

The Seer's 7 Deadly Fairy Tales

A Compendium

by
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ALL'S FAIR IN VANITY'S WAR

PROLOGUE

October 2008

"I feel like a pork-chop going to a bar mitzvah," I said, as my seatbelt pinned me and the pink chiffon I was encased in against the back of the leather seat. Otherwise, I might have tried to combust out of the ridiculous cotton-candy confection.

We'd left the sprawling mansions of the historic McIntyre district in our rearview mirror and were speeding past bungalows and Halloween weirdoes as we made our way to the outskirts of Salem village.

"Those sweet sayings are starting to keep me up at night." Locke's dimple crested his cheek bone.

Then his lingering look stole my breath. "Relax." His eyes crinkled at the corners. "It isn't as if they're going to perform a human sacrifice. It's just a party."

My lashes swept my cheeks as his peppermint-flavored lips brushed mine, sending brief images through my mind. The satiny softness of Locke's breathing across the inside of my ear. His woody evergreen scent that always seemed to envelope me. When he came to pick me up for the Halloween bash tonight his eyes danced with a mischievous brilliance. I looked up through the windshield to gauge how much longer we'd be alone on the deserted road and caught the blinding high-beams headed right at us.

My scream spiraled off the pavement with the car, and we broadsided the brick wall. Everything slowed to a cryptic pace as I cart-wheeled through the shattering glass, through the tops of the evergreen trees and landed with a thud, before sliding across the damp grass. Every ounce of air was knocked out of me and my head throbbed as chaotic images burst red and black against my corneas.

My arms felt like dead weight as I tried to shake the slimy leaves from my hands by brushing them across my legs. When I touched myself I was shocked, not by the sight of blood, but by thousands of pinpricks of light that raced through my limbs, electrifying every hair on my body as if I'd plugged the vacuum into that outlet that always overloaded and gave off a little jolt. I held up my arm, trying to see if the blast of current had seared my skin, but a trail of blood raced the shower of light sprinkling the ground from my body. My body had conducted electricity and I was now shedding sparkles.

I managed to get my tingling legs under me, but instead of going back to the fence and trying to get back to the scene of the accident, something pulled me through the graveyard with such force that I dropped the silvery wings of my costume between a Celtic cross and a crumbling obelisk. The halo was torn from my hair when I'd been hurled out of the car. I pulled the last hairpin from my scalp, and my elbow-length hair danced around my shoulders like a black veil. Being crowned with a corona on the night that decadence and debauchery ruled Salem was about as likely as a red-horned demon dropping into an Easter parade anyway.

I was maneuvered through the minefield of monuments, some unseen force directing the course of my electrified body, as if searching the tombstones for one in particular. I came to an abrupt stop and my knees buckled, pulling me to the ground as my fizzling fingertips were forced to score to the headstone. I felt like a marionette as I traced the letters of the epitaph. "Death's cradle straddles all our graves, lulling the elderly, while catapulting the young to

their eternal rest.” The first time I read it last summer, I knew you’d need more than tenth-grade honors English to understand, but now I’d been cannon-balled out of my own body, and Gram’s words raced through me as if they were adrenaline.

I gasped for air.

I looked down at my puppet-like body: it was misty white, ethereal even, and it burned as if I’d stayed in the sun too long without enough SPF 30.

My blurry-eyed mind wondered if I should be concerned about being spotted. It’s difficult to believe, but on Halloween night in this peculiar town stuff weirder than a specter prowling a cemetery is happening. Although, I do expect the accident to make the front page of the *Salem Evening Journal*. Last year, “Buffy Stakes Elvira at Broomsticks Bistro” was November first’s headline. Tomorrow’s caption will read, “Homecoming Queen and Quarterback Eternally Separated in Horrific Crash.”

The realization dawned on me like the headline shouting off the front page: I was dead. I was sparkly and burning and dead. My mind started to race. I couldn’t be dead. I couldn’t be gone. I couldn’t lose Locke. I couldn’t breathe without Locke.

The thought of a final separation was too much to bear, so I tried to ignore the pain by pulling forth flickers of the past. His brushing sand off my hip at the beach last summer, the way he’d eyed me through his sunglasses in anticipation as his fingertips rested there. The way he’d squeezed my hands when I’d snuck into his barn a couple of weeks later, refusing to let me unbutton my shirt as he whispered “Wait,” between kisses that said “Go.” The way his body arched against mine in such desperation as we moved in tandem just a few nights ago at the Witches’ Ball, only again to whisper “Soon” along my ear.

I brushed Gram’s headstone again, bringing forth the image of her as she eyed Locke from her squeaking front porch rocker for the first time and said, “That boy will lead you down the wrong road.”

We were only twelve then and I had no understanding of what she could possibly mean, so I rolled my eyes. It wasn’t Locke’s fault that his square jaw and angelic features were perfectly proportioned. Or that his piercing violet eyes could burn almost obsidian in a moment of annoyance, and then turn to laugh at you with the sparkling majesty of purple robes. Or that his hair was as thick and rich as the sable collar of that imaginary robe. Or that his face was the one that could stopper the hole in my heart that the loss of my father had created. Or that his face was the only one, beyond those of my own family that I loved.

“Mind me, granddaughter. Pretty is as pretty does.”

I loved my Gram. Her wrinkled face, mapped with both pleasure and heartache, had always staunched the pain before Locke came along. Her gnarled hands spoke words most eyes never comprehended. I worshiped slices of her buttermilk cornbread, slathered with sweet-churned butter. She’d been raised so deep in the South that sushi is still called bait, and she never feared karate-chopping us Massachusetts Yankees with her southern-style wasabi tongue.

As her worried eyes perused him I asked, “You don’t think I’m pretty enough?”

“Pretty beautiful, and pretty apt to stay that way,” she scolded. “You are eternally beautiful. Your hair as silky as falcon’s wings, they’ll carry you on, where his road leaves off.” Echoes of her southern drawl rang in clear contrast to Locke’s upper-crust articulation screaming my name in the distance, his voice filtering through the curtain between worlds as if summoning me to my finale.

I used the tombstone to pull my heavy body up. I dragged myself toward the sound of his voice as if it was a beacon in the blackest moment of the night. I struggled to pull my shimmery self over the brick wall. Thick fumes of gasoline and fizzled wiring pulsated through the atmosphere, tickling the back of my throat. The knock and hiss of Locke’s car scratched against my iridescent skin, hardened bark electrocuting satiny flesh. The cars stood

hood-to-crumpled hood, each burning angry steam out its radiators' nostrils. I expected the tires to paw the ground and tear out against his armored opponent, as if dueling to the death. *My death.*

Tears saturated my lashes, their black sheen dripping from my chin, as papers pirouetting though the air drew my attention to my shredded book bag hanging from a sapling. I watched in horror as my English book opened, the pages fluttered, and my term paper—Bronte vs. Austen: Battle of the English Heroines—, floated through the air as easily as I had during my last dance recital.

Which reminded me, I was out past curfew. My mother would be perturbed. Whenever I came home late, which was always Locke's fault, she would say, "I was afraid you were lying in a ditch somewhere." If she thought I was lying somewhere, she wasn't imagining a grassy knoll, but a reclining bucket seat.

The bright side is I no longer have a curfew. The downside is I think I'm almost invisible, motherless, and—oh yeah—dead! I couldn't believe I wasn't freaked out. I'm in deep denial.

The sharp screech of metal on metal expelled the bald headed driver out of the other car furiously. He then raised his smoke-clogged voice to the heavens and twisted vile curse words together; they gave me head pains and wreaked havoc with my heartbeat. He beat on his chest in conquest and the earth gave a slight tremble. His bloodied hand went to his skull, pushing a piece of torn flesh back, but spiked scales rose in response to his darkening skin. He sluiced out of his leather vest and pants like a snake shedding his skin. His features grew ecstatic as his nose elongated, and his mouth chomped the smoky air exposing two rows of teeth. Talons formed from his fingertips, as his ears slid up the sides of his head, becoming a miter-shaped crest and frill.

I shuddered and backed away. Biker man turned into a lizard. No, he was too huge. He was a crocodile. Rather, a basilisk, king of serpents. I'd read about them in my myths and legends class. They're not living, breathing entities. I looked down at my ethereal self. Oh... My... God, I'm a myth, too.

The basilisk cracked the vertebra in his neck, sliding to the pavement on all fours, snorting a noxious steam that laced the air with the taste of mildewed sludge. The tang was so potent I'd swear he'd been birthed from a biohazard-bog.

Locke's upper lip furled, not the whole thing, just the center—as if his disdain was so completely focused that he couldn't be bothered to let it slip to the corners of his mouth. Words erupted from his contorted mouth, slithering and ebony, and beyond my comprehension.

In response, a nostril blast streamed from the basilisk's snout, knocking Locke on his backside. Locke's outstretched fingertips glowed blue, and then blazed red as a globe of fire exploded from his hands towards the creature. The fireball just missed the crest of the basilisk's head and hit the blacktop, rolling along the tar-smeared asphalt until it tickled the tire treads.

Locke winced, but started again. It reminded me of how he'd determinedly throw a long pass the next chance he had after an interception on the football field. The snarling beast was bearing down on him like a blitzing linebacker sniffing an easy sack, but Locke's focus didn't falter as he spiralled another fireball right at his target. The basilisk gagged, before the red flame sank into his gullet, and 'boom' he imploded into confetti-sized ash.

I offered a silent prayer, thankful that he didn't burst into chunks of filet-of-crocodile. I didn't know if a ghost or apparition, or whatever I was, could hurl, but I didn't want to barf on this darn dress. I was vain enough to admit I didn't want to wear my mom's frilly twenty-five-year-old prom dress with sweet-and-sour vomit stains on it for an eternity.

The basilisk's car exploded, and the blast startled me as the blaze beckoned and mesmerized me. Even Locke screaming my name couldn't call my attention away from the inferno leaping across the hood of Locke's car and over the empty shell of my lifeless body.

Cremation didn't bother me, but I didn't expect to have to witness my flesh quiver and roll, and then disintegrate. The putrid scent brought me to the blacktop, where I prayed that it would be over soon, that the white light would come for me.

