***Happenstance on a Journey***

Where was I going? Hell, I was not even sure. I just wanted to roam about and was content on doing so. I needed to put a new stamp on my life, to re-evaluate my circumstances. A journey to find myself, one might say. So you can imagine my surprise when I came across a fairy.

We almost literally ran into each other. A small, peculiar creature she was. Pixie like, if you will. Her wings were clear but had a glitter strewn about them. Her hair was Blue-Violet. Most peculiar of all was her voice. So high pitched that at first contact I had to cover my ears with my hands. The only communication we had for those first few minutes was by way of mouthing our words.

“Hello?” I mouthed.

“Yes, hello,” she replied silently, her small eyes wide with alarm.

“Do not be afraid. I mean no harm. I did not expect to meet such a little thing… are you real or am I drunk?”

The fairy’s face grew red. Red hot. “WHAT?!” her high pitched voice screamed through my ears. Shaking my hands in her direction screaming, “STOP!” Quite loud she was indeed. My ears rang for another few minutes, and then she quietly squeaked, “Yes, I am real. I am not little, I am a fairy. You are quite rude, sir.”

I found a log to sit upon , watching as she flew this way and that way. “I am not rude. Curious is all, just curious. You are the first fairy I have come across. Possibly the first human to ever encounter one. Therefore, it is my duty to observe and write down what I encounter with you.” She flew to a nearby leaf and sat upon it.

“You are quite odd,” she said, “You are the first we have come across in a long time. You are not our first human. I am Thelna.”

She rose and fluttered around my head as my eyes tried to follow. I replied, “I am George. George Wightman, at your service. Do you have a last name?” Thelna stopped right in front of my face and looked perplexed.

“What is a last name? I am Thelna. Just Thelna.”

“A last name is… well,” I blushed and fumbled with words to describe it, “A last name is almost like… like a second name you go by.”

“You humans are strange. There is no point to a second name, when you have one name,” she squeaked out.

She flew about again, moving quite a bit. I observed that she actually sat still for only a second or two at a time. “It helps to identify us better in our society is all. There are many, many humans Thelna. Are there many fairies? Do you all live around here? What do you eat? Do you sleep?” Thelna opened her mouth as if to scream, I stopped my questions immediately.

“You are exhausting,” she mused, “Fairies are everywhere. We thrive in trees, near the water, in the snow, in the desert. There are many of us, too many to count. We eat nuts and berries around here. As to the other areas that I am not sure. We do not need to sleep. Do you sleep? What do you eat?”

My mouth was gaping at her reply. How could they not eat meat? Why so many fairies? Did they have special powers? My mind was racing when I remembered her questions. I replied, “Yes we sleep. Ideally 7-8 hours a night for most people, but many do not have the leisure for that. We eat many things and not all of us eat the same thing. I for one enjoy a good steak every now and then. How can you thrive without sleep? Why are there so many of you? Why not make yourselves known to the world?”

I got up and moved to my knapsack and retrieved my flask of red wine and bread and cheese. Thelna watched me curiously as I made my lunch. Her small eyes followed my every movement even as she moved about quickly. Had I not been so hungry I would have found it unnerving. She replied, “I do not know why we do not sleep. There are many of us because we are a diverse species, much like you and other species out there. Here in this forest there are twelve different types of fairy alone.” My gaze dropped to my food as I ate, I knew she was not finished talking and though tempted to ask more questions I sat quietly instead.

“We keep ourselves hidden because thousands of years ago a few bands of fairies made themselves known to the humans. When they did, the humans captured them thinking it would bring them some sort of luck. We were stolen, bought, sold, and treated quite unfairly. It was only when all the fairies in the land joined together that we were able to go back into hiding. Much blood was shed, on both sides. The law was made then to never show ourselves again…” Thelna then grew quiet.

We sat in silence for a while, letting her words play over in my mind. She has broken their law, though not intentionally. I grew worried for my little acquaintance. Thelna must have sensed this because she fluttered in front of my face until I looked at her. “Do not worry, George. This is actually a good thing. For many years now my band has been waiting to come across a human. We want to prove that we can co-exist. Maybe not the whole world, but at least to live among a few. This is a great risk I am taking, but I think you are worth it. I mean you haven’t captured me yet.” Thelna laughed at her comment.

I was amazed that she placed such trust at my feet. I watched her flutter around more while I cleaned up my lunch. I was concerned however, “Thelna, I do not live around here. I could see if some individuals lived here in the woods may understand, but the city could be of much harm to you all. I am not saying I will go back home and tell of you. I have no intention of that; however, place great care on who you meet here in the forest.”

Thelna let out a high pitched shriek. “Do you think I would place my people in danger such as that?! I have no choice but to be careful. We have been aware of you for weeks now. The Elders deemed you a kind soul.” I was much surprised to hear this, that I have been watched since I entered the forest a few weeks ago. The little fairy clucked her tongue, “Do not be shocked. We are tiny and use it to our advantage. We know more than we let on.” She then laughed harshly. This is turning into one weird dream, I thought to myself. Though when I pinched myself, it hurt. The world had opened a bunch of possibilities to my imagination. Or was it reality?

