

*Whisper Hollow*

# BELIEVE

*L.L. Macy*

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BY L.L. MACY



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*Dedicated to the knowledge, power  
and release only reading can produce.*



Around the world and throughout time

One word

Has been spoken

Between father and son;

Mother and daughter;

Friend to friend; and

Even enemy to enemy.

In any language, it gives

Strength and willpower; and

Determination and fortitude.

In Finland they say, “Uskoa”,

In Germany, “Glauben”;

Spain, “Creer”;

Romania, “Crede”; Italy, “Credere”;

China, “xiang1 xin4”;

...And in English we say

Believe!



*Many, many books exist in the world today, powerful books, all of them.*

*You smirk. Do you not believe? Does not a book inspire feelings of sadness, yet happiness as well? Can it not show you terrible evil, yet great love; or open your eyes to wonders you thought never were? Most of all; can it not take you on a journey into imagination that seems so real that reality ceases to exist? ... Or is reality merely an extension of our own imagination.*

*Once, before there were fables or any stories of old, there was the adventure from which all adventures come...from a time long ago, when they were first created. Once, one book was created and left unwritten. Believed to possess greater powers than words alone, it was passed down through the ages, inspiring yet twelve more. All were stored in a wooden box dubbed the Trunk of Life... guarded by good, desired by evil. Once, all people and faeries alike believed in the power of those books and the need to preserve them for the future so that they may inspire others. Once, one man stood against seven strikes of evil for just that reason, because he believed...believed that anything was possible between the covers of a book.*



# Once...

A HUGE brown and gold hawk lifted his wings in unison but one time, gliding effortlessly over the forest below, wings outstretched. His large hooded eyes scanned the peaks of the mountains surrounding the small valley that gave little protection against the strong northern wind cascading over them; and it was getting stronger yet, even for him. Churning, boiling black clouds began to rise behind those peaks and he watched as the fog crept its way up and over the highest of them, down towards the valley and forest below.

He was Cedrick, the eyes and ears and sometimes even the very thoughts of his master, Ciera, Queen of the Faeries. Searching the dead forest he spotted Enol, the knight would be magician; then shifted his eyes to the north once more focusing on the fog snaking its way through downed trees and brown grass; pushed along by the power of the black clouds above it and the evil within.

Cedrick thought of this once beautiful forest. The majestic

oaks and aspens, grassy meadows and widespread wildflowers were all just a memory now...yet another price paid for control of the Trunk of Life. Again he searched for the knight, finding him once more, kneeling, holding in his right hand what the great bird knew could only be the Sword of Ciera, the last of his seven keys. Cedrick took a deep breath, hoping the faith and belief his queen had placed in this young knight would be magician, was not in vain. He waited, soaring high above, wings still outstretched, knowing that if Enol failed, he must take action. At all cost the Trunk of Life must be saved.

His eyes narrowed and he turned his attention back to the fog. It was everywhere slinking, slithering like a snake, creeping, winding and curling 'round the withered trunks of once great trees, but this was not just any fog; it was searching... searching for the knight would be magician and the knight would be magician was waiting for it. Enol stood, feet planted in the gray dust that now coated the ground, his back against the trunk of a huge oak that had been snapped nearly in half. He knew that it was coming, the last effort from an almost defeated enemy. The last fight he must face for control of the Trunk of Life.

The northern wind slapped his face, twisting and blowing his hair up and around. Twigs and leaves swirled around, glancing off him. He turned making sure the Trunk of Life was still at his feet, as his mind's eye ran through the memories of the last six keys and evils' attempt to gain control of the books. The wolf, the Cane of Narzio, the braided rope, the mirror, the cask of water and the lamp, all had helped him in great ways, saving his life many times over. All had helped get him here to this forest with the last of the seven keys...the Sword of Ciera, Queen of the faeries herself. He could just see the poisonous fog now. Soon it would sense the life within him, attack and attempt to consume the Trunk of Life. The

knight would be magician pulled the Queen's sword from its sheath and knelt, drawing in a deep breath, the sword now feeling heavier than it ever had. The battle for the trunk had been a long one and every muscle in his body screamed in pain as he lifted the sword slowly and spoke to the stone it held.