Tears rolled down Locke's cheeks. "Ashes to ashes," he choked out, as he crumbled forward in agony. As if answering his call, an errant tissue of flame danced along the chilly breeze and landed on Locke's shoulder. In an instant, it ignited the tar on his collar, and the greedy flame raced up the right side, burning his face. He remained alert long enough to emit one last shriek of my name, before he collapsed onto the pavement.

I crawled over the shattered glass to Locke. I touched his beloved fiery flesh and his unconscious form fizzled through my fingertips. His woody evergreen scent swirled around me as I tried in vain to extinguish the flames.

The squall of sirens startled me. I looked up to see flashing lights and firemen sending showers of water over the vehicles and the paramedics racing toward us. I stood up to greet them, forgetting that I wasn't me anymore and the first man there walked right through my iridescent spirit. The pain was immediate and so intense that I screeched, but it didn't draw any attention except for some birds rustling in the trees overhead. I tried to reach out to the second paramedic who was inserting an IV in Locke's arm and my cold electrified flesh rose gooseflesh on his arm, but no other response.

I dropped to my knees again on the solid yellow lines in the center of the road and cried bitter tears as they loaded Locke into the ambulance. A white van pulled up on the shoulder along a squad car, and the police officer greeted a man as he exited the van, pulling on a wind breaker with CORONER emblazoned on the back.

"Dr. Sliquest, she's over there." The officer pointed toward Locke's demolished smoldering car.

"Her mother is going to be devastated."

"She should have kept her daughter away from their kind."

"Myrtle, you've got to let it go," Dr. Sliquest said sternly. "Who was in the second vehicle?"

"That's the thing, doc, there's not a trace of anything," Myrtle responded, leading the coroner away.

The finality of the removal of my charred remains from the car made me yearn for the serenity that only Gram's sentiments would offer me. I'd always gone to her with my troubles. That hadn't changed with my father's death—or hers. Or even, it seemed, with my own.

I tiptoed around tombstones and skirted the edges of monuments making my way back to Gram's grave, with a certainty that I would find my rest alongside her and my dad for all eternity. As I approached, a woman in a long garnet-colored robe looked up from drawing a white circle around their markers. At her feet was a black cauldron, spewing vapors scented of camphor and rose petals, which she billowed into the air with a sweep of her hands as if she were conducting a symphony.

She motioned me to come to her with a firm nod of the head. When I stepped in front of her, she raised her arms with a sweep of her cape and she wrapped me in a cloak of feathers. The weight made me stagger back a step, but then they seared into the sensitive skin between my shoulder blades and made my ethereal form jolt closer to her again.

Who are you? The words slipped through my wandering mind as I examined the plumage at my back suspiciously.

“I am the Mother. I am here to instruct your ExtraOrdinary journey.” She ran her fingers over the length of my hair.

You can hear my thoughts?

“Only the thoughts you choose to project.”

I’m supposed to be with Locke.

“No, he has always been intended for another, someone ExtraOrdinary.”

I assure you, he thinks I’m extraordinary.

“But you are not one of *us* and thereby unacceptable to the Order.”

I brushed my tears into my hair. **What exactly is he?**

“He is a human mortal who has magical and mystical gifts. You were not born thus, even though it was in your blood, but now you have been reborn.”

I’d ignored the whispers about my childhood sweetheart. The grudging fearfulness he was often shown, his Harry-Houdini appearances out of thin air, his barn cloaked in an air of mystery, and the strange repetitive phrases he used sometimes.

He was some sort of a magician. He never told me who he really was. I mourned the loss of that truth between us along with the passing of my own body, as the ashy bitterness of a new reality clung to my tongue. **What do you mean, ‘in my blood’?**

“All will be revealed. For now, all you need to know is that you have been sacrificed as the ancient rites of the Order demanded.”

Sacrificed? **I don’t want to be sacrificed.**

The Mother eyed the grave marker. “But the cradle has chosen you.”

How can you see me when the paramedics didn’t?

“Let’s just say, you are on a different frequency now and I am able to see that frequency when most others can’t. Even ExtraOrdinaries won’t be able to see you, only those of us with OtherWorldly abilities.”

I can’t die. I’ve barely begun to live. I started to tear up again, **I still have a curfew.**

“Through your sacrifice, you will help save our worlds.”

Suddenly, I recognized the Mother. I’d seen this woman, Ilithyia Wyrd, in town once when I was a little girl, and Gram warned me to stay clear of her and the other Wyrd sisters. Since then I’d run into her from time to time with Locke and she always seemed displeased that I was with him. Locke and I were headed to a party at her house when the accident happened. I’d had a bad feeling about it since I sensed Ilithyia didn’t like me. I should have listened to the gooseflesh whispering in my ear when he begged me to go. I should have listened to my mom insisting that she didn’t think it was a good idea. I should have heeded Gram’s final warning etched in stone.

My flight response kicked up and the plumage at my back twitched in anticipation. I thought through the conversation knowing that Ilithyia was speaking in riddles I’d have to decipher. **What exactly am I supposed to save our worlds from?**

“From our own vanity,” Ilithyia said solemnly, turning away.

My nails scored the velvet sleeve of her gown. **Wait a cotton-picking minute, what exactly am I?**

“At the stroke of midnight, you will become The Seer.” Ilithyia’s voice slithered over the cemetery fence. “An ethereal body able to travel the nine worlds.”

Why would I need nine worlds? I can’t even keep the continents straight in this one? I stuck my finger in the brick wall, trying to find a crack. I jumped up to catch the ledge to pull myself over again, but the wings messed with my balance and I landed in a heap and kicked the wall for good measure, stubbing my toe.

I sighed, which caused a sputtering of my wings before a misguided take-off. My wings took me to the height of the wall and just as I cleared it I looked down and hissed. I hate

heights. My wings collapsed like a mosquito dropped by a four-thousand watt black light bug zapper. I nose dived head first. I need flight school.

Ilithyia leaned over me, and helped me onto my bare feet. “There is youthful immortality in the nine worlds.”

Immortality like this is about as useful as sunscreen on a submarine. It was rotten from the edge of my ebony wings, through the magic plasma I could feel pulsing through my quills, to the new pair of lungs I’d received the moment Ilithyia wrapped me in the plumage.

I bent over, certain I was going to hurl. **How come I feel like death sucking a sponge?**

“Your East Coast vernacular is ruined when you’re upset, your speech reverts to southern-fried-chicken,” Ilithyia finished, as if she didn’t care for my complaints.

Ilithyia slipped into the trees behind the marble orchard, and I traipsed along behind her, mumbling complaints until I came to a halt at the edge of the woods. No one I ever knew stepped into this clearing or ventured a hike through the ancient moss covered oaks beyond.

“You’re the first of your kind in generations.” She nodded me across. “You will be the keeper of secrets and the recorder of events.”

I’m good at divulging secrets, but I hate paperwork.

Ilithyia turned a raised eyebrow, much the way my own mother would; okay, so maybe I wasn’t completely motherless after all.

I used to be at the top of the social ladder at Salem High, I called out, refusing to go farther.

“Your adolescent pecking-order is irrelevant now.” Ilithyia reappeared, right in front of me, brushing twigs from my wings.

I want my money back, a refund for reincarnation as ‘The Seer’, or at the very least, a white-light intervention. I whined as she drew me into the clearing. As soon as my bare feet touched the packed earth, a tingle started on the bottoms of my soles and fizzled up my legs and across my torso, stretching the length of my arms and up the back of my neck until it singed my scalp.

I shook my head and my hair danced around my head like the Bride of Frankenstein during a shock therapy session. **Is this freakish frequency I’m on going to keep me invisible?**

She eyed my hair, pointedly, and then my dress.

Okay, maybe invisibility was for the best. The pink chiffon was ripped, singed, and dive-bombed-dirty. Hey, flying isn’t as easy as angels make it look.

How long has this hocus-pocus Order been in Salem?

“Long before the witch trials happened. The Order hides in plain sight, where witches congregate.”

That’s what I was now, hidden in plain sight. **Why didn’t Locke tell me?**

“It is forbidden, unless he planned to bring you into the Order,” Ilithyia sighed. “His mother informed me he was going to ascertain your feelings about such things.”

The feathers at the back of my neck twitched, stroking at my mind, but the force field pressing around me was making it hard to think. **What’s a seer supposed to see?**

“Not just see, but record.” Ilithyia placed a beautiful red-beaded chain over my head; a little black book, its soft leather cover worn and pliable, dangled from the end of the beads. “Seers’ bear witness to epic events. Carry the book with you always and record what you see fit, but remember you are helpless to intercede with Ordinary or ExtraOrdinary proceedings.”

We’ll just see about that! Maybe I was on the highway to Hades, but my wings made me think about the footpath to paradise. I may have ended up on the wrong road, but I certainly wasn’t going to give up on Locke without a fight.

WHILE AT BLESSINGSTON

May 2009

After my death Locke was angry and consumed with finding whoever summoned the basilisk that caused the car accident. He started digging around in dark corners of Salem. And because I was from the Ordinary world, I had no idea there were backrooms where black magic and voodoo were the only magic practiced. The Sister's gave him a stern warning to stay away from such practitioners or more harm would come to him. But Locke only gave up his search when he wandered behind the counter of Hellsbane's Curiosity Shop and a hefty fist to the gut encouraged him to never return. Then Locke's pursuit of information turned to scouring the internet, where he spent hours of quiet contemplation digging through the vast black holes of cyber space.

Once the Order sent Keleigh to Salem, Locke became moody and withdrawn and he spent most of his free time under the hood of his hot rod. Locke and Keleigh fought like cats and dogs when no one was around, and at the end of the school year, during finals there was an ultimate blow up between them. So after graduation his parents sent him to school in Ireland, months ahead of schedule.

I flew across the Atlantic in the cargo area of the full flight because I was unable to gain access to the passenger cabin. In the course of the 9 hour trip to Ireland, I prayed that there was someone at Blessingston that could reach Locke and help him diminish his anger. And I hoped to find an explanation about the purpose the Sister's insisted I would serve. How could I help anyone? When only a few people could see or hear me.

