

“Are you actually suggesting they intend for us to look through a dark glass?”

“That’s exactly what I’m suggesting. And by *dark*, I’m pretty sure they mean *opaque*, in which case the glass is *this*.” Roger reached into his pocket and withdrew the moonstone.

Kip’s eyes almost bulged out of his head. “Moon exerts her pull...” he said wonderingly.

“*Her* being the word that makes all the difference. They’re referring to a woman, and the only one who’s been linked to the moon time and time again since I came home is Arianrhod. She figures into this, I just don’t yet know how. But what I *do* know is that this is one of her Eyes. *Moonstone*, get it?”

Kip nodded.

“So if I were to look through this th-thing...” Roger’s breath hitched as the enormity of what he was about to do struck him. Up until this point, he’d been working under the assumption that the moon, and anything associated with it, was a tool his enemies were manipulating against him. Moonlight had concealed the Jagged One, after all, but now it seemed that *moonstone* was about to reveal. And Roger wasn’t sure he was ready for that. There was no telling what might happen when he looked through the stone. A blood-soaked vision of the disc sprouting metal talons and clawing out his eye as soon as he raised it to it nearly made him toss the meager sausage sandwich Lockie had given him for breakfast.

*Lockie*. It was the first time Roger had thought of his cousin since Lockie had betrayed him. *Betrayed?* Yes, that was exactly what it had to be called. And if there were to be any chance of discovering a way out of the mess his cousin had got them into, Roger would have no choice but to risk looking through the blasted stone.

Heart thudding in his ears, he squinched his left eye shut, held the cracked moonstone up to his right one, and braced himself to come face-to-*fey* with whatever was waiting on the other side of this dark glass.

Dull pain throbbed behind Roger’s eye as his vision sharpened to an almost unbearable degree. He turned in a circle, mesmerized by the luminescence rising off every object in the forest, the white glow that outlined all things, from the tomb to the trees to Kip himself and the table...

“What is it? What do you see?”

Roger was too flabbergasted to answer Kip’s questions. Slowly, the boy walked toward the thing five paces ahead of him, and when he reached it, he drew the moonstone away from his eye. The object that had no business being in the forest vanished, but when he held the moonstone up to his eye once more, it reappeared.

“Tell me what you see,” Kip demanded. He wasn’t going to like what Roger had to say. In fact, he’d probably have a heart attack when the boy told him. But Roger had lied to Kip enough already. He owed the cat the truth, no matter how terrible it was.

“It’s a *feast*.”

The effulgence at Roger’s side suddenly blazed up before dwindling to a barely perceptible glow. Roger popped out the moonstone and turned to Kip. Thank God, the cat hadn’t died on the spot, as Roger had feared he had done, but even though Kip was alive, he looked far from well. He looked, in fact, as horror-struck as if he’d just witnessed someone being sacrificed right in front of his face.

Roger screwed the moonstone monocle back into his eye and studied the scene only he could see. Before him was a small round table covered with a white cloth so long its folds pooled on the ground. Over this cloth, a smaller one of rich purple velvet had been draped. Snaking across the tabletop, twisting around the obsidian candelabra with the black crystal teardrops

dangling from its branches, were great lengths of moss—green and springy and wonderfully soft, as Roger discovered when he reached out and touched them.

“What are you touching?” Kip asked sharply.

“Just some moss. Here, have a look.”

He held the moonstone in front of Kip’s eye so the cat could see. “I do not like this, Roger.”

“Don’t be such a misery guts,” he said, yanking the moonstone away. “It’s only a table.”

“A table upon which a feast has been laid. Do you know what that makes it? *A feast in the forest*,” Kip hissed, “and that should be enough of a warning for you to let it alone.”

But it wasn’t. Not at all. Instead of being repelled, Roger felt more drawn to the strange table than ever, especially when he noticed the liquid in the pair of black glass goblets on either side of the candelabra.

He reached for a goblet, brought it to his nose, took a sniff, and set it back down on the tabletop. Whatever the red drink was, it smelled delicious. And so did the fudgy little morsel at Roger’s fingertips.

The boy grabbed the sweet, surprised that so small a thing could be so heavy. It must have been weighed down by all the nuts and other delights it was stuffed with, which gave Roger even more of an incentive to devour it as quickly as he could. The only thing that made him pause was the flower. That huge white bloom in the middle of the treat didn’t look edible. And it had started to brown at the edges, too. Roger flicked off the decaying blossom. Problem solved. Now that the offending bloom had been got rid of, Roger was able to see something that made his mouth water all the more. Embedded in the luscious fudge were half a dozen salted pistachios—the nuts Roger had been unable to resist ever since Rotters had brought home a sackful of them from one of his trips abroad.

