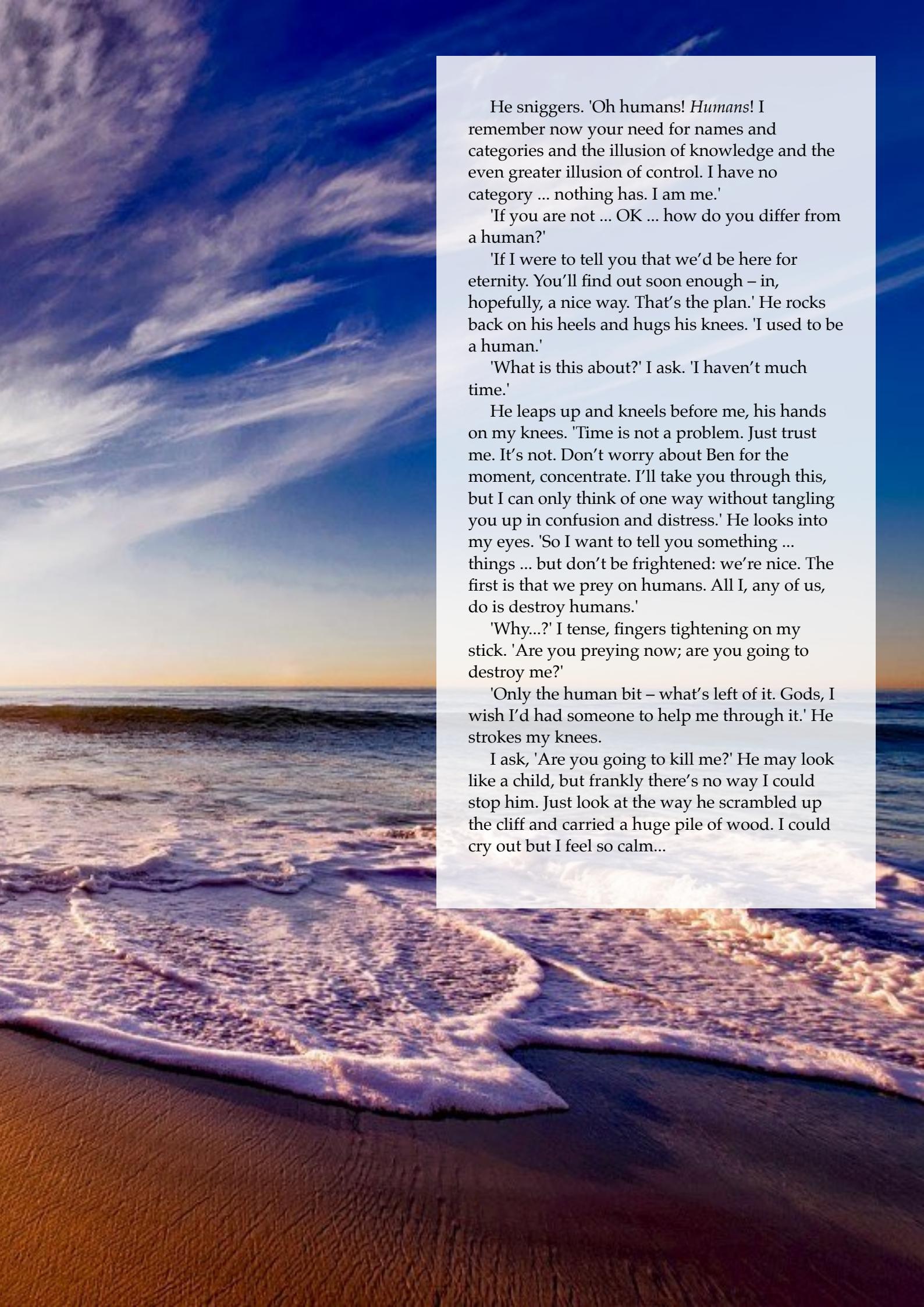
'How would I know? I haven't had a chance yet. I'm having a thinking moment. Get on with you.'

He jerks his beard to point along the beach. 'Ginger or raspberry. Message received and understood.' He totters away. Really, we're too old to be walking on uneven surfaces but we have both aged without grace, kicking, fighting and screaming against the rebellion of our bodies. He's unstable as I watch him disappearing into the dusk. We shouldn't have come this far from the promenade but neither of us have ever been sensible. We're so close, so similar; two aspects of the same person. I love that man so much.

A sound makes me turn. The boy is back on the beach. In those insufficient moments he's collected firewood, thin sticks, kindling and what looks like a nest of dry grass. He's squatting down and talking to the grass in his hands. It's like I'm hearing half a conversation in a foreign language, his voice, laughing, chiding, coaxing and chuckling in turns. A ghost of smoke rises from the nest like a pirouetting dancer, thickens and a tiny flame erupts followed by more. Within seconds the boy has a small cone of twigs alight on the sand and piles sticks over them. He turns, winks at me and dashes among the breaking waves. Reaching into the water he sings, laughs again and straightens up while lifting two lobsters. Returning to the fire, he kneels, places the lobsters on the sand and strokes them once on the head. They stop moving. Dismembering and cleaning them with his fingers, he places the tails on sticks over the fire and the rest around the base. All the time he's busy singing, whistling, and talking to things or people I can't see.

I seat myself on the rock, and study him. He's busy and doesn't seem inclined to talk to me. I'm fascinated. He's not human, that much is obvious. Everything I've ever seen has clearly recognisable states, but his is ... are ... ephemeral. One moment he's so insubstantial I wonder how it is I can't see through him, in another appearing beyond massive, as if he could walk through rocks and they would have to shatter around him. In the end I'm so mystified I ask, 'What are you?'





He sniggers. 'Oh humans! *Humans!* I remember now your need for names and categories and the illusion of knowledge and the even greater illusion of control. I have no category ... nothing has. I am me.'

'If you are not ... OK ... how do you differ from a human?'

'If I were to tell you that we'd be here for eternity. You'll find out soon enough – in, hopefully, a nice way. That's the plan.' He rocks back on his heels and hugs his knees. 'I used to be a human.'

'What is this about?' I ask. 'I haven't much time.'

He leaps up and kneels before me, his hands on my knees. 'Time is not a problem. Just trust me. It's not. Don't worry about Ben for the moment, concentrate. I'll take you through this, but I can only think of one way without tangling you up in confusion and distress.' He looks into my eyes. 'So I want to tell you something ... things ... but don't be frightened: we're nice. The first is that we prey on humans. All I, any of us, do is destroy humans.'

'Why...?' I tense, fingers tightening on my stick. 'Are you preying now; are you going to destroy me?'

'Only the human bit – what's left of it. Gods, I wish I'd had someone to help me through it.' He strokes my knees.

I ask, 'Are you going to kill me?' He may look like a child, but frankly there's no way I could stop him. Just look at the way he scrambled up the cliff and carried a huge pile of wood. I could cry out but I feel so calm...

He winks at me, 'Yes, I look like a child but that's not the whole story. The important bit now is that I'm in your mind, reading your thoughts and slowing them down, blocking others so you ask the right questions. I'm doing this with all the intelligence and love I can muster. Afterwards we can talk about it and see if there is a better way. You're going to need to do this – what I'm doing now – very soon. This is my first time.' He sighs. 'Yes, a child. I was a human child: *I loved* being a child. Then I grew into an adult and it all went wrong. I tried to be what everyone wanted, what society expected and encouraged me to be. Too many conflicting pressures all claiming to be the most important ... and somehow I failed to pick up sufficient wisdom and a thick enough skin to deal with them. The result was a malformed, twisted grotesque: a poisonous homunculus. I was revolted by the man I became. I didn't admire or trust him ... and I had to *be* him!' He pats my knees, rises and turns back to the fire. He calls, 'If I remember rightly, I killed myself.'