After arriving in Dublin, Locke was picked up by a tall, muscular blonde who opened the back door of the limo and introduced himself as Tristan.

Locke stalled outside the car. "He's the tragic knight from the fairy tale?"

"That would be for whom my mother named me," Tristan responded with a brogue so thick you'd need a gas powered tool to slice through it. For some reason, Tristan's voice sent a chill up my spine as if Jason from Friday the 13th was revving his chain saw high over his head and chasing me in hot pursuit.

Once Locke and I were situated in the car, it felt as if Tristan's golden eyes were watching me through the rearview mirror. I was invisible to almost everyone, so I stuck out my tongue. Tristan frowned. I brought my thumb to my nose and wiggled the rest of my fingers. Tristan narrowed his eyes and made a slicing motion across his throat with his own nimble fingers. OMG, he could see me. I projected my thoughts at him. **What, exactly, are you looking at?**

Tristan's gravelly drawl responded, "This is not your place."

Locke was peering through the tinted windows at the darkening landscape that shrouded the winding road when Tristan spoke Locke flinched. Locke, still unaware that I was with him and that I was the cause of Tristan's words, looked up at Tristan and shrugged before saying, "With a face like this the only place I belong is in a freak show."

Tristan's words addressed Locke, but his eyes addressed me when he said, "You have much to learn about your place."

The car sped north along the coastline as twilight surrendered to darkness. When the moon took to the heavens its half-full sphere showered illumination over the rolling countryside and with my bird-like clarity I could see twinkling lights in the distance and then a vast expanse of blackness beyond. Finally, I was able to make out the outline of a building,

the jagged edges of what appeared to be ruins mirrored the rugged cliffs, the stone pinnacles of the edifice glowed with an eerie tinge of green and I could see sprouting peaks of architecture through patches of misty fog. We were headed in the direction of the imposing ruined castle that sat on the very edge of a steep ridge; it seemed as if one great shove would send it slipping into the ocean.

The road turned sharply and we drove through a pair of oaks as wide as buses. I looked behind us at the trees as large as California redwoods and the road that we had been on evaporated in the exhaust. I turned forward in time to see the headlights reveal a narrow bridge and a two story gatehouse built of rubble, but it was in such pristine condition one would think the cornerstones were cut yesterday, not hundreds of years ago. The drawbridge unfurled on the clanging of metal gears and met the road with a resounding clap. Two men clad in dark colored robes that matched Tristan's, their faces concealed in the folds of roughly woven material, motioned the car through the gatehouse.

The car lumbered through the stone courtyard and came to an abrupt halt. Locke got out of the car before Tristan could open the door for him. I was able to escape the car when Locke gave an impressive stretch and yawn hanging onto the open car door. I took flight and landed near a pair of doors crowned with a perfect Tudor arch and heavy iron filigree decorations and fittings.

Tristan startled Locke out of his stretch when he spoke. "It must have been difficult to leave the lady Keleigh behind."

"Why would that be hard?" Locke grunted, but wouldn't meet Tristan's eye. "She's nothing all that special."

"Oh, well, on that point we will agree to disagree, though I am sorry to hear about your friend *dying* in the accident."

Locke cocked his chin angrily and then pointed toward it. "This was not an accident."

"No, then what was it?" Tristan asked.

Locke kicked at the loose stones scattered over the pavers with his boots. "Nothing," he said storming away toward the massive oak doors.

The green lichen on the stones over the entrance seemed to be moving like millions of caterpillars over the walls. Blessingston was way creepier than the Sister's property, maybe it was cold and foreboding because it was hundreds of years older. Or maybe it was because all the buildings were surrounded by a wall thicker than the hull of the plane we had taken here and I wondered what was inside this compound that needed this kind of security. I shivered as I tried to count the number of structures. Sometimes the buildings appeared to be newly built and match the gatehouse to perfection, but then the stones seemed to shimmy in place and all you saw were the outlines of ancient ruins. This place had one heck of a cloaking spell on it and I had to wonder what sort of magic could conceal something so large. One of the buildings across from where I was standing was the size of a cathedral; actually, it looked very much like Notre Dame in Paris. My flesh ran to gooseflesh that tickled the nape of my neck as I considered just how powerful the magic or magician was that concealed this place.

Before I left Salem the Sister's made all sorts of appeals to get me to stay, finally warning me that Blessingston was a dark and devious place and I felt the reality of that settle into the quills of my feathers.

Locke walked up a few stairs and stepped into a large hall with heavy oak paneling encasing the perimeter, the carved woodwork rose to a height over his six-foot tall frame. Tristan followed behind, carrying Locke's bags and nodded in the direction of a massive dining room with an oak table long enough to seat 20 people to a side. "This way Cavanagh."

Tristan passed through the dining hall and into another chamber that was empty except for a large carved chair sitting in the center of the room, elevated on a dais. The parquet floors were covered with a beautiful carpet and the wall of windows was intricately pieced

stained glass that reflected the firelight illuminating the room. Tristan didn't take to the stairs instead he started down a long gallery that felt like it was the length of a football field. This narrow corridor was about 15 feet wide and had a wall of French doors on one side and across from it, from polished floorboards to the crown molding, hung hundreds of portraits. Locke's boots clunked along the wooden parquet floor and as he moved along the candles down the length of the wall came to life like runway lights, one after another. When we reached the end of the gallery Locke turned back and with the slightest movement of his chin the candles extinguished, the only remnant of life was the smoke filtering through the moonlight.

Tristan, Locke and invisible me were squished into a windowless room the size of a Starbucks bathroom. Tristan stacked Locke's duffle bags against one wall and said, "Wait here, I will see if the Elders will see you tonight or in the morn." Tristan looked back over his shoulder at me and frowned, before disappearing through a pair of black, iron-clad doors decorated with Celtic symbols.

Locke paced back and forth in the confined space. The room was so tiny that he kept walking through the edge of my ethereal being. The pain was immediate and fierce. I don't remember a time when I didn't want Locke to touch me, but now it was too painful, both physically and mentally. Locke pulled up short, rubbing his arms along his biceps before blowing his own warm breath into his fisted hands.

The door to the room beyond opened and an old man, hunched and crinkled beyond the age of anyone I'd ever seen, smiled at Locke. Then he grinned and giggled like a little boy. My feathers twitched at my shoulder blades when the old man's chalky eyes fell on me. He angled his head in my direction and acknowledged me with the slightest movement of his jaw. I started to project something to him, but a sharp pain vibrated from one of my temples to the other and I fell forward on all fours in agony.

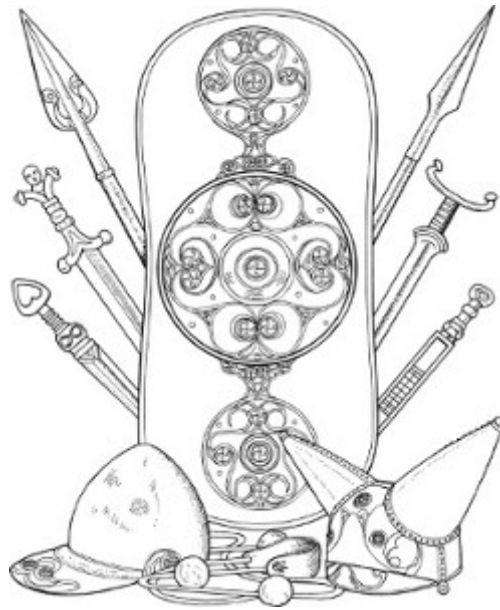
"Your lessons will begin on the morrow. For tonight, we will have a wee bit of a chat," the old man chortled. He motioned Locke through the thick doors as I managed to regain by bare feet. I started to follow Locke, but the old man slid back into the room and with a flick of his wrist he summarily slammed the massive double doors in my face.

That was my introduction to Blessingston and so the warm welcome I dreamed of never happened. And in the months to follow, I learned there was no other way to gain access to Colloquy chamber, even through the chimney stack. I'd been desperate enough to try that once when I wanted to hear what was being said on the other side of those doors.

During the next year and a half that scenario played out over and over again. Locke would be summoned to the Elders for some infraction and I'd be trapped in the little chamber, like a caged bird, but the bars of my cage was my invisibility and my call for help fell like birdsong on sleeping ears before dawn. I would stand waiting and wondering what sort of punishment the Elders had dreamed up for Locke's shenanigans this time.

Locke learned many magical and mysterious things while at Blessingston, but most importantly, both Locke and I grew up. Someday I'll share more of what my life was like there with you, but the first months were so painfully lonely for me, it's hard for me to talk about. But I followed the younger children and eavesdropped in their classrooms to learn about the ExtraOrdinary world that I'd somehow found myself trapped in, taking a crash course in everything magical and mythical and these are some of the things I learned.

The Seer



THE SEVEN PRECEPT OF AMERGIN

Ordinary mankind was given stone tablets carved by the will of God with His commandments written on them. Our ExtraOrdinary laws are recorded on stone tablets with symbols to guard their hidden and secretive meanings. Many times throughout history when Ordinary man has experienced calamities or setbacks they have they tried to exterminate the ExtraOrdinary beings from their midst, you only have to remember events like the inquisition and witch hunts that swept Europe and American, to understand that the peace between those of us with ExtraOrdinary power and Ordinary humans is fragile.

In spite of what Ordinary mankind has done to us, and our belief that it is best if we keep our talents hidden from the Ordinary world, we believe it is the sacred responsibility of ExtraOrdinary beings to protect this planet and even Ordinary mankind from the ShiningOnes, because it seems that they are indeed returning for our common homeland.

Therefore we will share with you the laws that we live by, the Seven Precepts of Amergin, the greatest of all Druids.

First: Labor diligently to acquire knowledge, for it is power.

Second: When in authority, decide fairly among all men, for thy authority may one day cease.

Third: Bear with fortitude the ills of life, remembering that no mortal sorrow is eternal.

Fourth: Love and respect virtue for it brings peace and prosperity.