"Sword of Ciera, you are the last of the seven keys. Please, help me now. The Trunk of Life is almost safe. With your help, it will be for a very long time, I promise this now." His head jerked up, a woman's voice; it was everywhere and nowhere at the same time, seeming to float on the very air around him.

"Raise your sword, knight! Face the stone away from you and say my name!" it said. Enol lifted the sword, turning the hilt of the sword containing the stone away from him as he had been directed and as the fog began to engulf him, he raised it high saying, "Ciera!" Light shot forth from the stone instantly, placing itself between the knight would be magician, the Trunk of Life and the deadly fog. Enol watched as trees started bending back and forth again and again. He felt his hair stop moving and the absence of wind upon his face. He watched as the leaves and loose twigs swirled, still circling around him in the wind yet never touching him.

"The wind is blowing but I feel nothing!" he thought aloud. He watched in amazement, still holding the sword high in the air, suddenly feeling wind at his back. A strong and whipping southern wind was pushing the fog away...that was when he saw them. Two angered faces etched on a mixture of fog and dark clouds as they were forced to retreat and then were gone.

Everything stopped as the light slowly faded from the sword. The knight would be magician lowered it, sliding it back into the sheath that was tied to his waist. He watched in awe as the

rest of the dark clouds seem to melt away; and blue sky could once again be seen over what was left of the forest. The seventh key had served him well, protecting him from almost certain death. He would return it to its owner...a woman he had met only in a dream. His eyes settled on the Trunk of Life as he drew in a deep breath. Thoughts of all that had happened raced in his mind as the forest around him fell silent. "Enol." His eyes snapped up searching the trees around him. "Enol, it is I, Ciera."

A broken tree to the right of him seemed to move. Wooden arms, legs, clothing, and a face appeared and the Queen of the Faeries herself stepped into full view. The boots she wore stopped just above her knees; the wrap around her shoulders barely brushing the top of them. She was tall and lean, her wings full and tapered, an empty sheath hung across her back stretching down to the back of her thigh. The crown on her head was a band of gold with four points, each with a different jewel beset in it. Hair flowed out and away from her face on an invisible wind and she was smiling. Enol smiled back.

He knew little of her, only the legends. She was Queen over all faeries, the keeper in the balance of good and evil. The knight would be magician bent down on one knee realizing as he did that she...she was the woman from his dream. He lowered his eyes without wanting to, such beauty.

"Please," Ciera said softly, "Rise. You have fully earned my respect and that of the faerie kingdom. Enol, you have saved the Trunk of Life." With that her delicate wings folded back into a sort of cape under the empty sheath on her back and she now bowed her own head toward the knight would be magician.

"My lady," he said gently taking her hand, bringing them face to face. He could see the strength she possessed in the way she held his stare. "When you came to me in my dream you

said that you believed in me and my destiny to save the Trunk of Life. Believe me now that I will honor and keep the promise I have made.”

Ciera looked deep into the knight would be magician’s eyes seeing the courage and wisdom she knew he already possessed. “My father knew of you many years ago. He had a vision; a vision that a man named Enol would eventually control the Trunk of Life. That a knight would be magician would survive seven strikes of evil,” she paused shifting her stare from his eyes, not wanting to though, and looked around at the dead forest, continuing. “And as for your promise...” Her left eyebrow rose and she looked once more in his eyes, “I would like to help you keep it!”

The faerie queen stepped backwards, twirling in a slow deliberate circle; all the while moving her hands in the air as if she were painting. As she turned the whole forest changed, grass grew, poking up through the strewn twigs and leaves. Flowers spread everywhere, and the withered trunks of once great trees were healed as they grew new branches laden with fresh leaves. Now the ground shook beneath Enol’s feet; and he turned to see a tiny sprout push through the dirt and become a sapling, then a young tree...then a mighty oak. He stood back in amazement and turned toward the beautiful faerie, not knowing what to say.

Ciera just smiled and spoke first. “You will need a home and safe place for the Trunk of Life.” She turned him gently again toward the tree and standing behind him, brought a flat hand down and past his eyes. Enol’s mouth widened speaking a silent ‘whoa!’

In the moment it had taken to cover his eyes, she had transformed the mighty oak into a home. A large arched door stood at its base with what seemed to be a smaller door in its top section. He watched in amazement as grooves formed at the

bottom of it and moved upward. The door was somehow carving itself! His eyes drifted upward toward the round window that stood open above it, the same thing, it was carving itself.