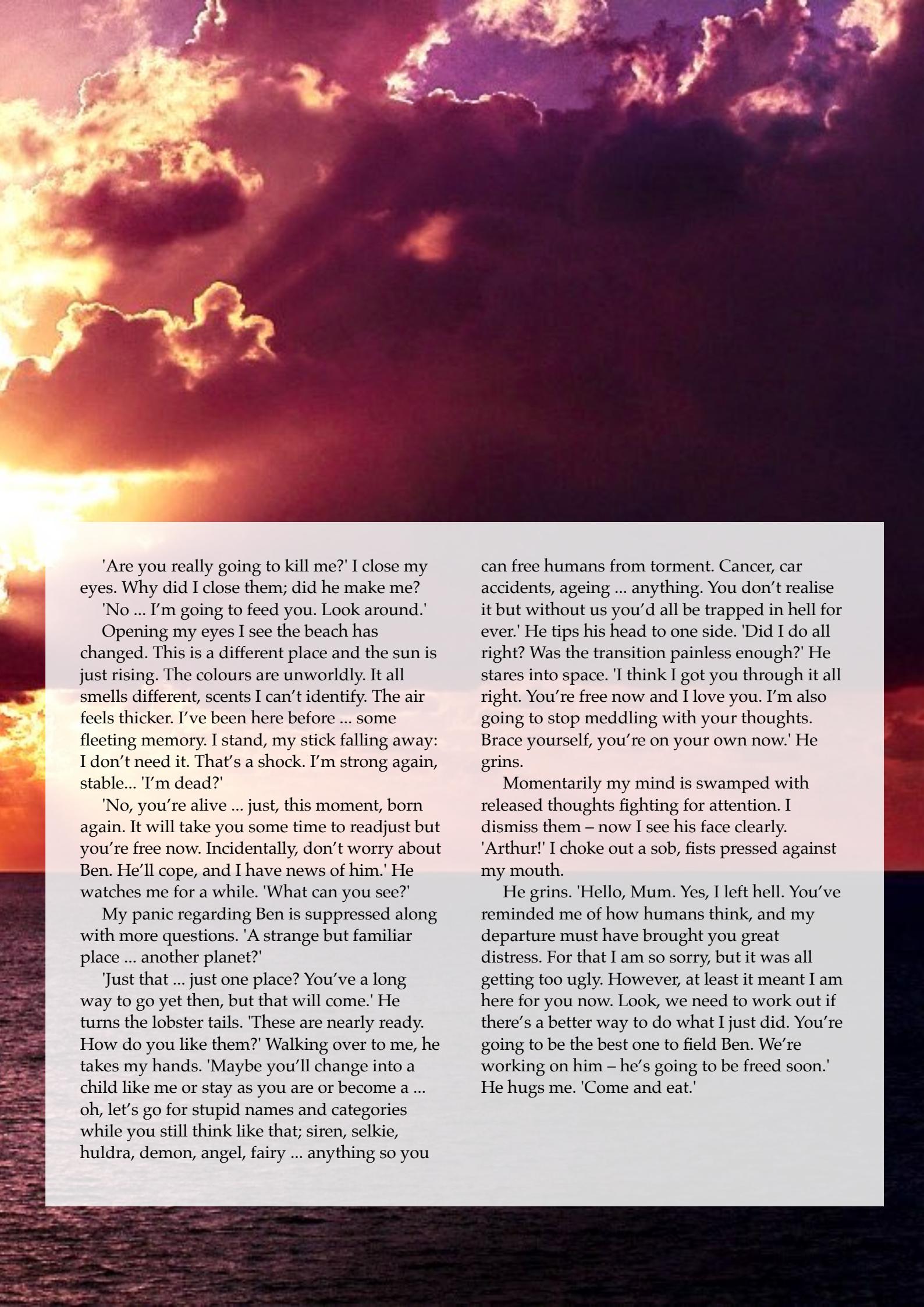
'You're dead? You committed suicide?'

'Yes ... yes. I only killed the adult. I kept the best bit. There are so few benefits to being human. Keeping the best bits is one, family ties another. There are friendships too, but you get all these things anywhere. It's hard to find any point in being human at all.' He turns the sticks and other pieces of lobster. 'Do you like mackerel? There are some close. I can call them.'

A thousand questions in my mind seem to evaporate. Yes, something is messing with my head. But for all that's happening I remain tranquil and able to think clearly.

He looks back to me, pulling hair into a ponytail to clear his face. He ties it with a strip of semi-dried seaweed, fragments tumbling from it. 'I love you!' He lets those words hang for a moment. 'We go into people's heads, hearts, bodies and destroy everything we can. It takes a lot of us and a lot of effort. Why do humans even exist? Is there any point to them?' He stands, pushing a lobster claw with his toes. 'Nothing suffers anything like humans do. Nothing is so ignorant and out of control ... and so removed from reality.' He looks at me, head tilted to one side. 'Tell me, what's the point? Did you ever find a point?'





'Are you really going to kill me?' I close my eyes. Why did I close them; did he make me?

'No ... I'm going to feed you. Look around.'

Opening my eyes I see the beach has changed. This is a different place and the sun is just rising. The colours are unworldly. It all smells different, scents I can't identify. The air feels thicker. I've been here before ... some fleeting memory. I stand, my stick falling away: I don't need it. That's a shock. I'm strong again, stable... 'I'm dead?'

'No, you're alive ... just, this moment, born again. It will take you some time to readjust but you're free now. Incidentally, don't worry about Ben. He'll cope, and I have news of him.' He watches me for a while. 'What can you see?'

My panic regarding Ben is suppressed along with more questions. 'A strange but familiar place ... another planet?'

'Just that ... just one place? You've a long way to go yet then, but that will come.' He turns the lobster tails. 'These are nearly ready. How do you like them?' Walking over to me, he takes my hands. 'Maybe you'll change into a child like me or stay as you are or become a ... oh, let's go for stupid names and categories while you still think like that; siren, selkie, huldra, demon, angel, fairy ... anything so you

can free humans from torment. Cancer, car accidents, ageing ... anything. You don't realise it but without us you'd all be trapped in hell for ever.' He tips his head to one side. 'Did I do all right? Was the transition painless enough?' He stares into space. 'I think I got you through it all right. You're free now and I love you. I'm also going to stop meddling with your thoughts. Brace yourself, you're on your own now.' He grins.

Momentarily my mind is swamped with released thoughts fighting for attention. I dismiss them – now I see his face clearly. 'Arthur!' I choke out a sob, fists pressed against my mouth.

He grins. 'Hello, Mum. Yes, I left hell. You've reminded me of how humans think, and my departure must have brought you great distress. For that I am so sorry, but it was all getting too ugly. However, at least it meant I am here for you now. Look, we need to work out if there's a better way to do what I just did. You're going to be the best one to field Ben. We're working on him – he's going to be freed soon.' He hugs me. 'Come and eat.'

CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR

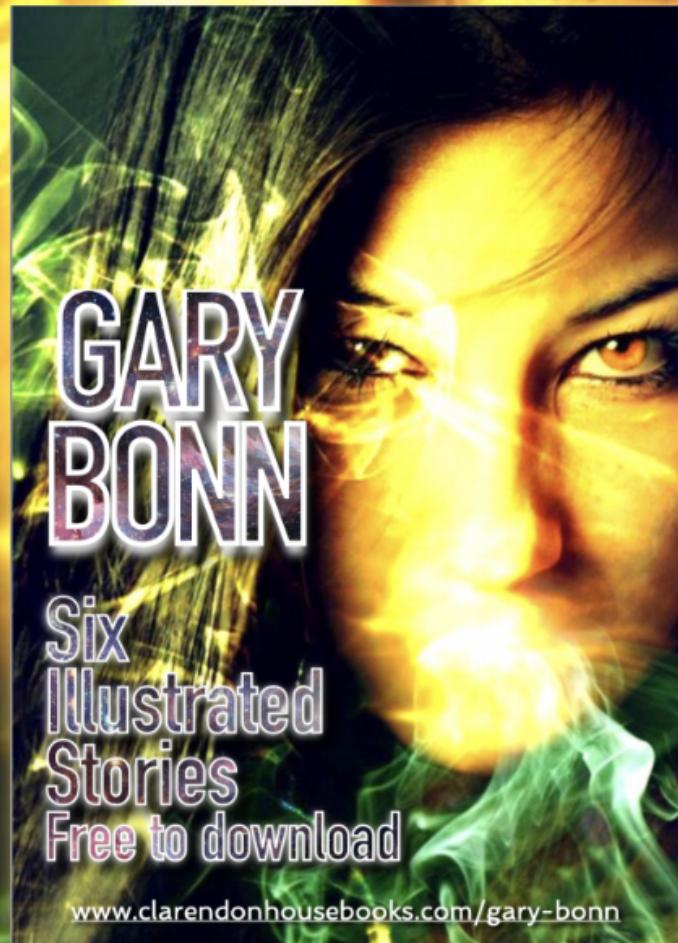
GARY BONN



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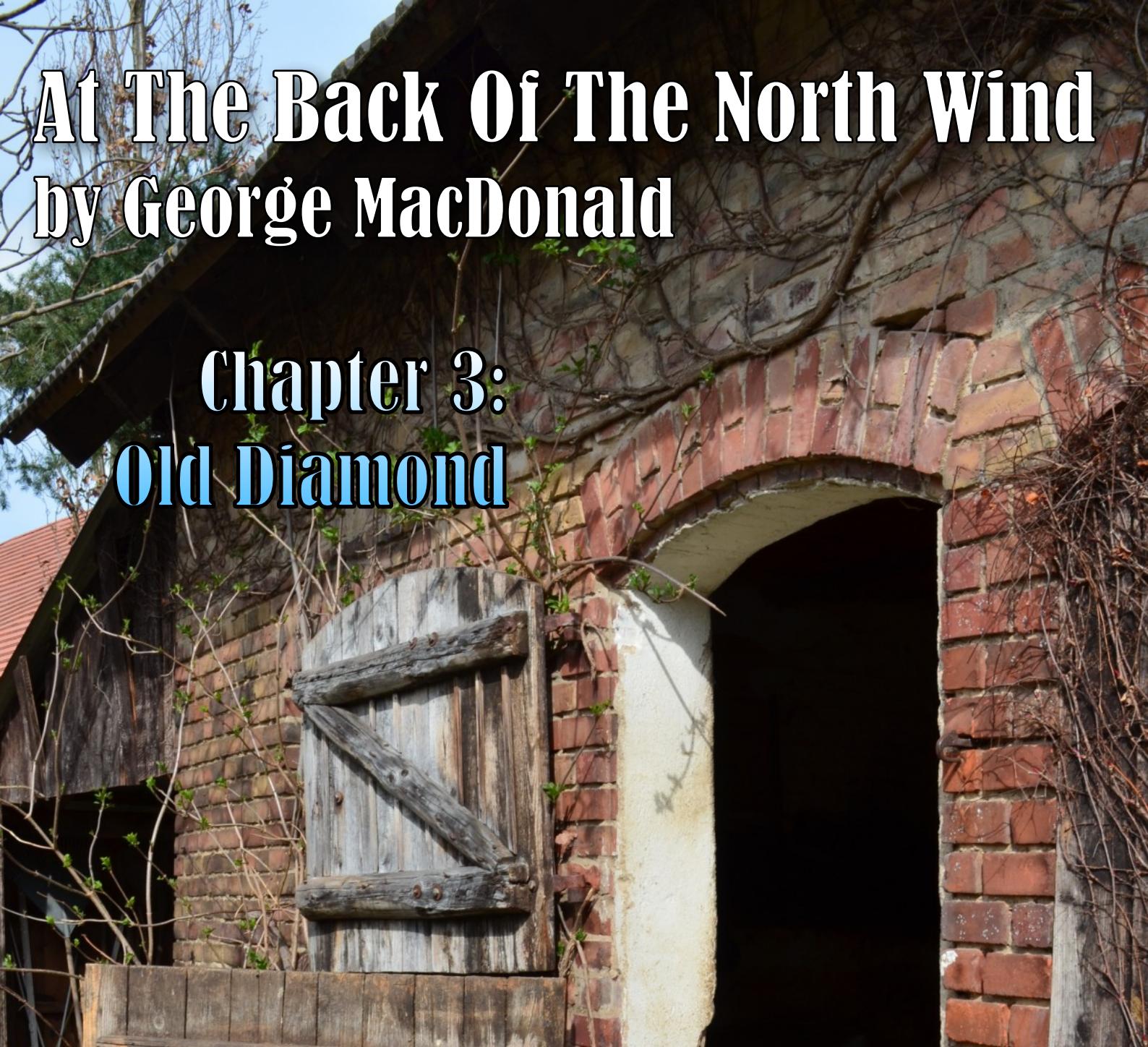
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# At The Back Of The North Wind

## by George MacDonald

### Chapter 3: Old Diamond



DIAMOND woke very early in the morning, and thought what a curious dream he had had. But the memory grew brighter and brighter in his head, until it did not look altogether like a dream, and he began to doubt whether he had not really been abroad in the wind last night. He came to the conclusion that, if he had really been brought home to his mother by Mrs. Crump, she would say something to him about it, and that would settle the matter. Then he got up and dressed himself, but, finding that his father and mother were not yet stirring, he went down the ladder to the stable. There he found that even old Diamond was not awake yet, for he, as well as young Diamond, always got up the moment he woke, and now he was lying as flat as a horse could lie upon his nice trim bed of straw.

"I'll give old Diamond a surprise," thought the boy; and creeping up very softly, before the horse knew, he was astride of his back. Then it was young Diamond's turn to have more of a surprise than he had expected; for as with an earthquake, with a rumbling and a rocking hither and thither, a sprawling of legs and heaving as of many backs, young Diamond found himself hoisted up in the air, with both hands twisted in the horse's mane. The next instant old Diamond lashed out with both his hind legs, and giving one cry of terror young Diamond found himself lying on his neck, with his arms as far round it as they would go. But then the horse stood as still as a stone, except that he lifted his head gently up to let the boy slip down to his back. For when he heard young Diamond's cry he knew that there was nothing to kick about; for young Diamond was a good boy, and old Diamond was a good horse, and the one was all right on the back of the other.

As soon as Diamond had got himself comfortable on the saddle place, the horse began pulling at the hay, and the boy began thinking. He had never mounted Diamond himself before, and he had never got off him without being lifted down. So he sat, while the horse ate, wondering how he was to reach the ground.

But while he meditated, his mother woke, and her first thought was to see her boy. She had visited him twice during the night, and found him sleeping quietly. Now his bed was empty, and she was frightened.



"Diamond! Diamond! Where are you, Diamond?" she called out.

Diamond turned his head where he sat like a knight on his steed in enchanted stall, and cried aloud,--

"Here, mother!"

"Where, Diamond?" she returned.

"Here, mother, on Diamond's back."

She came running to the ladder, and peeping down, saw him aloft on the great horse.

"Come down, Diamond," she said.