Fifth: Abhor vice for it makes men wicked and slothful.

Sixth: Obey those in authority, in all just things so that virtue may be exalted.

Seventh: Cultivate the social values, so what is good for one will be good for many and you shall be loved by all men.



COMPENDIUM

ABRED In the Celtic theory of concentric rings of existence Annwn is the inner circle and represents the OtherWorld, ABRED is the center ring and represents our outer life; the world around us, our births, deaths, and struggles play out here through change, creation, and progression. Ceugant is the outer circle representing the purity or heaven. This philosophy is often represented by the triple spiral.



AIR: Magical element represented by wand, thurible, censers, besom and bells.

ALLPOWER: The all powerful life force to the Celts, it is imperishable and without end.

ALTAR: A high location or a structure built on which offerings such as sacrifices are made for religious purposes. Symbolic and practical items for the function of worship, spell casting and ritual. The altar is usually covered with a pristine cloth, adorned with a pentacle. The left side of the altar is feminine and adorned with representations of the goddess and the right side is masculine, with phallic symbols such as athame and wand. The center is the working area and holds a cauldron.

AMERGIN: Amergin was the most powerful druid until the modern age. All modern druids live by his precepts.

AMULET: A ritual object used as a talisman. It is usually a piece of jewelry or token filled with warding power, usually worn to protect against some force or entity or to conceal something. Keleigh wears a quartz necklace charged with enough magical energy to block *Neart o laigstigh*, or inner light. Keleigh is a Devas, an ExtraOrdinary being of light and without her amulet her skin would radiate particles of energy, actually making her beam.

Until Keleigh can learn to control this energy from within she would be well served to wear the necklace, because the ShiningOnes are always fascinated by any ExtraOrdinary being who stands out from the rest.

ANCESTORS: To the Celts the spirits of their ancestors always lived close to their families. These spirits usually seem neutral but if their graves are not properly taken care of, the dead may grow angry and disrupt the earthly world.

ANDRASTE: The Celtic goddess of war, victory, ravens, and battles. Her name means invincible or she who has not fallen. She is venerated in woodland groves and her symbol is the hare. Andraste pledged her protection to the Iceni tribe and was a goddess of divination, probably called upon to predict the outcome of battle.



ANGUINUM: Also known as a druid's egg or serpent's egg. In the summer baby snakes entwine themselves into a ball that is held together by their spittle and secretions from their own bodies, when this hardens the congealed, grayish-white glob is polished until it resembles marble. Some say the baby snakes and other things move about in the grayish white matter—OtherWorldly things, with flickers of life and stories to tell. In alchemy, the philosopher's egg symbolizes the seed of spiritual life and depicts places where great transformations take place.



ANNWN: The ancient Celtic name for the OtherWorld. In the philosophy of the rings of existence, annwn is the center ring.

ANKOU: Known as the death omen. Ankou is the King of the Dead and is a tall haggard looking figure with long white hair or a skeleton with a revolving head that sees all. He collects the souls of the dead and puts them into his spectral cart that two ghostly figures pull on foot.



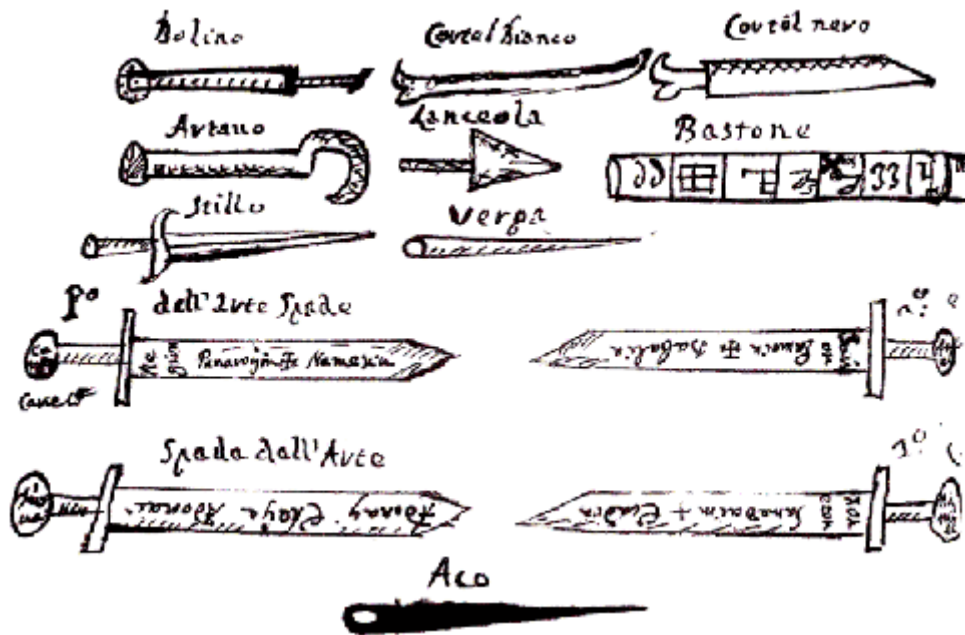
APPLE: Symbolic and most magical fruits to the Celts. The apple can indicate harmony and immortality, love and abundance, and appears in many Celtic myths and legends.

AQUARIA: An aquarium planted with natural water plants and filled with local pond life from the area.

ASH: Symbolic tree for the Celts believed to protect against the dark arts and to ward off fairies. It is believed to be able to cure Ordinary and OtherWorldly diseases. It is a large graceful tree with compound leaves.

ASHES: Symbolic material used in many folk traditions. Ashes from Lughnasa fires are used to bless people.

ATHAME: Black handled, double edged dagger used for ceremonial purposes and stands for the masculine element of fire. An Athame is considered one of the four weapons of significance in Celtic myth. The Athame is used in ritual to channel and direct psychic energy and to cast or draw a circle for ritual magic. If the handle is made from black ash it is said to protect against the dark arts.



ATHENAEUM: A library and museum. The Salem Athenaeum is one of the oldest privately owned libraries in the world. The Order might not write its beliefs and practices down but they do collect the writings and records of others.

BADB: One of the Celtic war furies, she and her sisters Macha and Morrigan, form a fearful triad of war goddesses. Badb's name means scald crow and she is often depicted as a black hooded crow screaming over the battlefield or sometimes she is depicted as a black-robed woman standing along the front line of the skirmish. She usually functions as a prophet of doom and when she is seen she forewarns of a not peaceful time but of evils yet to come.



BALOR THE EVIL EYE: A ShiningOne, who is said to be the King of the monstrous Fomorians. The Fomorians lived in Ireland before the first invaders swept the shores of the emerald isle. Balor lost one of his eyes at the second battle of Mag Tuired, when Lugh threw a spear through it, the other eye became so harmful that it could split boulders and caused any looking into it to fall to ground withering in burning pain.



BANSHEE: OtherWorldly fairy who wails for the death of someone of noble birth, she has been sentenced to cry for all eternity because she betrayed her lover when he went into battle. Often the Banshee comes as a beguiling young woman, but beware she sometimes appears as a hag. Her red hair marks her of fairy blood, and she wears green clothing and bright red shoes.



BARD: Professional poet who orally narrates the history of the Order. Bards sing songs recalling the brave deeds of tribal warriors, as well as genealogies and family histories. This oral history is committed to memory and transmitted orally by bards or their apprentices, the fili. Bards are officials at court, chroniclers and satirists whose chief job is to praise the Order and damn those who cross it with their words of power. Bards employ the power of transformation: in poetry they use metaphor and in magic they use shape-shifting.

BARGUEST: The name means barrow ghost because these OtherWorldly beasts are reputed to haunt ancient stone graves. They are also known as hell hounds, these fire-eyed black dogs can be as large as horses. When they cross into our world it is for nefarious purposes and they usually set all the other dogs in the vicinity into infernal howling. A bite from a barguest can refuse to heal if not properly treated.



BARROW: Celtic sacred burial site, these graves are stone lined and sometimes contain more than one burial, and they are usually haunted by fairies.

BASILISK: Known as the king of serpents because of his crown and frill. A basilisk walks on all fours, snorting a noxious steam that laces the air with the taste of mildewed sludge. The tang so potent one would swear he'd been birthed from a biohazard-bog.



BELENUS: One of the most widely worshiped Celtic deities. The great fire festival of Beltane on May 1st is to commemorate him, and cattle are walked through pyres to cleanse and protect them before they are put out to pasture for the summer. His name means bright, brilliant, or shining one. Belenus or Bel is not a sun god; there is no evidence of sun worship of any kind among the Celts, where the day began at sunset not sunrise.



BELISAMA: Goddess of lakes, rivers, fire, crafts and light, her name means “summer bright” and she is known to be the consort of Belenus. Belisama’s waters shelter good fortune and abundance.



BELTANE: May 1st festival which commences at sundown the night before. Beltane marked the beginning of summer and is celebrated with the bonfires of spring, probably a burning off of the brush that accumulated on fields so they could be planted. In ancient times cattle were driven between these fires to ensure their safety in the coming year. On Beltane the hearth fires were extinguished and relit from the celebration bonfires. There are many traditions such as dancing around the maypole, collecting Beltane dew to increase attractiveness, and the crowning of the May Queen and King.

BLESSINGSTON: A sacred prehistoric site in Ireland, on the eastern edge of the island near Newgrange, Ireland. The Order holds a fortress along the coastline where they have a school dedicated to educating druids, vates, and bards. It is also the seat of power for the Colloquy of Elders. This is what it looks like to Ordinary eyes, but it has a powerful ward on it that ExtraOrdinaries can see past.



BOGGART: Helpful household spirit, who cleans and works in exchange for sweet treats. They tend to be stout hairy men wearing ragged brown clothes and incredibly hard to be rid of.



BOUDICCA: The great Celtic queen of the Iceni, who after her husband fell in battle against the invading Romans assumed his role. It was said that she had a harsh voice, red hair to her knees, a huge frame and a terrifying countenance.

CAIRN: Mythological site, the structure composed of stones to mark a burial or landmark. Some cairns have interior chambers used for rituals.