Enol turned to the beautiful faerie with one eyebrow up and a half smile staring in awe and admiration. “Incredible. Think you can teach me that trick?” Ciera stared back at Enol smiling at his smile with his one eyebrow up. “It is not a trick, it is magic and I am just the deliverer of it as it passes through me from my ancestors.”

The knight would be magician knitted his eyebrows, “Tell me more.”

Ciera gave him back his half grin with one of her own. “I will tell you this, true magic good or evil never dies. Now come, let me show you your new home.”

She reached her hand toward the massive door but paused when Enol’s hands touched her shoulders.

“What is...,” The knight would be magician stopped short and cocked his face sideways in confusion as the ripples that seemed to swim up the door came to an abrupt halt, forming into what could only be faces. Yes, faces that spoke Ciera’s name and quibbled over who would speak first. “Or should I say who?” he continued over the top of them. Ciera answered his question by addressing the two faces by name. “Id, Odd! Shush up for one second.” Both faces were immediately quiet, eyes upon their new Queen. She had saved them but weeks before, a story for another time. Ciera continued, “We will talk later this evening, for now, practice your traveling skills as you will be accompanying me when I leave.” At that, the faces disappeared back down the trunk of the massive oak and into the ground. Enol watched in amazement as they did but his face showed concern as he looked back up toward her.

“You are leaving?” he said hesitantly.

“One day,” she answered back with a wink. “But for now

we have much work to do; and lessons to learn first my knight would be magician.” Opening the massive door with a gentle push, she led the way in. Enol picked up the Trunk of Life and followed her through the doorway saying, “Just tell me one thing, whose side are those guys on?” Ciera turned toward him her left eyebrow up and arched. “Ours.”

\* \* \*

Ciera stayed at Enol’s new home for some time teaching him many things about the books and the magic they held. That he must always believe in their power and that between the covers of a book; all things are possible. The first six keys had returned safely and been absorbed by the books; her sword, the seventh, now filled her once empty sheath and hung on one of the hooks next to the huge arched door. Together they set up the library arranging the first twelve on the shelves; but the thirteenth Ciera left in the trunk. Enol watched as she did this, suddenly placing his hand on hers, the one that held the lid as he glanced to the books on the shelves then back to the book in the trunk.

“Why is this one titled and the others not?” His hand was still on top of hers. He did not wait for an answer. He read the title, “Book of Anisoptera.”

Ciera’s eyes flashed toward him. “You say the name correctly.” Her thoughts reeled. She knew the name of this thirteenth book because her father had told her. The book had never revealed its name on the cover before, not ever...that is, to no one but this knight would be magician.

Enol smiled almost blushing, “Only from a childhood story my mother told me years ago. It means dragonfly.”

Ciera smiled at him seeing the faraway look in his eyes and was unable to stop herself from reading his thoughts. He was remembering the story and his mother; and all the while the

letters on the book in the half closed trunk glowed without their knowledge. She pulled her eyes from him, lowering them to the top of the trunk, slightly ashamed at having invaded his private thoughts; and placed her other hand on top of his pushing gently on the lid closing it, barely catching a glimpse of the glow as the latch clicked shut. Instantly she reopened it to confirm what she had seen but no glow came from within.

“What’s the matter?” asked Enol.

“I thought...” Her voice trailed off as she looked up at him and once again closed it. Turning to face him fully she said, “This book is the thirteenth book. It was created first by the Old Ones, the Mighty Ones who could foresee the future; and the powers one book would need to provide between its covers...magic, yes; but knowledge was the ultimate goal. One book created to inspire all others.”

Her hand moved waving toward the other twelve. “The Mighty Ones knew that this book would inspire my Father Quinn to create twelve more as it was passed down from generation to generation to him.” She paused now, turning away from him stepping toward the shelves, spinning back toward him again. “They also knew of you Enol and that you would one day find a way to use the twelve to inspire others, books of knowledge, inspiration, happiness and even sadness for the world of the future to come.”

The knight would be magician stared at the books on the shelves now, his face serious, eyebrows once more knit in thought. Ciera held back from reading them.

“Are these books connected in some way?” he asked it hesitantly; and she noticed answering simply, “In all ways. Their power is equally shared between them”.