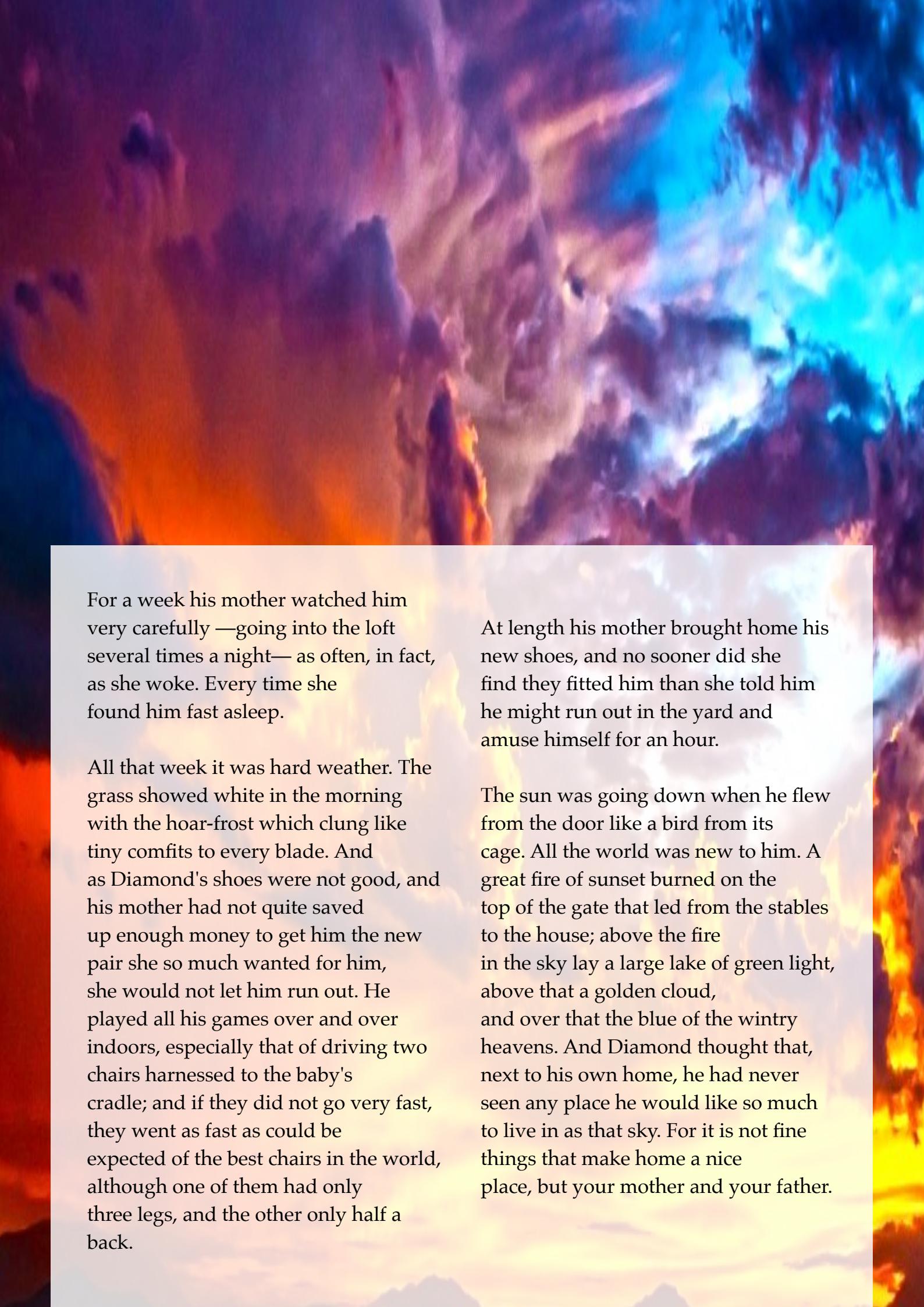
"I can't," answered Diamond.

"How did you get up?" asked his mother.

"Quite easily," answered he; "but when I got up, Diamond would get up too, and so here I am."

His mother thought he had been walking in his sleep again, and hurried down the ladder. She did not much like going up to the horse, for she had not been used to horses; but she would have gone into a lion's den, not to say a horse's stall, to help her boy. So she went and lifted him off Diamond's back, and felt braver all her life after. She carried him in her arms up to her room; but, afraid of frightening him at his own sleep-walking, as she supposed it, said nothing about last night. Before the next day was over, Diamond had almost concluded the whole adventure a dream.





For a week his mother watched him very carefully —going into the loft several times a night— as often, in fact, as she woke. Every time she found him fast asleep.

All that week it was hard weather. The grass showed white in the morning with the hoar-frost which clung like tiny comfits to every blade. And as Diamond's shoes were not good, and his mother had not quite saved up enough money to get him the new pair she so much wanted for him, she would not let him run out. He played all his games over and over indoors, especially that of driving two chairs harnessed to the baby's cradle; and if they did not go very fast, they went as fast as could be expected of the best chairs in the world, although one of them had only three legs, and the other only half a back.

At length his mother brought home his new shoes, and no sooner did she find they fitted him than she told him he might run out in the yard and amuse himself for an hour.

The sun was going down when he flew from the door like a bird from its cage. All the world was new to him. A great fire of sunset burned on the top of the gate that led from the stables to the house; above the fire in the sky lay a large lake of green light, above that a golden cloud, and over that the blue of the wintry heavens. And Diamond thought that, next to his own home, he had never seen any place he would like so much to live in as that sky. For it is not fine things that make home a nice place, but your mother and your father.

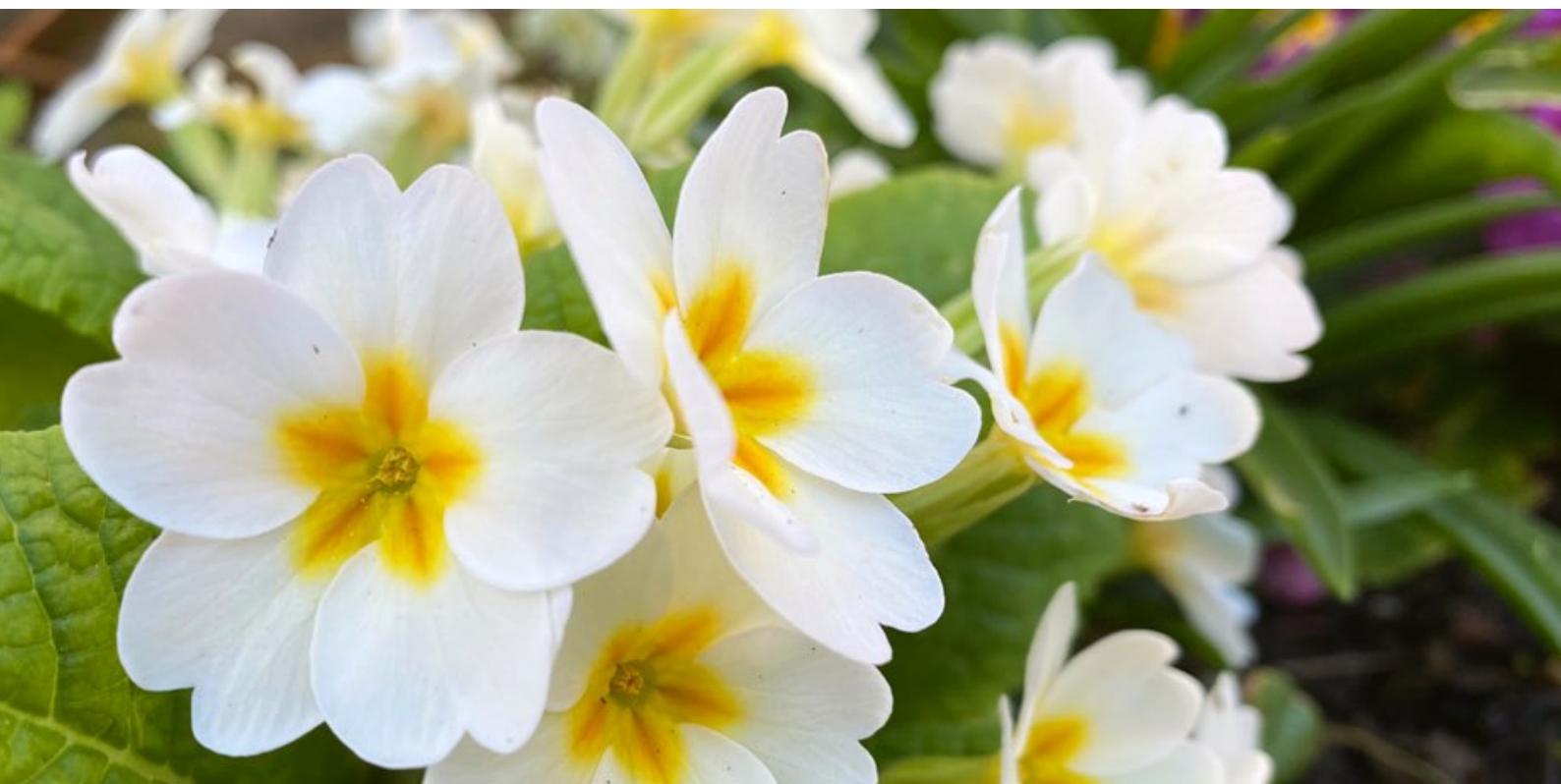
As he was looking at the lovely colours, the gates were thrown open, and there was old Diamond and his friend in the carriage, dancing with impatience to get at their stalls and their oats. And in they came.