I got up and hefted my knapsack over my shoulder. “Well Thelna, fairy of the forest, I believe it is time for me to go. I am getting a little freaked out by my imagination,” I slapped myself to wake up. I waited and waited, nothing happened; Thelna was still fluttering in front of my face. I did it again, again nothing. “I am real, George. Quit playing games. Follow me,” she squeaked.

Was I really awake? If so, then this was a astonishing reality. We ventured further into the forest. During our walk, Thelna pointed out various places in the trees where the fairies made their cities. My eyes were opened to a new world. Though it was all tiny, I was able to see what they built their homes and buildings out of and…were those fairies? I heard a shriek; much like Thelna’s and saw what looked like a swarm of flies heading in my direction.

Thelna told me not to be afraid. I set my knapsack on the ground, sitting down next to it. Sitting down would possibly make it easier for them to be around me. She moved around me, settling on my shoulder, “Do not be afraid. I told them not to bite,” Thelna giggled. I watched as thousands of fairies swarmed around me. It was a sight to behold. Colors of greens, blues, reds, oranges, purples; every color imaginable fluttering about.

A male fairy with dark blue wings and hair approached. He appeared regal in some ways. “Hello,” he voiced boomed to my surprise, “I am Idrenl, leader of this band. Thank you for coming with Thelna and welcome to Brigir, our home.” As he said this the place seemed to light up and revealed a rather astonishing city. My eyes took in the sight then settled on Idrenl.

“Thank you for the welcome and hello. I am George Wightman. Nice to meet you,” bowling slightly though not quite sure why.

Idrenl nodded and spoke with Thelna briefly. “I hear you have been informed on our past as well as a few other things about us and our culture. Also, that you have told a bit of yours as well. I am very grateful that you did not capture Thelna nor give her any falsehood,” he stated. Idrenl then went on to tell him the importance of an alliance between the fairies and the humans. He would not divulge the specifics of why it was important, only that it was.

Many of the fairies swarmed around me. They went between my legs, around my head, and under my arms. One even put her head in my ear! “I would not mean harm upon any creature,” I said to Idrenl, “I am most curious about your kind. It is in my nature to observe those things around me and to report back to whom it may concern. I am however on a journey of my own accord and have no one to report this to.”

With this, Idrenl looked at me. He appeared quite saddened by this comment. Thelna made her way towards him. They talked in soft, quiet voices for quite some time. While they did this I took to asking several questions to the fairies around me. They were most happy to oblige me and in return I showed them items from my knapsack. Of all my things that fascinated them, it was my compass they found most unusual. “It tells you what direction you are going,” though I do not think they heard me. I turned again only to gasp as Idrenl and Thelna were right in front of me. “You scared me!” I exclaimed.

“Your situation, George, is unfortunate but something we can work with,” said Idrenl.

“Even though you have no one to report your observations to back… home,” Thelna said, “this is still a huge moment for both our races. We were to meet a human without being captured or hurt. This is more than most of us expected. We can now go to the Elders and tell them that progress is being made.”

The three of us went to a secluded part of woods as the other thousands of fairies were celebrating and being quite loud. We found there are many similarities in both our cultures. We both have leaders, a system of check and balances, similar foods, and family structure. Both cultures also differentiated in how they handled criminals (fairies do not believe in the death penalty), choice of partner (fairies were paired up at birth), and how humans ate meat and fairies did not. We continued to talk into the night and I was introduced to a pungent drink which they called Morshra.

I found myself waking up the next morning upon a soft bed of grass. My head ached slightly and somewhat dizzy from rising too quickly. The sun was just rising and all was silent in the forest. My body remained motionless as I looked up into the trees trying to find my friends, the fairies. There was no evidence they were there. Distraught, I stood and called out to those that live in the trees. No response was had.

“Idrenl! Thelna!” I called over and over into the otherwise silent forest.

Had it been a dream? Was I going insane? Were they taken? Did that make sense? How would someone take thousands of fairies in the night? None of this made any sense. It was real. It had to be. I never overdid my drinking and when I pinched myself, it hurt. Idrenl, Thelna, all of them, had to be real. If not, then my sanity was on the line.

All I had wanted to do was take a journey. A journey to lighten my soul, give me a fresh outlook on life. A fresh start. When I met Thelna I received all of that and more. My imagination and curiosity were sparked once again. My keen sense of observation was restored. I could go back to my life in London refreshed and ready to do good deeds, but I had to know it was real. The only way to know for sure was for them to show themselves.

“Thelna! Thelna! THELNA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

A flutter caught my eye. It was Thelna. I jumped up and down with excitement. “You ARE real!” I called out to her.

She stopped in front of my face, yawning, “Yes of course. I am afraid that we all had a bit too much fun last night. Our heads hurt and we are all so very tired. And here you are calling out to us when we want to sleep!”

“Oh! Sorry! I am just happy this is real or I would be quite insane. I will let you all sleep in peace,” I whispered.

Satisfied, Thelna flew back up into the trees. I sat down and made a small breakfast compiled mostly of berries and some bread. A smile spread across my lips. I was not crazy. I had come across a whole other species that current man did not know about. I was chosen by them to learn and observe and in return I would tell them about current events in the human world. It was all still rather unbelievable to me, but I knew it was real and I knew my journey had only really just begun.