His ears heard all that she said; but all the while in his mind he marveled at her beauty watching as she moved towards the

trunk, and patted it on the top saying, "This book could rewrite the stories of the other twelve. It could control them, changing our lives forever." She had paused, gazing momentarily out the window, thoughts seemingly far away. "A book I believe, that the very power to keep us safe will run through one day. A book so powerful that if opened by evil, all would be lost; for it is a book, even with all the power it holds; that is, as of yet unwritten...its destiny unknown."

\* \* \*

...And so it was that the thirteenth book stayed locked in the Trunk of Life and was hidden by Ciera's father Quinn while Enol continued his training as a knight magician. They had late dinners and each told of their lives up to this point. Ciera explained her powers and their limitations. How she had to wait till the fog and clouds were virtually upon him before the powers of her ancestors would work through her sword, pushing the wind that had blown them away.

At this point Enol had held up his hand, "So you are saying that up to the seventh key, your sword, I was bait?"

Half smiles had come to both faces, eyebrows arching; and Ciera had answered simply, "Well, yes," adding immediately, "And a very good piece of bait you were, luring and surviving each strike of evil."

They laughed together at this and Enol took her hand into his still smiling at her.

"Next time however, I would like to know when I am going to be the bait, okay?" he said as his other hand traced the outline of her chin.

She smiled back at him answering immediately, "Agreed." Suddenly Enol's smile faded as he stared at her face and hers had followed, "What?" she asked.

He told her of the faces he had seen. They had seemed

etched, features only; but had been able to move independently apart from the fog and clouds on which they seemed to ride. One, he was sure, had been a woman who resembled her. Ciera turned away from him at once her wings flaring and the smile disappearing from her face. She snapped back toward him wings still flared, shoulders square in defiance, "That would have been Anya, evil sister of the Queen of the Faeries herself...yes...me. The other would have been Rhetoric, one time magician apprentice to my father; Rhetoric, who desires the Trunk and the books inside for his own evil agenda; Rhetoric, who would surely kill for the thirteenth."

He touched her face again and she softened her stance, her wings settling. "I can see the resemblance," he said tracing down her cheek again, his eyes softening, "It is said that one must sometimes take the good with the bad."

That was when he first kissed her and she had let him.

The two of them grew close, fell in love and had a child named Madrena. Enol soon became the true magician he was meant to be; and together they named the new land *Whisper Hollow*.

# Now...

CIERA'S DREAM had been so vivid, her father so alive looking and her heart had swelled, remembering how much she missed him and her mother. If one could cry in a dream, surely, she had. When she finally awoke her face was wet with tears. His appearance had been the same as she had last seen him, the lines of life encircling his eyes, but softening when he smiled and spoke to her.

“My dear daughter, I have missed you.”

“And I you my father,” she answered.

He hugged her gently and stood back, hands still on her upper arms. “You must return home my dear, evil is trying to open the trunk...the thirteenth book needs you.”

Her mind's eye briefly envisioned a bright green and she responded, “It is safe, father.”

Again the lines of life softened as he smiled once more. “You are correct but once more evil will try to attain it and the other twelve books. This time must be its last. This time you must

rid the world of the threat to take the power of books from the future, completely and forever.”

In the dream, she stood before him, her sword in its sheath on her back, the dragonfly dagger on her side. His eyes had lowered toward the dagger, and then back into hers. “Keep close guard on that; you will need it.”

The dragonfly dagger was almost 14 inches in length. Its sheath, reinforced with the same metal that encased its hilt. A true master had created it. The metal was carved and was deeply intricate and ornate. Three jewels were beset in the handle, one blue, one red and one green. Around them the metal had been shaped into elegant swirls signifying the sky above, the land below and the love that should always be between it. The blade itself was razor sharp. It had never been used. Legend goes that only a dragonfly dagger can pierce the skin of a true magician...good or evil. The knife must be sharp, untainted and unused having never pierced skin of any kind or drawn blood...a virgin blade if you wish. Ciera kept it at her side always as her father had asked. She had been told in the past that a specific use would arise for it, nothing more.

Her fingers had lightly caressed the hilt of it as she watched him reach into the depths of the floor length robe he had worn in the dream. He produced a small scroll.

“Enol has aged, my daughter; you will need this in the new fight against an old enemy.”