Diamond was not in the least afraid of his father driving over him, but, careful not to spoil the grand show he made with his fine horses and his multitudinous cape, with a red edge to every fold, he slipped out of the way and let him dash right on to the stables. To be quite safe he had to step into the recess of the door that led from the yard to the shrubbery.

As he stood there he remembered how the wind had driven him to this same spot on the night of his dream. And once more he was almost sure that it was no dream. At all events, he would go in and see whether things looked at all now as they did then. He opened the door, and passed through the little belt of shrubbery. Not a flower was to be seen in the

beds on the lawn. Even the brave old chrysanthemums and Christmas roses had passed away before the frost. What? Yes! There was one! He ran and knelt down to look at it.

It was a primrose—a dwarfish thing, but perfect in shape—a baby-wonder. As he stooped his face to see it close, a little wind began to blow, and two or three long leaves that stood up behind the flower shook and waved and quivered, but the primrose lay still in the green hollow, looking up at the sky, and not seeming to know that the wind was blowing at all. It was just a one eye that the dull black wintry earth had opened to look at the sky with. All at once Diamond thought it was saying its prayers, and he ought not to be staring at it so. He ran to the stable to see his father make Diamond's bed. Then his father took him in his arms, carried him up the ladder, and set him down at the table where they were going to have their tea.



"Miss is very poorly," said Diamond's father. "Mis'ess has been to the doctor with her to-day, and she looked very glum when she came out again. I was a-watching of them to see what doctor had said."

"And didn't Miss look glum too?" asked his mother.

"Not half as glum as Mis'ess," returned the coachman. "You see--"

But he lowered his voice, and Diamond could not make out more than a word here and there. For Diamond's father was not only one of the finest of coachmen to look at, and one of the best of drivers, but one of the most discreet of servants as well. Therefore he did not talk about family affairs to any one but his wife, whom he had proved better than himself long ago, and was careful that even Diamond should hear nothing

he could repeat again concerning master and his family.

It was bed-time soon, and Diamond went to bed and fell fast asleep.

He awoke all at once, in the dark.

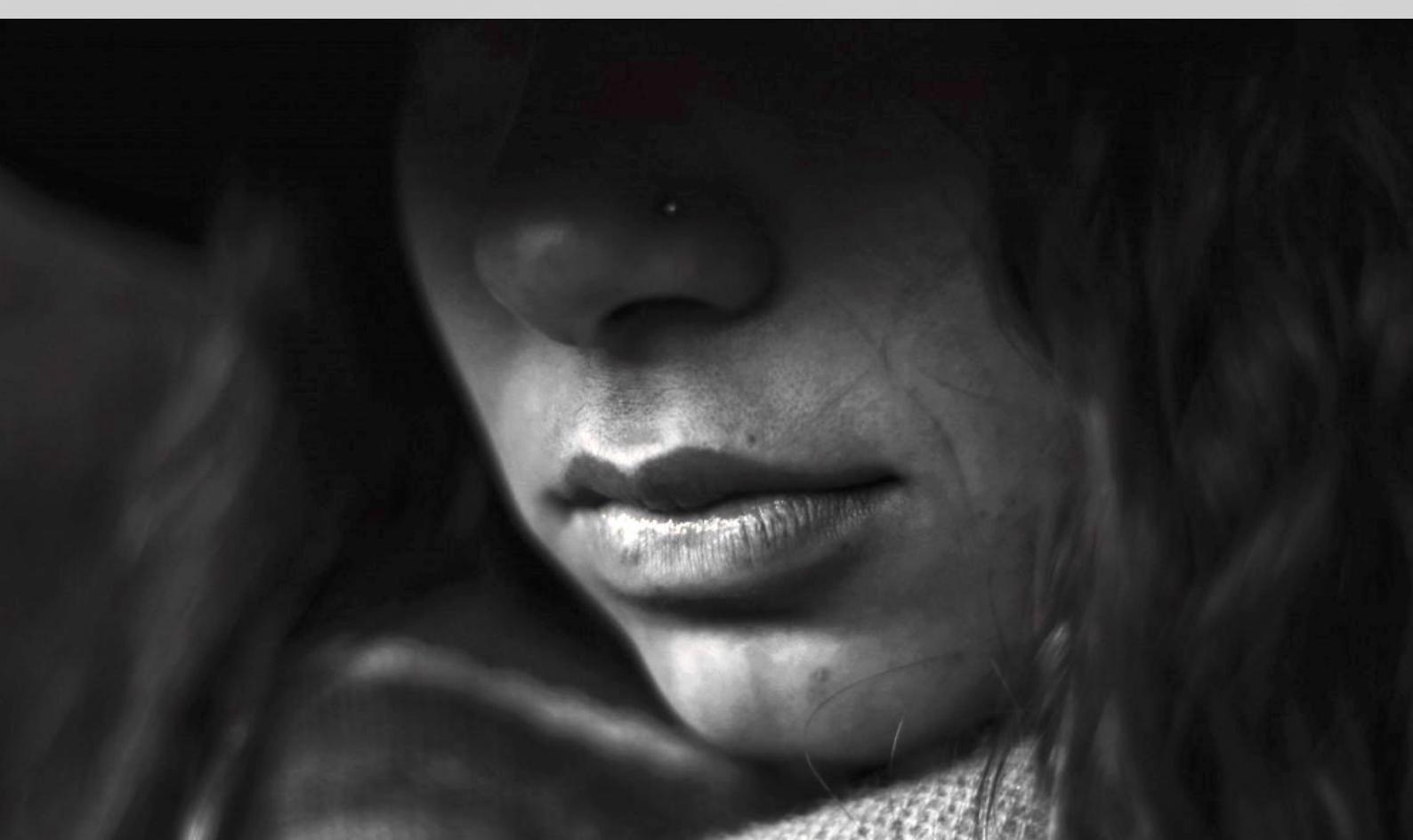
"Open the window, Diamond," said a voice.

Now Diamond's mother had once more pasted up North Wind's window.

"Are you North Wind?" said Diamond: "I don't hear you blowing."

"No; but you hear me talking. Open the window, for I haven't overmuch time."

"Yes," returned Diamond. "But, please, North Wind, where's the use? You left me all alone last time."





He had got up on his knees, and was busy with his nails once more at the paper over the hole in the wall. For now that North Wind spoke again, he remembered all that had taken place before as distinctly as if it had happened only last night.

"Yes, but that was your fault," returned North Wind. "I had work to do; and, besides, a gentleman should never keep a lady waiting."

"But I'm not a gentleman," said Diamond, scratching away at the paper.

"I hope you won't say so ten years after this."

"I'm going to be a coachman, and a coachman is not a gentleman," persisted Diamond.

"We call your father a gentleman in our house," said North Wind.

"He doesn't call himself one," said Diamond.

"That's of no consequence: every man ought to be a gentleman, and your father is one."

Diamond was so pleased to hear this that he scratched at the paper like ten mice,

and getting hold of the edge of it, tore it off. The next instant a young girl glided across the bed, and stood upon the floor.

"Oh dear!" said Diamond, quite dismayed; "I didn't know--who are you, please?"

"I'm North Wind."



"Are you really?"

"Yes. Make haste."

"But you're no bigger than me."

"Do you think I care about how big or how little I am? Didn't you see me this evening? I was less then."

"No. Where was you?"

"Behind the leaves of the primrose. Didn't you see them blowing?"

"Yes."

"Make haste, then, if you want to go with me."

"But you are not big enough to take care of me. I think you are only Miss North Wind."

"I am big enough to show you the way, anyhow. But if you won't come, why, you must stay."

"I must dress myself. I didn't mind with a grown lady, but I couldn't go with a little girl in my night-gown."

"Very well. I'm not in such a hurry as I was the other night. Dress as fast as you can, and I'll go and shake the primrose leaves till you come."

"Don't hurt it," said Diamond.