Roger broke the sweet in two, marveling at how gooey its insides looked, how gooey and chewy and red as blood. What luck! It had been made with raspberry jam. His favorite.

He was about to pop the sweet into his mouth when something beside the candelabra caught his eye. It was a small silver box identical to the one he’d pinched from Coffyn, except that this one had barely a speck of powder within it—powder, Roger now realized, that must have been sugar. He was salivating so badly, his mouth felt like a miniature Victoria Falls. Next to pistachios, sugar was his greatest weakness, and the means of satisfying his craving for an overdose of the stuff had been resting in his pocket this whole time. Roger retrieved Coffyn’s snuffbox, flipped open the lid, and laid the box on the table. Only then did he notice that next to the original box was a little card with words stenciled on it in a delicate hand. *Sprinkle and you shall see*, it read. Roger laughed.

“Why on earth are you laughing?” Kip demanded.

“If you could see how *Alice in Wonderland*-ish all this is, you’d laugh, too.”

“I did see it, remember? But the story *I* thought of was *Hansel and Gretel*.”

*I’m fattening you up for the witch in the forest who wants to eat you for lunch.*

The remembrance of Lockie’s words was like a bullet to Roger’s brain. He jerked forward, knocking over Coffyn’s snuffbox and sending a cloud of white powder into the air. The dust flew up Roger’s nose, got into his eyes, made him sneeze.

And broke the spell he’d been under since finding the feast.

Roger spat out a mouthful of corpse dust, for that’s what he now realized the powder had been all along. Not sugar, but ground up bones. The sharp fragments mixed within it should have

told him the truth straightaway. Who those bones had belonged to, Roger didn't even want to make a guess. And as for the sweet...

He flung it onto the table. It struck the cloth with a wet smack and instantly dissolved into a ball of black sludge. And in the middle of that sludge was a shard of bone.

Moonstone or no moonstone, Roger saw clearer than he'd ever seen before. These "treats" were not fairy cakes that he and kids all over England would have given their right eyes for.

This was the Fey food that had enticed children into making sacrifice to *her*—food made not with eyes, but with flesh and bone and hearts unknown.

*Lead to the rath and your fate will be shown.*

The words of the rhyme lashed around Roger's mind like a demon's whip and yanked him back into the abyss he had just clawed his way out of. Dark thoughts assailed him as he stepped back and looked at the ground.

Surrounding the table was an unbroken circle of white stones. A faerie ring.

*A rath.*

And the feast was in the dead center of it.

He'd once sworn he'd never bring the bone he'd found in his room to the rath. But if he'd no intention of ever doing so, why had he made such a fuss over the bone to begin with? Why, in fact, had he pocketed it at all?

Roger was seized by the certainty that everything he'd done over the past several hours had been leading him to this moment. Here was his chance to discover his destiny, to gain an advantage over his enemies by knowing precisely how things would turn out. All he had to do was drop the bone into the rath, and his future would be revealed. It was almost too easy. Roger reached into his pocket, extracted the bone, and held his hand out over the table.

"Put that bone back in your pocket, Roger. Make your own future."

Kip couldn't even see the rath, yet he'd known *exactly* what Roger was up to. Jolted, the boy glanced to the side. Through the moonstone, the cat glowed red as dragon fire, his eyes like burning coals. The sight should have terrified Roger into submission, but he was more determined than ever to have his own way. "If I don't know what will happen, I might not *have* a future. It's better to be prepared."

"By ceding your free will to them?"

"I'm the one making the choice."

"Are you? Look within, Roger. You have not been yourself since you entered this wood."

Roger shook his head, denying Kip's words, but in his heart he knew them to be true. The cat was making far too much sense for the boy's liking. "I have to do this," he said stubbornly.

"Mark me, Roger Knightley, if you drop that bone, your life will be forfeit."

The bone suddenly slid toward the edge of Roger's palm as if it were desperate to get the job over and done with before he could change his mind. Roger's throat constricted, but he made no move to save himself from disaster. "Lead to the rath and your fate will be shown," he recited mechanically, edging even closer to the ring of white stones.