“What is this?” she asked as she took it from him raising one eyebrow.

“I must go now Ciera; just follow the directions and the map. Be careful, evil has learned many new tricks. Believe!” Lightly, he touched her face and she had felt it. Slowly he had faded away, all the while looking into her eyes.

“Father! I have more questions!” she had yelled in her dream but he had not returned.

She awoke with a tear stained face, wondering what the scroll could have contained. The stream that cut its way down the hillside, where she had made camp the night before called to her in its own babbling way and she rose, washing her face in it, waking up with its coolness, as it cleared her mind. She used the inside of her shawl to wipe off the excess water, and gazed up at the sky above. The sun was just about ready to peak over the mountains to the east; and the clouds seemed to be exclusive to the valleys as they hugged their floor. Turning toward the now out fire she thought of her husband, Enol. If he were here, he would just be finishing his second cup of coffee; she missed him. No one and no dream had to twist her arm to return to Whisper Hollow.

She had only a small pack to carry; and she turned to retrieve it. Not one, but both eyebrows rose when she saw the scroll...the scroll from her dream, and she remembered her grandfather's last words, "Believe!" Slowly she bent toward it, picking it up gently, unrolling it. Her eyes scanned it quickly, a smile coming to her face. There would be a sacrifice on her part but her husband was worth it. Madrena and the books were worth it. Whisper Hollow was worth it.

Quickly she rolled it back up, placing it in her pack, and called for the two faces that traveled with her. A mere moment passed and there they were, side by side on the log, just to the right of the fire pit.

"You called Ciera?" they both chimed together. She peered down at the two faces remembering back when they had first met. Both faces were the last of their kind. They had been gnomes of different tribes, whose fellow tribesman had one by one eliminated the other till there was but one of each. The two of them, Id and Odd, now hung on the log before her.

She had intervened just in the nick of time, stopping Odd's dagger from hitting its mark, disarming them both with a

single swing of her sword saying, "I have watched you and yours for years, slaughtering each other for simply the differences you both hold sacred; the very differences that make us all unique. No more."

The two gnomes had stared at her with hatred, then back at each other with even more.

Odd had been first to speak. "You have no right to tell us what we can and cannot do," he had snarled, with Id adding, "My people have only defended themselves," his eyes shot towards Odd, "They started this fight."

She replied simply, raising her sword once more high on her right side, "I am Ciera, Queen of the Faeries, and I have every right. It takes two to keep fighting, and because of your unwillingness to resolve this petty fight based on indifference, you will now serve me until I feel you have proven yourselves and your prejudice thoughts have ceased."

With that she swung the sword, passing it just above their heads striking the tree at their back. "I banish you to the wood never to touch the soil or water that surrounds us; never to walk among the rest of the world upright. You will serve me and fight others like yourselves." As her sword hit the tree, they were sucked into the crevice it created, only the outlines of their faces showing in the wood.

Acceptance of their fate had come slowly, but they had adjusted nicely, proving themselves repeatedly throughout the years. She knelt down tickling Odd's chin then passed her hand gently across Id's brow. "Seems we must return home my friends, any objections?"

The two faces smiled broadly. "None here!" said Id automatically with Odd adding, "I'll second that!"

Their queen smiled back at them reading their almost identical thoughts. "Where would we be, if you had not stopped us so many years ago? Dead, most probably."

She had shown them the value of enjoying the differences between the assorted cultures they had experienced in the many years in which they had served her. Life was an adventure now, not a struggle. Life was good.

Ciera responded, “You have both proven yourselves many times over. I am so very proud of you, and how far you have progressed. I could release you from the wood that imprisons you today, if you so desire, but I must ask you to stay as you are for now. Once more evil comes for the books, and in your present state you could be a great advantage in the fight against it. It is your choice to make.”

Id looked over at Odd, then back to his Queen. “I feel I speak for both us when I say our debt to you for what you have done for us is yet unpaid. How can we help?”

Their beautiful queen spread her wings as she strapped her small pack on her back nodding at their choice and smiled, “Just keep up with me for now!”

She flew up just above the treetops, turning towards home, silently sending a message out to Cedrick to meet her there. Id and Odd raced from the log to the trees, jumping from one branch to another, both of them so excited about returning home that they did not notice the blackened figure that lurked at the forest edge, just inside the darkness watching them, and listening...but Ciera did.