North Wind broke out in a little laugh like the breaking of silver bubbles, and was gone in a moment. Diamond saw—for it was a starlit night, and the mass of hay was at a low ebb now—the gleam of something vanishing down the stair, and, springing out of bed, dressed himself as fast as ever he could. Then he crept out into the yard, through the door in the wall, and away to the primrose. Behind it stood North Wind, leaning over it, and looking at the flower as if she had been its mother.

“Come along,” she said, jumping up and holding out her hand.

Diamond took her hand. It was cold, but so pleasant and full of life, it was better than warm. She led him across the garden. With one bound she was on the top of the wall. Diamond was left at the foot.

“Stop, stop!” he cried. “Please, I can't jump like that.”

“You don't try,” said North Wind, who from the top looked down a foot taller than before.

“Give me your hand again, and I will, try,” said Diamond.

She reached down, Diamond laid hold of her hand, gave a great spring, and stood beside her.

“This is nice!” he said.





Another bound, and they stood in the road by the river. It was full tide, and the stars were shining clear in its depths, for it lay still, waiting for the turn to run down again to the sea. They walked along its side. But they had not walked far before its surface was covered with ripples, and the stars had vanished from its bosom.

And North Wind was now tall as a full-grown girl. Her hair was flying about her head, and the wind was blowing a breeze down the river. But she turned aside and went up a narrow lane, and as she went her hair fell down around her.

"I have some rather disagreeable work to do to-night," she said, "before I get out to sea, and I must set about it at once. The disagreeable work must be looked after first."

So saying, she laid hold of Diamond and began to run, gliding along faster and faster. Diamond kept up with her as well as he could. She made many turnings and windings, apparently because it was not quite easy to get him over walls and houses. Once they ran through a hall where they found back and front doors open. At the foot of the stair North Wind stood still, and Diamond, hearing a great growl, started in terror, and there, instead of North Wind, was a huge wolf by his side. He let go his hold in dismay, and the wolf bounded up the stair. The windows of the house rattled and shook as if guns were firing, and the sound of a great fall came from above. Diamond stood with white face staring up at the landing.



"Surely," he thought, "North Wind can't be eating one of the children!"

Coming to himself all at once, he rushed after her with his little fist clenched. There were ladies in long trains going up and down the stairs, and gentlemen in white neckties attending on them, who stared at him, but none of them were of the people of the house, and they said nothing. Before he reached the head of the stair, however, North Wind met him, took him by the hand, and hurried down and out of the house.

"I hope you haven't eaten a baby, North Wind!" said Diamond, very solemnly.

North Wind laughed merrily, and went tripping on faster. Her grassy robe swept and swirled about her steps, and wherever it passed over withered

leaves, they went fleeing and whirling in spirals, and running on their edges like wheels, all about her feet.

"No," she said at last, "I did not eat a baby. You would not have had to ask that foolish question if you had not let go your hold of me. You would have seen how I served a nurse that was calling a child bad names, and telling her she was wicked. She had been drinking. I saw an ugly gin bottle in a cupboard."

"And you frightened her?" said Diamond.

"I believe so!" answered North Wind laughing merrily. "I flew at her throat, and she tumbled over on the floor with such a crash that they ran in. She'll be turned away to-morrow--and quite time, if they knew as much as I do."

"But didn't you frighten the little one?"

"She never saw me. The woman would not have seen me either if she had not been wicked."

"Oh!" said Diamond, dubiously.

"Why should you see things," returned North Wind, "that you wouldn't understand or know what to do with? Good people see good things; bad people, bad things."

"Then are you a bad thing?"

"No. For you see me, Diamond, dear," said the girl, and she looked down at him, and Diamond saw the loving eyes of the great lady beaming from the depths of her falling hair.

"I had to make myself look like a bad thing before she could see me. If I had put on any other shape than a wolf's she would not have seen me, for that is what

is growing to be her own shape inside of her."

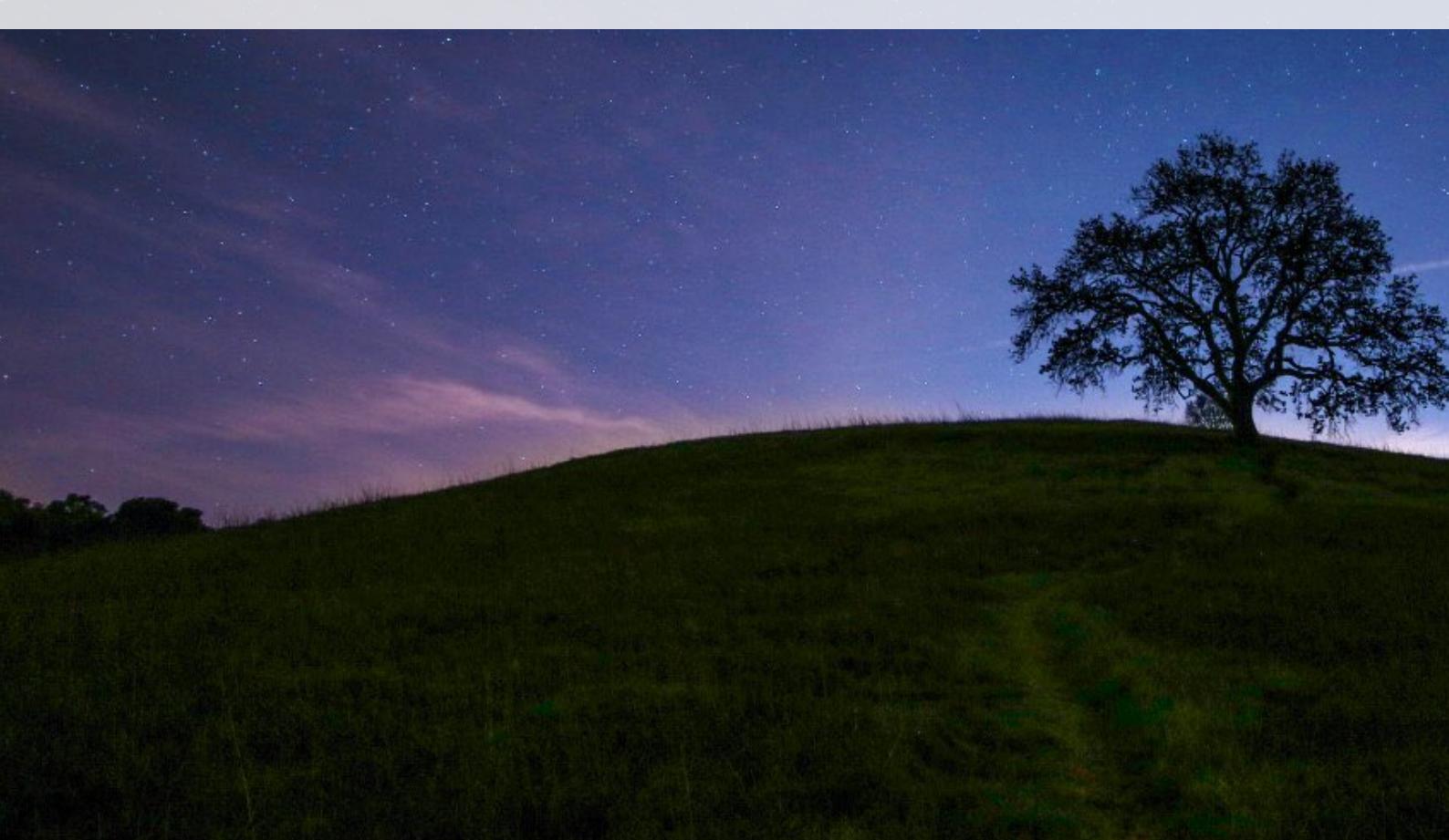
"I don't know what you mean," said Diamond, "but I suppose it's all right."

They were now climbing the slope of a grassy ascent. It was Primrose Hill, in fact, although Diamond had never heard of it. The moment they reached the top, North Wind stood and turned her face towards London. The stars were still shining clear and cold overhead. There was not a cloud to be seen. The air was sharp, but Diamond did not find it cold.