CALABAR BEANS: *Physostigma venenosum* is the seed of a poisonous plant which is native to tropical Africa. The plant is a large climbing perennial. The calabar bean acts like a nerve gas, disrupting communication between nerves and muscles. The administration of the beans as a truth serum is known as the trial of ordeals, it establishes the person who consumes the beans as truthful if they live or a liar if they die.



FIG. 800.
Fève de Calabar.
a. Graine.

CALENDAR: The Celts did not divide the seasons at the solstices, which are the shortest and longest days of the year, or equinoxes, when day and night are equal, but at the mid-points of the solar cycle. The Celts saw darkness preceding light, so the day began at sunset. Winter began on Samhain, November 1st and spring on Imbolc which is February 1st.



CANTRIPS: Spells written in ancient symbols that only the most learned may read.



CERNUNNOS: Known as the stag lord or the great horned one, he is half-man half-stag who is usually portrayed seated and crossed-legged and surrounded by other animals, especially the snake. There are no snakes in Ireland because Cernunnos took them from Ireland when he was sequestered and uses them at will. He carries the snake in one hand representing knowledge and in the other the torque, the symbol of Celtic nobility. When he speaks he says things like, "I am the fair among the flowers."



The representations of Cernunnos, ancient above, modern below.



CEUGANT: The outermost ring in the rings of existence. It is the realm of pure principal where the white light of the hammer strikes of midsummer, fully illuminating the soul.

CHARM: A spell or incantation to attract good fortune.

CLOAKING: The act of concealing something or someone with a spell, sometimes accomplished with a magical cloak or coat one might be wrapped in.

CLOUD BURSTING: A cloud burst is an extreme amount of precipitation that comes on out of nowhere, usually as a result of a spell.

CLOVER: The four-leafed clover is said to be a lucky talisman to break through any glamour of the fairies. And the oil of four-leafed clover is the main ingredient in fairy ointment, that when applied to humans would give them invisibility.

CLURICAUNE: Solitary fairy who prefers to lounge around and dress fashionably in a red suit. His shoes have silver buckles and he is not industrious like his brother the leprechaun and a cluricaune is prone to drinking wine in large quantities.

COLLOQUY OF ELDERS: Three sages or ancient men who represent the three different houses of the Order. Along with the Sisters three they rule over the Order, their seat of power

is Blessington in Ireland. Legend has it these three men each made a trip to the OtherWorld where they learned many things that human ears have never heard, but if ask any of them about it they will deny it.

COMB: Symbolic object associated with the goddess-queen Medb. The comb represents the feminine force.

CONORAN: An obscure Irish goddess who was the mother of three magical daughters who ensnared three great warriors they lusted after with a magical web.



CORROSION: A physical blemish that forms on an ExtraOrdinary person's skin when they draw too much energy from a LeyLine, this is caused by a buildup of toxins in the body. Corrosion often results if an ExtraOrdinary pulls huge amounts of energy off the LeyLine overheating would occur and the blemishes a result. The LeyLine is a power source and corrosion is similar to how a battery corrodes.

COW: Symbolic animal representing both the feminine and masculine powers. In ancient Ireland the herd was the best way to calculate wealth and it was also believed that all cows were descendents of OtherWorldly cows that rose from the western oceans at the beginning of time.

CURSE: Words spoken by formula or spell designed to ensure responsible and generous leaders. Our words carry great power and alter the physical world. Curses are usually the work of bards.

CYTHRAWL: Which means chaos.

DAGDA: Father figure and known as the good god because he was good at everything and protector of the tribe, he has immense power and is armed with a magic club that can kill nine men with a single blow. Dagda has a magical cauldron he calls Undry and it is said to be bottomless and from which no man leaves unsatisfied. His home is at Newgrange and he was the high King of the Tuatha De Danann. Dagda is known as father of all and lord of great knowledge.

DANU: Celtic goddess of the land's fertility. Her name is derived from the Old Celtic dan, meaning knowledge and she is known as the mother goddess.



DEER: Symbolic animal. The Celts saw the fleet footed deer as the wild equivalent of their domestic herds. They symbolize maternal love and abundance.

DEVAS: A Celtic ExtraOrdinary being of light that some believe are demi-gods.

DIORAMA: A miniature or full-sized three-dimensional model, usually enclosed in a glass showcase. Dioramas are used in museums to depict historical events, cityscapes or natural scenes. They can also refer to a theatre device that moves, for example The Witches Museum in Salem uses dioramas to depict the Salem witch trials. <http://salemwitchmuseum.com>

DIS PATER: Celtic god of the underworld and would be the modern equivalent to our devil. Although in ancient myths to be the guardian of the underground meant you were quite wealthy as that was where gems and resources are buried.



DRU: Meaning truth. Druids respect the truths and beliefs of others, and have compassion for all beings.

DRUIDS: Celtic priest and societal role. Druid is derived from the word meaning wise or oak. The house of druids' is comprised of poets, magicians, lawyers, educators and

philosophers. Their positions were hereditary and their ceremonies were conducted in open air temples and sacred groves called nemetons. There are two other houses in the Order: the vates and the bards.



EARTH: Magical element represented by pentacle, mortar and pestle and salt.

EPONA: Fertility goddess and her name means horse. She is the protector of horses, donkeys, and mules. She is one of the few goddesses the Romans adopted from the Celts because of her power and prestige among the horse-riding warrior elite.



ERGOT: Medicinal plant poisoning symptoms include spasms, painful seizures, itching, nausea and hallucinations for those chosen for ritual sacrifice

EXCOMMUNICATION: A ceremony performed by the Order in which an ExtraOrdinary is named delinquent for some crime against the Order or if an ExtraOrdinary rejects their place in the Order. The words spoken over them at this ceremony are, “The sword is naked against her, a woman deprived of privilege and exposed to warfare.” Once an ExtraOrdinary is expelled from the Order, they are never readmitted.

EXTRAORDINARY: Mortal person born with magical skills and powers, these traits are inherited and encoded into their DNA. Passed from generation to generation these extra abilities are developed and encouraged from the moment of birth. An ExtraOrdinary could possess any of the following and some possess many of them.

1. Apportation-materialization, disappearance, or teleportation of an object
2. Aura reading-perception of the energy surrounding a person, place or thing
3. Astral projection- an out of body experience where the essence or Ba of a person leaves the physical body
4. Clairvoyance-perception outside Ordinary human senses
5. Death-warning-premonition of a living person before their death
6. Divination-using a ritual to gain insight
7. Energy healing-healing by pulling energy from another ExtraOrdinary person or from a LeyLine
8. Finder-ability to locate missing or hidden objects through divination
9. Precognition/premonition-ability to see future events before they happen
10. Psychokinesis or Telekinesis-manipulation of time, energy, space or matter; the ability to move objects using only the power of the mind
11. Remote viewing-gathering information from a distance using a scrying device
12. Retrocognition-Perception of past events
13. Scrying-use of mirror, water or reflective material to view events at a distance or in the future
14. Second Sight-the ability to communicate with spirits, ethereal beings or OtherWorldly beings
15. Telepathy, extrasensory perception and sixth sense the ability to transfer your thoughts or emotions to another person, or your ability to read someone else's
16. Transvection-the ability to fly

FAIRY: Celtic folkloric figure, usually thought of as elemental spirits of nature, but in fact they are the dishonored versions of the Danaan who served the ancient ShiningOnes. Fairies are immortal beings, usually quite attractive, with silky hair and glowing complexions and even though they are small in stature mortals have a hard time looking away from them; their allure has made many of them known as immoral beings as well. Along with the sidhe, they should be respected and sometimes feared.

FAIRY ARROWS: Prehistoric flinthead, powerful enough to penetrate a protection spell. The arrowhead on the left of the image below most closely resembles a fairy arrow, it leaves

an x-shaped entrance wound and is very difficult to dig out of flesh. Celtic legend says that fairy assassins dip these arrowheads in dragon venom which is poisonous to humans. A single arrowhead properly placed in the body is usually fatal. Locke was more than just lucky to survive five of these arrowheads to the chest.



FAIRY MOUND: Also known as a fairy hill or fairy fort. Throughout Celtic lands there are barrows, small natural hills and drumlins that seem to spring up from the landscape as monuments. Many believe that the fairy folk or the sidhe inhabit these mounds and fairies are known to be seen dancing around them on holidays. Have you ever heard the phrase ‘dancing on your grave’, it comes from this Celtic belief.

FINDER: ExtraOrdinary with the ability to find hidden or lost items.

FIRE: Magical element represented by athame and candles.

FIREBALL: Locke uses a fireball to kill the basilisk in the opening scene. A fireball is Locke’s weapon of choice, it’s an easy spell since he has mastered the element of fire, he taps the LeyLine for a power source, and when it surges in his hands he says a few words that ignite the energy, and then he simply throws the globe of fire as if it were a football.



FORMICA AQUILONIA: Scottish wood ant that only resides in the fairy woods, Annaghgarriff Wood, Peatlands Park in Armagh, Ireland.

FOX: Symbolic animal often associated with a clever human.

GEIS: A sacred vow which can be an obligation or prohibition. It is a magical promise or pledge. If someone under a geis defies the taboo, the violator will suffer dishonor or even death. The doom of many a hero has come because of a broken a geis, but sometimes

multiple geasa are put on a hero and he has no other choice than to break one geis in order not to violate another.

GENII CUCULLATI: Type of fairy called the hooded ones because all you can see of their faces are their blue-black eyes and jagged teeth. They are flesh eaters whose black tongues emit the scent of rotting meat. They speak in a language older than Gaelic and are usually depicted as a triad of either males or females. Do not let their small stature fool you they are extremely dangerous to deal with.



GRIMOIRE: A 'grammar' cookbook, book of magic spells and rituals, hand copied from generation to generation, a forbidden text of forbidden practices. The key to using the grimoire is to put down as little as possible but enough to be able to recall or remember the spell, incantation or ritual.

GUARDIANS: The dozen druids sentenced to protect the Order from OtherWorldly summoning; they have been sentenced to this fate for dabbling in the dark arts.