She turned her head back toward the dark spot, staring at it, letting it know she saw it then turned her thoughts to home, the scroll and then something else; the glow of the lettering so long ago...the glow of the thirteenth book.

\* \* \*

Enol sat at his massive desk stroking his now gray beard, staring at the books sitting on the shelves with red rimmed eyes. Just one sign, just let me see one sign. Something was up with them;

he knew it...felt it deep down. Then there was the fading. It had happened just out of the corner of his eye. You know the place where you wonder if you really did see it, but he was sure he had. It had been the book of Fire and Smoke that had faded, becoming sort of transparent and then it was back. It had glowed, its power seeming to radiate from it as if the book itself was fighting some unseen battle, struggling to remain in its place on the shelf.

He took a long deep breath knowing deep down that whoever was trying to possess the books would get it right sooner or later and the books would start disappearing. He was older now. Would he be able to fight as he had before? Fight for control of the books, and win once more.

His thoughts now turned to Ciera who had been gone so long, too long. Not only did he want to talk with her about the books; he just wanted his wife home. Her duties as Queen were many though, and he respected her for fully living up to her legacy as the balance of good and evil.

Enol's eyes never left the books as his thoughts of Ciera continued. His beautiful wife had long ago taught him of the powers the books held, and how her father had intended to use the books when first created. However, with the continual threat of evil's attempt to possess the books, Quinn had had no choice but to lock them away in the *Trunk of Life*, hidden, until a certain young knight would be magician from his vision would come along to protect them, that is.

Enol smiled his half smile remembering how Quinn had introduced himself just after watching him joust...and lose. He had come straight into the arena, looked straight down at his face as he sat up from the fall from his horse, and said, "No future son in law of mine loses! Get up and try again." Of course Enol had no idea at that time of who Quinn was or what he was talking about. In fact, being a little dazed, he half

thought he had dreamed the whole thing until seeing him later in the courtyard to discuss a certain set of books and the future.

Then, once he and Ciera had saved the Trunk of Life, she had shown him the powers between their covers. How each book had the abilities to do whatever was needed to help the reader in their quest, no matter what the quest, hence inspiring books of the future.

He remembered the lines of faeries that had asked to be attached to the books, to be their guardians, and how hard it had been to decide on which ones. ...Oh, and then the adventures there had been!

His eyes narrowed, still staring at the shelves of books as he thought of the fading once more. "Only a true magician could be attempting to take these books. The magic they contain holds them on the very shelf they sit, unable to be removed unless called by someone in need. Somehow, they are being fooled." He sat staring at the books, drumming his fingers on his massive desk; wondering who the magician might be, as thoughts of Ciera started filling his head once more. "I need some air," he said aloud as he rose and walked to window.

\* \* \*

Madrena, daughter of Ciera and Enol, stepped lightly down a thin path of clover that wandered throughout Whisper Hollow. She had grown tall and thin like her parents over the years, her beauty upholding her title of Faerie Princess. The wrap that draped her shoulders hung to the back of soft leather boots tied just above her knees with a strand of leather, her purple red hair, braided, hanging down almost as far.

She turned her face upward, half thinking of her mother; half thinking of those lavender blue skies visible just above the treetops, and that they looked particularly bright today. Her

fingers played gently with the emerald necklace around her neck, a present from her mother at birth; and she looked down at the clover still underfoot, smiling. As a child, Madrena had discovered that no matter what direction in Whisper Hollow she went the clover spread out in front of her, its path always leading her home...in fact, right to her front door! It had been something her mother, Ciera; had come up with. She told her, "You will always be safe here sweetie; you will never be lost as the clover will show you the way. It will always know where to take you." Madrena squinted down at the clover wondering how her mother had accomplished it, and about the magic she had used to do it.

Today, it led her to the outcropping that overlooked the land beyond Whisper Hollow. This was her favorite place, a place where she could think and imagine. Clouds floating above could become dragons with magnificent wings, their pointed faces topped with huge plumage almost as big as their bodies. Madrena sat with one leg dangling over the side, waving at the valley below as she moved it back and forth. She fanned her wings, soaking up the late afternoon sun as the small rising breeze moved up through them, and tousled the loose strands of her hair.