"Now," said the lady, "whatever you do, do not let my hand go. I might have lost you the last time, only I was not in a hurry then: now I am in a hurry."

Yet she stood still for a moment...

Don't miss  
the next chapter of George  
Macdonald's  
classic masterpiece in the next issue!



A photograph of a medieval knight in full armor, including a helmet with a visor, chainmail, and a leather cuirass. A sword is strapped to the knight's back, and a large, round wooden shield with a yellow painted design is positioned in front of the knight. The knight is standing on a grassy field with a campfire and cooking equipment visible in the background.

# Gandalf the Fearful Part Two



Earlier, I've argued that Gandalf the Grey, fabled wizard from the Third Age of Middle-earth, is in fact primarily motivated by fear through most of his career. We've traced his arrival and actions in the middle of that age of the world, and now we take a look at his growing fascination with Hobbits.

Gandalf, withdrawing from the front lines again, visits the Hobbits in the Shire occasionally, taking part in their parties where he impresses young Hobbits with his fireworks and his stories about dragons, goblins and princesses. He develops a reputation for encouraging eccentricity amongst the Hobbits, and is held 'responsible for so many quiet lads and lasses going off into the Blue for mad adventures'. Is he in fact trialling some kind of plan to send a Hobbit off on a quest?

If so, it's around this time, having been in Middle-earth for almost two thousand years, that he meets his prototype: a relatively adventurous Hobbit named Bilbo Baggins.

Meanwhile, far off in the East, Smaug the Dragon has destroyed both the Kingdom under the Mountain and the town of Dale, and Gandalf fears that Sauron might use the desolation around Erebor to regain the northern passes in the mountains and the old lands of Angmar. Gandalf knows that the Dwarf lord Thorin plans to battle against Smaug, but judges that this will not be enough. In 2941, Gandalf happens across Thorin while staying the night in Bree. Thorin feels an uncharacteristic urge to seek out Gandalf, who becomes intrigued, for he feels he needs to speak to Thorin as well. They agree to travel together.

In their conversations, Gandalf's possible plan to use a Hobbit to defeat his personal enemy starts to take effective shape: here is a perfect opportunity to 'test the mettle' of Hobbits under 'battle' conditions. It is very clear in *The Hobbit* that it is Gandalf who selects Bilbo for this task, against the better judgement of the dwarves at first: the wizard 'has a feeling' that a Hobbit should be involved, and

convinces the reluctant Baggins to become a burglar for Thorin. Is he actively testing his plan, which better explains the otherwise odd recommendation he makes to the dwarves to use Bilbo?

Gandalf then accompanies Thorin and Company to Rivendell and beyond and is instrumental in saving the travellers' lives from several calamities.

From the wizard's point of view, though, this is an interesting journey in more ways than one. Quite early on, he discovers the ancient sword Glamdring (about which more was said in [Issue One](#) of the magazine), and kills the Great Goblin with it. The sword will save his life in his greatest physical battle later.

It is also during this time that Bilbo obtains the One Ring, the key to the defeat of Gandalf's arch-foe, though the wizard doesn't recognise its exact nature at first.

Around this time, Gandalf's long journeys around the North start to pay off: he and his companions are rescued by the Eagles, whose King owes

the wizard a favour; Gandalf's knowledge of Beorn helps the dwarves' adventure move forward.

But he then leaves the dwarves himself to do the thing that he has so long seemingly put off doing: he journeys to the White Council and manages to persuade them to attack and drive out the Necromancer from Dol Guldur. Directly confronting and attacking Sauron has been something he has procrastinated with for almost two thousand years at this point. Why would he seek to act now? Yes, the whole White Council is spurred on by Saruman's secret fear that Sauron may reach out and discover the One Ring before Saruman himself does, and yes, Gandalf is thus encouraged by their full support. But why does he throw himself into conflict at that point, when he has put it off for so long?

Two answers spring to mind: he feels a boost in confidence now that he is acting on his half-formed plan to cultivate a Hobbit as a full solution, even though the details haven't yet consciously fallen into place; and he is wearing Glamdring, a sword of ancient lineage, which has loaned him courage, perhaps. Fate seems to be on his side,

more so than at any point since he arrived in Middle-earth. The Necromancer is consequently driven from Dol Guldur.

Thorin's quest is successful: Erebor is retaken and Smaug is killed. Gandalf returns to the area, brimming with confidence — he sorts out the complex politics that have arisen and sees that he has accomplished his immediate goal, the destruction of Smaug, who could have been used to disastrous effect by Sauron. A large number of Orcs and Wargs have also been killed in the North, removing threats to Rivendell and Lothlórien. As at the time of the Watchful Peace 900 years earlier, there has been a triumph.

But again there is no follow-through. 'Driving the Necromancer from Dol Guldur' isn't a completion of Gandalf's mission orders. And it is this lack of follow-through which prolongs the problem of Sauron.

Ten years after this attack, in 2951, Sauron declares himself openly in Mordor and rebuilds the Barad-dûr. The White Council meets for one last time in 2953 — two whole years later — to debate the Rings of Power, but Saruman, whose influence over the other members is largely due to

Gandalf's own reticence five hundred years earlier, claims to have knowledge that the One Ring has been lost in the Belegaer. Saruman, jealous and afraid of Gandalf, then sets spies to watch all his movements. If Gandalf had acted instead of reacting when offered the leadership of the Council centuries before, Saruman would not have been in this position.

Meanwhile Sauron begins reassembling his forces for another war against the West. Easterlings from Khand and beyond the Sea of Rhûn, joined by men from Harad reinforce his stronghold in Mordor; orcs, trolls, and other foul beasts multiply while he searches the Anduin for any sign of his precious One Ring. Gandalf, at least partially aware of all this, must have wondered whether he was ever to be free of his nemesis.

A few years later in 2956 he meets Aragorn, the hidden Heir of Isildur, and soon becomes friends with him. Here at last is someone with the same deep character motivation: a fear of Sauron. Indeed, Aragorn has much in common with the wizard: the completion of their lives' work can only be accomplished by Sauron's destruction, and yet to both this seems an impossible task.



Having no clear plan of attack, Gandalf reverts to his former pattern of withdrawing and trying to find a means of dealing with Sauron indirectly. With his subliminal idea still at work in his mind, he visits the Shire frequently, especially his friend Bilbo Baggins, and his younger cousin, Frodo, and notes Bilbo's unusual youthfulness, despite the Hobbit's advancing age. Gandalf recalls the deceit Bilbo used in originally claiming the One Ring for his own and sees that Bilbo is now very preoccupied with it. On the one hand, this behaviour arouses Gandalf's suspicions; on the other, it revitalises his plan. He convinces Bilbo to leave the Ring for Frodo, but makes sure that he is present at the moment of handing over. This is so that he can make a judgement both about the power of the Ring — and about the resilience and persistence of the Hobbits. If this transition of ownership of a Ring of Power, unheard of amongst other races, can actually be pulled off, Gandalf's fledgeling scheme has a chance: he has a Ring-bearer, a weapon with which to defeat Sauron once and for all, without he himself having

to directly confront the Lord of the Rings.

A search for Gollum and study of ancient records later confirms this plan: the Ring is none other than the One Ring. If it can be destroyed, the purpose for Gandalf's presence in Middle-earth will have been accomplished and his arch-enemy will have been defeated. And all through someone else.

Confirming his fears about the Ring also confirms the possibility of his plan's feasibility. He returns to the Shire and advises Frodo to leave as soon as possible, promising to return before a farewell party for Bilbo in autumn of that year (3018), and to escort him to Rivendell. Gandalf also tells Frodo about the creature Gollum, to which Frodo exclaims that he should have been killed. Gandalf speculates — perhaps again with some kind of foreknowledge of the future — that Gollum will have a part to play before the end. He then sets out to seek the advice of Saruman, supposedly still the head of his order.