GWYNFFRYDD: Place of illumination, where the soul spirit passes after death; a kind of purgatory the spirit resides in until it is reborn.

HEX: Usually a malicious spell placed on someone to bring them harm or ill fortune.

IGNIS SACER: An herb known as holy water used by midwives to produce strong uterine contractions

ILLUMINATION BETWEEN THE HANDS: Form of divination a Finder uses, they chew on raw meat while thinking about what they're looking for, then they speak incantations into their hands, sleeping with them against their cheeks and they dream the answer to their query.

IMBOLC: One of the four great Celtic holidays. It marks the beginning of spring on February 1 and winters end. Also known as Candlemas. The word imbolc is connected with a word meaning to wash referring to ritual purification. Weather magic is common on this day and may be the basis for our American Groundhog Day.

INTARABUS: Celtic god depicted as a beardless man with long hair draped with a wolf skin. His name means between two rivers.



INVOKING ILLUSIONS: To bring on an illusion of what is coming or what has come to pass by use of ritual.

IRISH CULDEE MONKS: Monks believed to be the builders of Mystery Hill site about a thousand years ago after they escaped persecution in Ireland, and started traveling with the Vikings. These Culdee monks broke away from the Order, no one knows why or why they were never excommunicated.

LAKE: Celtic symbolic site. The Celts like most prehistoric people respected the life giving qualities of water. There are myths that lakes are gateways to the OtherWorld, so many made offerings to lakes. Such tales helped protect lake deposits from thieves which are ripe with archeological finds.

LARIARAN: Celtic goddess of harvest time. Her feast day is the last Sunday in July, which is Lughnasa. The first day for eating newly harvested potatoes in Ireland is at the end of July. In Cork there is a standing stone in the shape of a heart dedicated to her.



LEYLINE: The alignment of historical and geographical sites of archeological interest, such as megaliths and ancient monuments, in a straight line. The existence of LeyLines was mentioned in 1921 by Alfred Watkins. These alignments were organized for overland trekking in monolithic times by line of sight navigation, so that many footpaths connect one hilltop to another. These lines of site which are ancestors could sense were actually

underground power sources and those with extrasensory abilities can draw energies from them. LeyLines are quite simply sources of immense power for those who know how to draw from them.

LIASHEE: The sister fairy of the Banshee, but the Liashee is sentenced to keem for love of mortal men.

LIBRARY OF ARCANE: Houses books on magic, science and nature, history, myths and legends, art books, reference materials and maps. Even though the druids don't record their own histories in bound volumes, they do collect the knowledge of other ancient wise people. These volumes range in a myriad of magical subjects from the Persian Magi, to the arcane wisdom of African shamans, to the mysticism of the ancient Egyptians.

LIMINALITY: Exchange between the worlds when passing through an OtherWorldly portal.

LOCATION SPELL: Incantation that acts like GPS tracking system that is highly reliable.

LOVERS KNOT: Symbolic representation of the universe drawn in a continuous line, the lovers knot has two mirrored halves that connect to form a heart.



LUGUS or LUGH: God of creation and learning. His name means to swear an oath. He was a great Celtic hero. Lugh also means many skilled and because of his brightly illuminated face he is often considered a solar divinity. Lugh was the grandson of Balor the Evil Eye and is credited with the defeat of Balor and the Formorians, whose king Bres he pardoned in exchange for agricultural knowledge. He is known as a great leader of men and is known to be fearless even against insurmountable odds.



LUGHNASA: The beginning of the harvest season on August 1st is marked by one of the four Celtic holidays Lughnasa. The first fruits of the crop are gathered, it is when contracts are established and when trial marriages commence. The goat a symbol of Lughnasa may reflect the creatures associations with licentious behavior. It is said that this is the only time of year that the Order unites for a great council meeting.

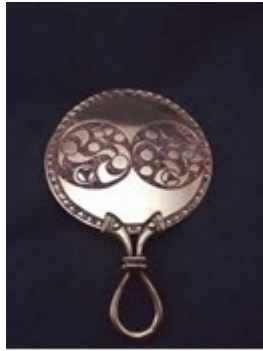
LUXOVIUS: God of a city's water. He is the deity of light and curative waters two elements that are linked in Celtic mythology. He is often depicted as a water wheel.



MEDDLERS: An ExtraOrdinary who has the ability to wreak havoc between the Ordinary world and the OtherWorld. Meddlers use pendulums paradox which is the time space continuum, to allow their consciences to travel between the nine worlds. Meddlers are powerful beings and usually feared and avoided.

MEME'S GENES: The mental genes one passes onto ones' children, or inherits from ones' parents. These particular genes are supernatural traits passed from generation to generation and how hereditary magic is passed along.

MIRROR: The Celtic hand mirror and comb are powerful symbols to the Celts, and many standing stones are engraved with these two images, indicating a female of considerable status. The mirror and comb are possibly equivalent to a man's sword and shield. For ExtraOrdinary females, who often use their mirrors for divination, the mirror is a sacred and powerful item that is handed down from mother to daughter. Keleigh inherits this mirror from her mother and she has extraordinary abilities with it and other mirrors as well.



MORAL METEMPPSYCHOSIS: Celtic belief in the transmigration of the soul based on moral worth. The idea isn't based on a belief in reincarnation because people aren't necessarily transformed back into humans. You know when people say someone's a real rat, with this theory they might be reborn in the next life as just that.

MORRIGAN: One of the most important Celtic goddesses because she is a member of the Tuatha De Danann. Morrigan appears sometimes as a white cow with red ears. She was a bard, able to change her outward appearance at will. There is much debate about the meaning of her name, some say it means phantom queen, some say death queen, some say her name means night mare.



MURMURS: The dozen rogue female Druids who serve the Colloquy of Elders, investigating rumors of black magic or dark arts.

NEART O LAIGSTIGH: Gaelic words meaning the light from within a person, some people are blessed with this gift and others say it marks those who have the blood of the Shining Ones running through their veins.

NEMETON: Forest clearing for Celtic worship, known as Druid's Hill

NINE WORLDS: The worlds of dreams, imagination, myth, magic, hope, love, music, art, and science. ExtraOrdinary people have the power to change and transform their realities by using these worlds singularly and in combination.

OEGUS: The divine son and the god of youth, an eternally youthful spirit found at Newgrange. He is usually portrayed as a lover and a trickster.



OGPS: OtherWorldly Galaxy Positioning System is basically a magical GPS system, except a ShiningOne's brain works as both the satellite and the tracking system. Trust me, NASA wishes they had OGPS technology.

ORDINARY: Mortal born with no extrasensory powers. Some mortals do have latent genes that sometimes surface during their life, but if these powers are not used and developed they lie dormant. Some mortals use these skills, for example a psychic, but using these gifts for profit is frowned upon by the Order. An Ordinary can only become ExtraOrdinary and join the Order if they can demonstrate great extrasensory aptitude, and after a period of rigorous training and great hardship they *might* be offered membership.

OTHERWORLD: This is the realm that runs parallel to our own. It is the home of the ShiningOnes, spirits and divinities. This world is not heaven or hell but exists nearby. It is a shadowy place that is luminal and very difficult to cross into for us, but occasionally the ShiningOnes or their minions cross into our world when the veil between realms thins. OtherWorldly time is different than earthly time a century here may be but an hour there.

PENDULUMS PARADOX: The time space continuum where the three dimensions of space and time exist in a continuum and some people are able to let their consciousnesses travel between these dimensions.

QUATRE YEUX: French term, meaning four-eyes, describing the power of clairvoyance

REINCARNATION: Celtic belief in the transmigration of the soul.

ROSMERTA: Continental Celtic goddess. Her name means the great provider and she is depicted holding a cornucopia. She can also be the goddess of spring representing healing.



SAIGHEAD SITHE: Hosts of the unforgiving dead. They came from the west, an angry airborne mob on a wild hunt.

SAMHAIN: One of the four great Celtic holidays. Samhain is November 1st and begins at sunset on the day before (Halloween) it is the festival commemorating the beginning of winter and a feast of both plenty and fear, although food is stored for the dark days of winter, there is no way to know if the cold will outlast the stored supplies. Because the veil between the realms is the thinnest on this night, folklore says that the Shining Ones cross over to blight vegetation with their breath and everything become fallow. It is the equivalent of New Year's Eve celebration in many regards, fires are lit on hillsides and ceremonies and rituals occur. This is the only night of the year that someone can be initiated or inducted into the Order.

SANCTUM SANCTORUM: Druids place of utmost privacy and purity and is essential to the success of a druids work. Sanctum sanctorum contains his library of arcane knowledge, his temple, a magical museum, and a worktable.

SANTISIMA MUERTA: A type of bottled pillar candle that burns in order to force a lover to return to you at any cost.

SCATHACH: Celtic warrior goddess and mistress of a school for young warriors, her name means shadowy one and she has the ability to grant wishes if you figure out how to ask her for them.



SERPENT'S EGG: See Anguinum. The egg symbolizes new life. This cosmic egg in mythology represents the egg that rises from the primeval waters and hatches the universe. Every druid, vate and bard has their own egg which they use for divination. These modern serpent's eggs usually have a representation of a snake on them; some in antiquity were actually formed from baby snakes molded together.

SHIELDING: To form a barrier around a person, place, or thing by use of a spell or incantation, usually used to protect someone from another's magic.

SHININGONES: The ancient Celtic gods and goddesses who are sequestered in the OtherWorld with their Danann brethren because of their interference in human affairs. Some ShiningOnes have the power to cross into our realm at certain times of the year when the veil between worlds thins. And some have the power to cross at any time at will, but they always have to return.

SIGNETS: Designs equivalent to modern day logos.

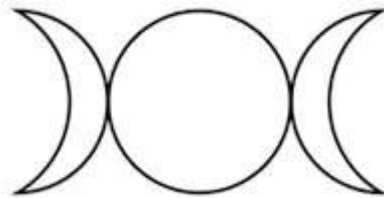
SISTERS THREE: The Mother, the Maiden, and the Crone make up one half of the ruling body of the Order, their seat of power is located in Salem, Massachusetts. The Sister's three represent the triple goddess. The Sister's male counterpart are the Colloquy of Elders whose seat of power is in Blessingston.