She thought of her mother and threw hands in the air showing her youth, flipping her eyes upward, wanting to scream, "I want my Mom!" out loud, but she didn't. She was very proud of her Mom and knew deep down she was where she needed to be, and would be here if she could, but when? She really did miss her. Maybe Dad knows when she'll be home. Madrena stood and took one last look at the world beyond and turned, following the clover once more and headed the short distance home.

The great hawk could just see the top branches of the mighty oak; home to his now good friend, Enol, his Queen and their daughter Madrena. He glided silently, lifting his wings just once to sustain the speed he had already attained. His queen had called him, and he had wasted no time in answering. Cedrick thought of the things Ciera had told him...about the good things Enol had accomplished with the books. How he attached faeries to them, allowing the books to use the incredible powers they held to help people in need; while inspiring those same people to write books of their adventures and their lessons learned which inspired even more to believe in the power of books and the power between their covers. "Brilliant!" he thought. His knight would be magician had become a true magician indeed!

Cedrick circled, watching Madrena as she walked upon the clover. What a beautiful young woman she had become. He then turned once more to the oak, thinking of the books, they were getting stronger. He felt it, Ciera felt it, and he was most certain his friend Enol would say he felt it too. Descending, Cedrick rounded the tree toward the open window he knew would be there; spotting Enol just as he poked his head out and looked up at him with that half grin.

"He always knows," thought Cedrick, "oh, if birds could smile..."

Enol pulled in from the window and Cedrick landed on the sill, his eyes immediately on the books. "Good day, my friend," he said to the great hawk, glancing toward the books on the shelf and adding. "You feel it too?"

The big bird bowed and nodded profusely letting out a screech of agreement.

Suddenly, the door burst open and in came Madrena, mouth moving, "Hey Dad! When's Mom coming...Oh! Ceddie! Hi! It has been so long!" She walked quickly over to the

open window stroking the big birds' neck and back. "I am so happy to see you! Surely you must know when my Mom will be here?"

Before the hawk could answer two sets of familiar ripples zoomed up the oak wall, the top ones stopping so quickly that the bottom ones collided with them and the voice of Id could be heard saying, "Ow!" with Odd responding; "Well, stop following so close! You know the rules. Ten inches...ten inches!"

Id answered smugly, "Yeah, yeah."

Madrena started giggling. "Looks like you guys are finally learning to compromise!" "And what did it take," added Enol, "Twenty years?"

Cedrick bobbed his head in agreement as both faces looked at the three of them, poking out rippled wooden tongues. All laughed together and when things quieted, Enol looked from Cedrick to Id and Odd.

"She sent you all," he said simply.

The great hawk screeched once more and the faces responded for him. "Yes." they said in unison. "Our queen sends a message that the trunk is in danger."

Enol turned to his daughter and saw the questioning look form on her face. He placed his hands on her shoulders, squeezing them gently. "Madrena, it looks like you will be seeing your mother very soon!" He hugged her, his eyes on the books at her back, adding, "Tonight is a story night, my dear; please call the faeries."

She pulled back from him, her hands still on his shoulders, asking, "All of them?"

"Yes, all of them." He hesitated very briefly and added, "The soldier faeries as well." Enol did not wait for another response but turned to Id, Odd and Cedrick, "Come let us light a fire, my friends; the shades of darkness are falling fast, and talk."

Madrena watched as her father, the faces and the great hawk went through the door. Something was up. He had been staring at the books, thinking deeply for almost two days now. "What story would father be telling tonight; and what did her mother's message mean?" she wondered as her eyes closed and she summoned all the faeries of Whisper Hollow to story night.

\* \* \*

The dragonfly sat quietly on a leaf, on the branch closest to the talking faces and listened. He was larger than most dragonflies but the green and gold tones in his wings blended with the tree itself. No one noticed him as the one they called Cedrick, stroked the window sill with mighty claws, screeching in a smooth shrill way, as only a hawk can do, saying his hello. His eyes never wavered from Cedrick until the girl with the purple red hair walked over by the great bird, and into view.

"She must be the one," he thought, eyes squinting. His filigree curled up close to his body, his wings took a backward slant. He barely noticed when Enol, Cedrick, and the faces came through the door. He could not take his eyes off of the girl they called Madrena.