Why does he feel the need to ask Saruman what to do? Again, Gandalf is giving someone else the responsibility of making

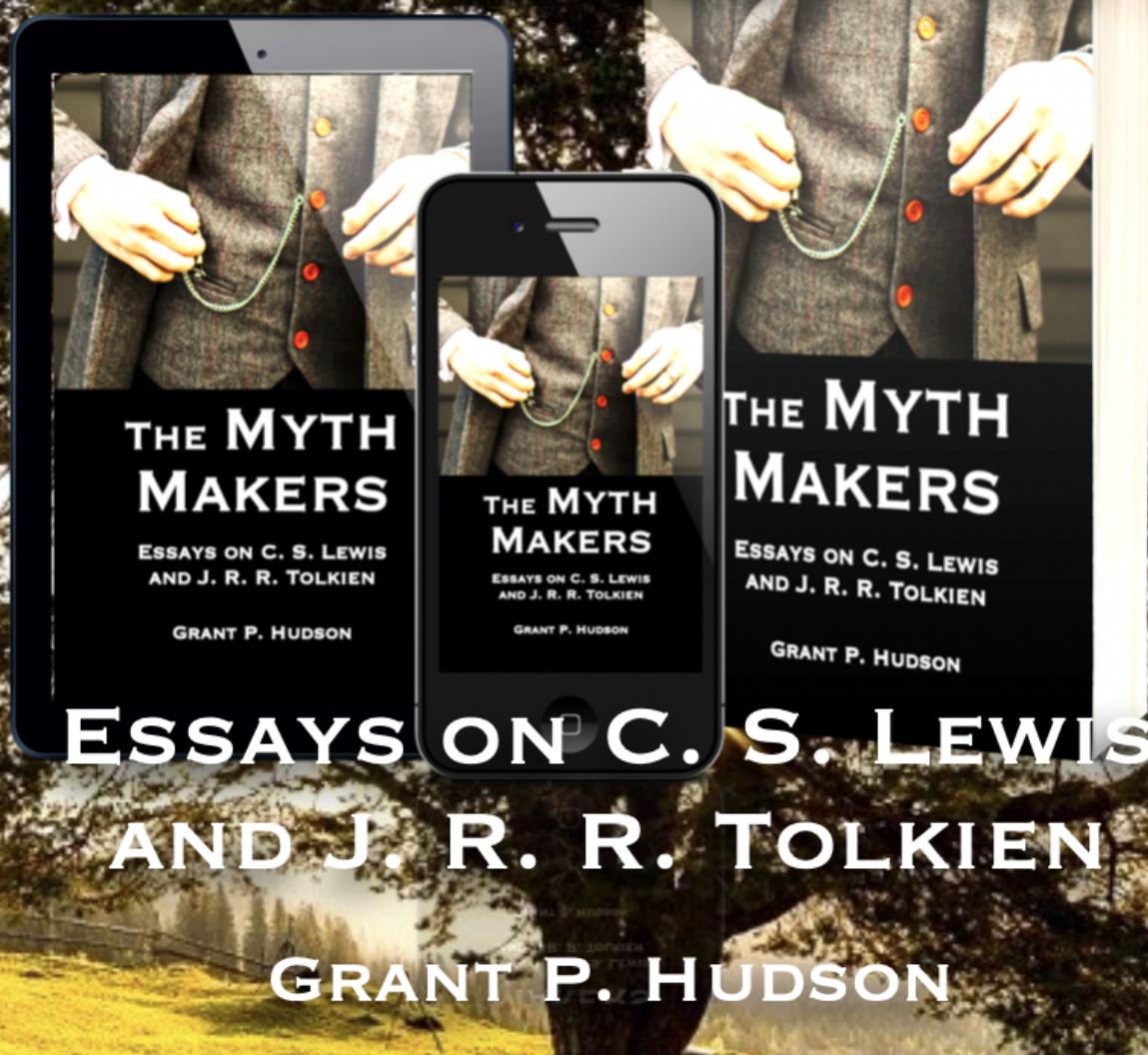
decisions in the conflict with Sauron. It serves Gandalf's inner fears well that Saruman is the Head of the Order — it means that Gandalf can always refer any important decision. Unfortunately for him, at their meeting, Saruman reveals his desire for the One Ring, suggesting to his 'old friend and helper' that they take the Ring for themselves and seize power from Sauron. Gandalf rejects this with horror — this is an even worse nightmare for him: if Gandalf takes the Ring, he not only prevents Sauron's defeat, he almost *becomes* his nemesis and at the very least becomes his slave.

Imprisoned by Saruman on the pinnacle of Orthanc, Gandalf is rescued by his friend, Gwaihir, chief of the Eagles, but now knows that he must return quickly to the Shire, as Frodo (and the Ring) are in double danger from both Sauron's Nazgûl and now Saruman's treacherous desire for power.

**In the third and final part of our examination of Gandalf in next month's issue, we discover how the events of the War of the Ring bring about some key realisations — and transformations.**

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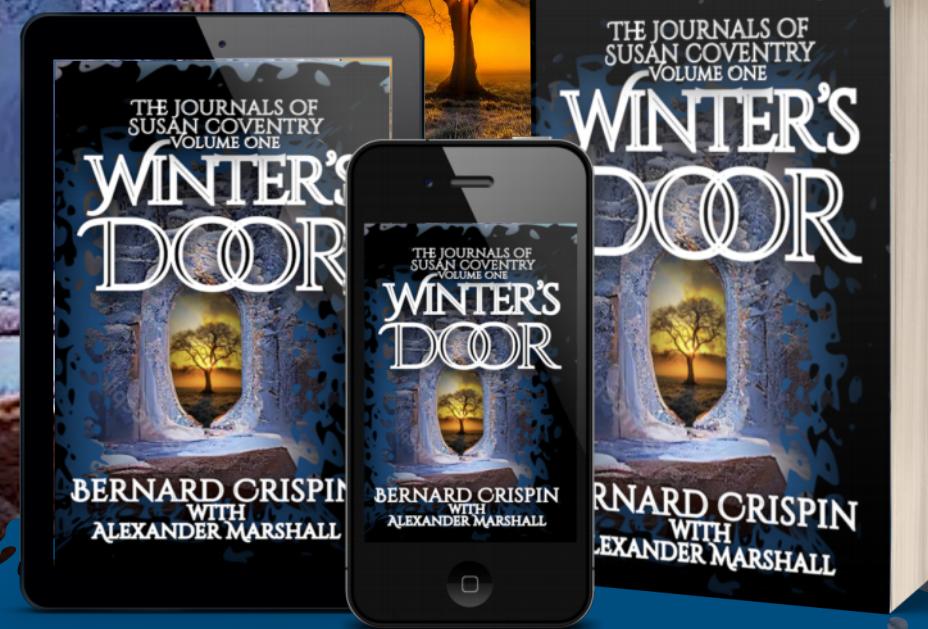
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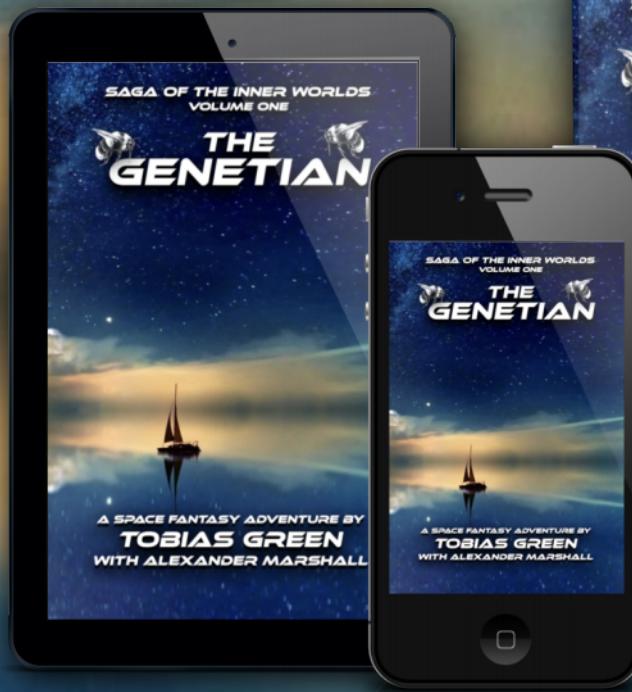


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