Arianna, the Crone of the Sisters Three, her name meaning the Silver one, a very Holy One, pledge

Ilithyia, the Mother of the Sisters Three, her name meaning the ready comer. In Greek mythology she is the goddess of midwifery and childbirth.

Bridgiana, the Maiden of the Sisters Three, her name meaning exalted one. In Irish mythology she is the goddess of fire, poetry and wisdom, the daughter of Dagda who was reborn in the 5th century as St. Bridget.



The symbol of the triple goddess.

SLUAGHS: A fairy hosts of the unforgiven ExtraOrdinaries, they travel in packs and only come forth at night. They are the ethereal embodiment of souls that have not been forgiven for their earthly transgressions. They are sometimes referred to as assassin fairies, they shoot fairy arrows that if properly placed kill instantaneously but they have to be summoned into our realm from the OtherWorld, and their intention is always murder and mayhem.

SMOKE WEAVING: Smoke represents our intentions rising toward the divine AllPower and the perfumed scent of the smoke has the power to alter the conscious intentions of those who come in contact with it.

SPELL: Words spoken to harnesses power from one entity and transfers it another. Spells are not easily undone because they usually require someone more powerful than the original caster to change their outcome.

STRAY SOD: There is a Celtic warning, “Don’t step on a stray sod.” To Ordinary eyes a stray sod appears to be a small piece of misplaced grass, but these fly sized creatures have the ability to lead travelers off their path and they can also cause someone to forget where they’re going or even what they were thinking. If a few sods band together they can wreak havoc on an entire village. Other magical creatures often capture stray sods and use them to trick people into forgetting whatever it is they want them to forget. Clancy is particularly fond of using a stray sod to confuse.



SUCELLUS: Celtic god of love and time. Sucellus was powerful and widely worshiped throughout the Celtic world. He reigned over agriculture and alcoholic drinks, and is often depicted with a mallet and libation saucer indicative of his power to protect and provide. He is also shown with a cask of wine symbolizing his serving at OtherWorldly feasts.



TALKING HEADS: Also known as shrunken heads by indigenous populations, warriors of old used to cut the heads off their enemies and carry them around as trophies, much the way Native Americans collected scalps.

TEMPLE OR ALTAR: Houses a druids serpent’s egg which is used for divination, his athame (knife) and chalice used for rituals and depictions of the male and female gods: Abundia the goddess of abundance and a bronze statue of Cernunnos the god of fertility. Candles, a censer for burning incense, bowls of salt, a crystal bowl for water, and gong are all items used to represent the earth and elements. Any magical amulets and talismans would also be kept here for protection. If one possessed, let’s say, a magical mirror, it too would find protection when placed on the altar.

TUATHA DE DANANN: A race of supernatural beings, who conquered the Formorians and who inhabited Ireland after their victory. When the Milesians invaded and overthrew the Danann, the Danann were sequestered in the OtherWorld with the ShiningOnes. The Danann were always quite mischievous and meddling in men's affairs, today they are fairy, brownies, elves etc.

TO TAKE THE VEIL/TO TAKE THE CLOAK: When an ExtraOrdinary is ordained into the Sisterhood or Priesthood, their human body is changed through powerful magic and while they are still somewhat human they are not immortal. These special ExtraOrdinaries will live hundreds of years and have many more powers than even a blessed ExtraOrdinary.

TORQUE: Celtic choker or necklace marking distinction among Celtic men. The torque identifies any that wear it as a warrior. Cernunnos gives Keleigh one of his, offering it to her as a token of his protection.



THAUMANTURGY: Wonder working, low magic in the service of others; everyday hocus-pocus.

THEURGY: High magic, meaning the god's work, the promotion of divine knowledge from a deity directly to an ExtraOrdinary through chanting and trance like states.

TOLMEN STONE: Celtic rock formation. When you pass through the aperture and complete the cleansing ritual, you must promise to complete your journey, even when it's solemn and strenuous.



TRIAL OF ORDEALS: Ancient truth telling ritual in which the beans of the Calabar plant are consumed.

TRIAD: Because of the mystical significance of the number three most Celtic concepts come in triple form.

VATES: Celtic priest or priestess who interprets omens. The word vate means prophet and vates comprise the second house of the Order.

VERBEIA: One of the many Celtic river goddesses. Her name means winding river or she of the cattle. She often appears on Beltane morning, but beware when she does because the river might flood and you could be swept away.



WARD: Spell placed on location for protection or concealment.

WATER: Magical element represented by a chalice, a crystal ball or mirror.

WELL OF CRYSTALS: Sacred location where tremendous earth energies are stored.

WITCHES BOTTLE: This single handed salt glazed jug is also known as a Bellarmine jar, it is fashioned after the grimacing face of Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine. It was a common storage container for beer and wine that originated in the Rhineland of Germany. Many of these jars have been recovered by archeologists across Europe and they usually contain strange items, like pieces of leather cut into the shape of a heart and then pierced with straight pins. Pieces of hair, nail clippings, urine, nicotine and traces of sulfur have been found in others. But none discovered by scientists has anything as strange as what Keleigh finds in the one she unearths. To learn more check out: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witch_bottle



WORK TABLE: A druids' worktable is the center of his sacred space and it houses items for creating compounds that work in conjunction with spells and incantations. It's not much different than a modern chemistry lab. An athanors is a small furnace used for melting and combining metals and other substances similar to a Bunsen burner. An alembic is used for distilling the essence of liquids used for the same thing as an evaporating dish and lab burner. Pieces of quartz, a mortar and pestle, a whetstone and knife, bottles and cloth sacks for herbs and spices are scattered around the surface. Locke doesn't keep any freshly ground unicorn horn around but he does have eye of newt. These folklore items rest alongside beakers, Erlenmeyer flasks and safety glasses at the table. Some of the more traditional items on a druids' worktable are crystal balls for divination, which should only be used sparingly, hour candles, and a polished skull which serves to startle visitors and makes an excellent paper weight. A large black cauldron rests in the middle of the table and is handy for stirring all sorts of spells or for storing paint thinner. Don't tell Locke this is what Keleigh used it for while he was away or he might blow a gasket, nah, he'll just make sure Humphrey scours it. What druid doesn't have a little minion to do all the dirty work?



NAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS

Ciara Borraill

Ciara: little black one

Borraill: swaggering, boastful, haughty and proud

Darby Eilis Flaherty (nee McIntyre) Keleigh's mother

Darby: free of envy

Eilis: Consecrated to the Gods

Keleigh Grian Flaherty (Key, because every lock needs a key)

Keleigh: beautiful, slender

Grian: sun, sun goddess

Flaherty: of noble deeds; chieftain like exploits

Lincoln Xavier Campbell (aka Lynx)

Lincoln: from settlement by pool

Xavier: intelligent

Campbell: wry, crooked, distorted mouth

Lynx: Bobcat from California, these cats are usually solitary animals with extremely good hearing, and sharp teeth, which they sink deeply into their prey.

Lockhardt Keven Cavanaugh (Locke, because every key needs a lock)

Lockhardt : Tuetonic meaning strong beguiler

Kevin: beautiful offspring

Cavanaugh: mild, benevolent, merciful, a friend or companion

Dr. Rory Keleigh Cavanagh (nee McIntyre) Locke's mother

Rory: red ruler

Keleigh: Beautiful one

Dr. Alsandair Driscoll Cavanagh, Locke's father

Alsandair: avenger

Driscoll: interpreter

Madison Jeanette Marx

Madison: mighty in battle

Jeanette: God is gracious

Marx: dedicated to Mars, the god of war

Michael Flaherty, Keleigh's father

Michael: Who is 'like' God

THE SEER: My real name is never mentioned in the book, because to speak the name of the dead is to bring them pain and suffering, especially if they are still in this world. A person destined to be a Seer is sacrificed in a fire ceremony and is reborn to witness and record epic events. I was a modern young woman, and I don't especially care for my new role. One of the Elders told me I had yet to realize its potential, but that's because it's difficult to accept one's own death and then stand by and watch the life of the one you love the most.



Please 'Like' me on Facebook at: <http://facebook.com/#!/TheSeers7DeadlyFairyTales> I can use all the friends I can get.

Wolfgang Ignatius Zacaris (aka Wiz)

Wolfgang: traveling wolf

Ignatius: ardent burning

Zacaris: to think about or meditate on
Wiz is not only an acronym for his given name, but also short for computer wizard. A techie or electrodork. You can see why he prefers Wiz, Wolfgang, seriously? Madi doesn't know his real name yet, so keep that quiet.

THE STOLEN BRIDE

October 2010

Many of the professors at Blessingston had taken the robe and were more than just ExtraOrdinary, some I speculated had OtherWorldly abilities. These people would acknowledge me with a nod of the head or a few whispered words, but for the most part I was kept separate just by being ignored. I now knew what it was like to sit in the cafeteria alone, not that I ate, but I knew what it's like to be an outcast for the first time in my existence.

Other than an ongoing annoyance from Tristan, who'd find me in the Cathedral and pile books in front of me as if he was the professor tutoring my ExtraOrdinary education, I was left alone. The Cathedral was a library that housed every book ever written and making the Library of Congress look like a meager attempt to accumulate knowledge.

Tristan always had something that he wanted to teach me. He was rude and arrogant, but his beautiful voice was the only one directed at me for weeks at a time, so I listened. But every conversation ended with the same curt words of instruction. "This is not your place."

Tonight Locke had again been summoned to the Colloquy Chamber, and Tristan insisted that I follow along. I couldn't hear what was being said, but I could hear Locke shouting before he stormed through the double doors and right through me. The pain swept me off my feet. Tristan came out of the chamber behind Locke and helped me up, even as my eyes tracked Locke racing away down the length of the gallery.

Where is Locke going in such a huff?

"Lockhardt is being sent home."

When? Why? What happened?

"Tonight. I don't know why or what happened. He is going to say goodbye to the children. You will go back to your place."

My place has always been with Locke.