\* \* \*

Leaves swayed and crunched ever so quietly, as the faeries of Whisper Hollow flew and hurried into the meeting place. It sat just outside of Enol's home, which let Madrena watch out the window as she kept checking the books for him. Not too often was her father able to sit and tell them the stories of far away lands, or unbelievable stories of magicians past. However, this was no story of yesteryear they had been told...it was one of what was to come.

The night sky was clear and the light from the fire bounced

from face to face as they arrived. All twenty eight of the faeries attached to the books were there, including Sneakin and Peakin; who came fully geared up, both carrying their swords on their backs, complete with the two crescent shaped daggers that fit snugly in the same sheath...warrior faeries, they were always ready for anything. Night and Day, Cinq, Saynk, Sunck and Piggett, Skinnie, and Hyde along with Fire and Smoke had already sat down and of course Id, Odd and Cedrick were there. The soldier faeries were just arriving. They were five in number. Their captain, Emmit was in the lead as they found places among the others.

“Hellos, and “Have not seen you in a whiles,” were said quickly as their knight magician raised his hand, asking for silence.

“Please,” asked Enol. His voice was calm and even as he looked over at Emmit who still stood. “Please, let us all sit, relax and let the fire warm us, for tonight you will hear a story of the future predicted, a story you will live.” The faeries glanced at each other, unsure of how to react to this, unsure of what their knight magician meant. Their eyes returned to him and they listened as he continued. “Tonight, I will tell you the story of a book of books; one that could write your stories, command your books and change your lives forever. A book which Ciera, your queen, and I both believe could channel the very power to keep us safe. A book so powerful that if opened by evil all would be lost, a book that is as of yet unwritten... it’s name, The Book of Anisoptera.”

There was much whispering amongst the faeries now as Enol paused.

Piggett spoke up, “Is the Book of Anisoptera in danger? Is it missing?”

Before Enol could answer more questions were asked. “Who watches over this book?” “We thought there were only twelve?”

“Has it been here all along in Whisper Hollow?” “Would the book make us evil?”

So many questions were being asked at the same time, Enol held up his hand once more for silence. “I will answer Piggett’s questions first. I believe it is, and it may be missing.” There was more whispering amongst the faeries.

Enol once again held up his hand. “The Book of Anisoptera or Dragonfly came well before my time and even before Ciera’s. It was passed down to her father from his ancestors along with the power within it. It is the Thirteenth Book of your twelve, created first always meant to be opened last. I know not where it is kept only that it exists.”

It was Day this time who spoke up first with a grin on her face, she and her brother were the smallest faeries in Whisper Hollow. “Then how do we know it might be missing?” Everyone chuckled.

“A very good question, Day,” replied Enol smiling back at her, knowing her playful way.

Sneakin broke in, his right wing snapping, “Have you ever seen this book, Enol?”

The keeper of their books’ smile faded, his eyebrows knitted, “I saw this thirteenth book for but an instance many years ago when your Queen and I first placed the other twelve, your books that is, on the shelf. It was hidden by Quinn himself. It does indeed exist.” He winked at Day, “But somehow I believe not knowing more about it has kept us safe...kept it safe.”

More whispering could be heard as Enol paused, looking at the eager faces around him that waited almost breathlessly to know more about this book, the Book of Anisoptera. He wondered. Would this small troop of faeries be enough to save the essence of what was Whisper Hollow? ...To defeat the evil now coming for the books? I must have faith in them, he thought. In all their many adventures they had never once

failed him, or the adult or child they were helping. Id and Odd had brought news that Ciera would arrive early tomorrow, and that it would be necessary to bring the faeries up to date on what was to come, that once again evil was trying to get to the books.

Enol leaned his head back seeing Madrena in the window and gave her a wink, thinking. "Listen carefully, my dear; for all of your magical abilities will be needed, even ones you do not know you possess." She leaned her head to the right, raising an eyebrow, staring back at her father, hearing his thoughts, not noticing the dragonfly who still sat in the tree nearby; her emerald necklace sparkling in the moonlight as her purple red hair splashed around her shoulders. Something inside of her stirred in incredible anticipation, and she winked back at him, a smile creeping to her lips.

*...And so Enol told the story of evil's last attempt to control the books. The story he must tell to prepare them for what was to come, to prepare them for tomorrow, and the adventure that lay ahead of them all...*

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