Tristan picked up a wedge of my hair. It startled me because other than helping me to my feet just now he'd never touched me before. I felt no pain as he wound the strand of hair about his index finger pulling me so close to him that my tattered gown brushed against his robe. "No Lass, it isn't, but you will learn that soon enough."

Before I had the chance to grab onto him for an explanation he disappeared on a cloud of shimmery smoke that was a color somewhere between his golden eyes and sparkling skin. A sweet musky scent settled on my tongue that was dangling dangerously close to the edge of my open-mouthed expression. And I would swear I could hear his Gaelic laughter in the rafters.

I chased after Locke and found him in one of the younger children's classrooms, he was already seated in a chair and the kids were jockeying for a position at his feet.

Steward, a little boy that I'd found as mischievous as Master Lockhardt ever dreamed of being spoke, "Will you no' tell us one more tale afore you go?"

Locke smiled down at Steward's small eager face. "It is the last tale I know but it's one of wooing."

Steward wiped the back of his scrunched up nose with the sleeve of his shirt. "There must be just a bit of blood in it or it ain't a proper tale."

Locke reached out and quieted the boy with a pat on the head. "There was a young druid, Kern of Querin, who returned home to his own people from his studies here at Blessingston. He was the high druid Goll Morna's best student." Locke's voice took on a musical quality

when he was telling tales as the expression at Blessingston goes. “When there was no work to be done, or spells to be cast, Kern passed his days hunting wild geese in the loch just beyond the walls of his home.”

“Did he live in a castle?” Bridget, a curly, red-headed girl took her thumb from her mouth to ask.

Locke smiled down at the little girl’s interruption. “Yes, the loch lay in the shadow of the castle. While Kern was readying his bow for the hunt he heard a thrashing through the rushes. He turned, bow drawn, expecting to see an animal, but instead he found four rough looking men carrying what appeared to be a corpse on a board. The men were unknown to Kern who was familiar with all the faces in the vicinity. When Kern asked the men to identify themselves they refused to answer him and insisted they were on a mission from the Shining Ones themselves and would not be stopped.

“Kern told the men that they were on his families land and that they would obey him, as the ruffians continued to argue with Kern they jostled their burden and a ladies arm fell from the wrappings and dangled off the side. A graceful bare arm, with skin like the whitest of swans brushed against the green clover. Kern trained his bow on one of the men’s head, and released his arrow, tearing the cap from his bare scalp and carrying it through the woodland and planting itself into the nearest acorn tree. When that didn’t frighten the ruffians enough to lay down their burden and send them away as Kern instructed, he sent his next arrow into one of the men’s thigh. A bellow of pain sent all the wild geese to the sky as if they were pursuing warmer skies, and the rough men dropped the board with the body on it and scurried away.”

“But Master Lockhardt, what was on the board.” Bridget asked.

Steward elbowed Bridget in the side before speaking in a thick Irish brogue. “A corpse, ya ninny. Didn’ ya hear Lockhardt say it was a dead lady on the board?”

Bridget crossed her arms and wrinkled up her nose in Steward’s direction. “I’ll have you know Steward, I am no ninny, and it weren’t no corpse on the board but a princess under a fairy enchantment. Isn’t that so Master Lockhardt?”

Locke winked at the children sitting side by side. “When Kern approached the corpse to see what sort of foul deed the men were up too, he found not a decaying body, but a beautiful maiden with strawberry hair wrapped from head to toe in a golden veil. As Kern leaned over her to look at her more closely she sighed. Kern picked up the maidens hand and placed it over her heart but she was so deeply asleep that it didn’t awaken her.” A wry smile took Locke’s face. “Then Kern woke the maiden.”

“But, Master Lockhardt,” Bridget interrupted again. “How did master Kern of Querin wake her?”

Steward ran the cuff of his sleeve across his nose again. “He poked her with his bow.”

All the other boys sitting on the floor broke into a riotous laughter and the little girls eyes grew wide and round.

“There will be no more of that Steward.” Locke tried not to smile, but it erupted at the corners of his mouth. “Kern woke the maiden with a gentle kiss, but when she came awake she never spoke a word. To ensure her safety Kern took her home to his castle and she remained with his family for a year because she refused to tell them who she was. Kern sang sweet songs to her and wrote her ballads but she never uttered a reply, other than to smile at his attentions. Kern tried every sort of magic he’d ever learned to get the maiden to speak but she refused. Kern ventured back to the woods where he’d found her, hoping to find some clue to solve the mystery of both the maids appearance and her silence.

“While Kern hid in the woods waiting, he heard whispering voices speaking about the young maiden, the voices sang through the trees mocking Kern for not knowing the secret to unlock the girl’s silence. Kern cast a great spell from the back of his mind and it snatched one

of the mocking birds from the trees and deposited at his feet. The mocking bird, terrified because Kern's spell was powerful enough to capture him in the first place, revealed all to Kern. The mocking bird said that Kern had to make the maiden eat from the veil that she had been wrapped in when Kern first discovered her in the woods and she would speak again.

"Upon hearing this Kern rushed home and found the veil, he laid it over the table and placed pieces of the finest porcelain on the table with all the food he found on the sideboard. He asked the fair maiden to join him for a lavish supper. Once the first piece of food passed her lips her singsong voice startled Kern when she spoke, 'The time has come for me to return to my own people, for I can no longer hide behind the veil.'

"The beautiful maiden's musical voice explained that she had paid the motley crew of men to spirit her away on her wedding day. But somehow, upon waking she found herself under the enchantment of silence, she told Kern how she didn't care to marry the high druid Moll Gorna, and that she had no desire to unite her house with the house of another, even if the match had been struck by the Shining Ones.

"Kern set aside his own feelings for the maiden and told her of his teacher Moll Gorna's great patience and kindness, insisting that Gorna would make her a very fine husband."

"To which the maiden replied, 'But my heart now belongs to another.'

"Kern refused the call of love from her melodious voice, he returned her to her rightful place and she was happily received by her family. Because of Kern's honesty he grew in the favor of her people and even Moll Gorna knew the young people to be in love. Gorna was so honored by the respect that his young student Kern had shown him that he released the young woman from her vow to him."

All the girls in the circle sighed, but Steward huffed, "I don't like that tale, there was no' enough warfare for me."

Locke tousled Steward's hair again. "Sometimes the battle is won with the gentlest of touches."

Bridget pulled her thumb out of her mouth again to speak, "And to the victor goes the spoils."

WORDS OF CAUTION

As Locke checked in at the counter for his journey home I flew around outside the airport terminal. I was happy to spread my wings a final time before they would be cramped inside the confines of a metal bird. Tristan didn't leave when Locke stomped through the sliding glass doors, instead he watched me circle high over head, finally gesturing for me to come to him.

I landed alongside him with a flourish. **I know, I know, this is not my place. I'm sure you're happy to be rid of me.**

"No Lass it is not."

When he didn't move to leave I projected, **Did you wish to give me the kiss-off in person?**

Tristan let his hood fall away and the piercing intensity of his eyes shot through me like sharpened golden knives through the finest delicacies at a Yuletide celebration.

"When I kiss you Lass, it won't be to say goodbye."

I hadn't anticipated that comeback and so I didn't have one of my own ready so I stuck out my tongue.

A slow smile was birthed from the corners of Tristan's lips. "Oh lass, you will definitely want to keep that in that pretty little head of yours." His voice deepened further, so that when he spoke the hair at the nape of my neck bristled. "This is for you, read it on the plane and it is no fairy tale."

I took the neatly folded piece of parchment and I examined the coat of arms on the wax seal. **Is this from the Elders?**

"No lass, those are my words to you, heed them and you will tarry long enough in this realm to do what you were summoned to do."

I picked at the edge of the seal with my fingernail but it refused to budge.

Tristan's large hand closed over mine and a warm rush went through my wings as I looked down at how his hand enfolded mine. "Memorize it and you will know more than those around you."

I wanted to search his eyes for answers but Tristan was gone, even as I felt the warmth of a familiar embrace enfolding me, before that too dissipated.

I was irritated with myself because of my reaction to Tristan. I chastised myself all the way through the terminal that his touch only meant something because it didn't hurt me as when others came in contact with my ethereal self. I waited until I boarded the cargo area and was secured between a crate carrying a barking German Sheppard and a Louis Vuitton luggage the size of a car before I broke open the wax seal and read Tristan's note.

Seer,

Before the dawn of Celtic civilization the ShiningOnes walked the grassy hills of Ireland, shrouding it in magic as thick as the mist. These gods and goddesses' fashioned humankind, but the inferiority of their design perplexed the gods, who thought to improve their creation by interbreeding.

The ShiningOnes took human mates to their sacred groves and bore a new race of ExtraOrdinary humans, humans who would live and die without immortality but were blessed with the godly traits of sacred divination, mystical healing, and great strength. In thanks, these ExtraOrdinary people became druids, vates, and bards who constructed standing circles designed with sacred geography to worship their creators.

As both Ordinary and ExtraOrdinary mankind became more industrious, the ShiningOnes watched as invaders breached the shores of the Emerald Island. The gods aided the inhabitants, but sometimes they aided the invading forces. The ShiningOnes meddled in human affairs, wreaking havoc on humankind as if they were but rooks and pawns. While people still worshiped the gods, the ShiningOnes fell out of favor with many, and the gods felt the lack of worship keenly and withdrew to loftier places.

Through the dim mists of these ancient times the ShiningOnes continued to take the best and brightest among humankind as if to remind them of their godly prowess, until man tired of the ShiningOnes interference and banded together to overthrow them. It took seven tribes of invaders to defeat the ShiningOnes but when humankind finally did, they banished all the gods to the OtherWorld to be worshiped from afar. Until such time as the ShiningOnes can accumulate all of man's knowledge, they will remain sequestered there.

Your young friends now hold most of man's knowledge in the palm of their hands every time they send a text message.

And the ShiningOnes are coming for it!

Tristan

If you want to know what happens next read *All's Fair in Vanity's War, The Seer's 7 Deadly Fairy Tales, Book I*. Happy Reading.

[Available at Smashwords](#)

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