

The clouds parted, like opening eyelids, to reveal the moon. A beam of light screamed towards the earth and found the small log cabin, bathing it in its ephemeral silver light. Surrounded on all sides by miles of forest, the cabin's current inhabitant was all alone, except for the illuminating gaze of the platinum Goddess, who watched from above.

Pale blue eyes tiredly sought the wall clock once again: it had only been fifteen minutes since she had last checked. The muggy summer air was like a thick suffocating blanket, coating everything with moisture. Passing her hand across her forehead she wiped away the thin sheen of sweat. She sighed loudly when it was just as quickly veiled with moisture again.

"Why did I ever agree to wait for them here," she said aloud, just glad to make a little noise in the oppressive silence.

There was no radio, no TV, and even if she had had either, there weren't any signals here anyway. 'At least there is a generator, so I do have light and running water.' she thought and then giggled: there wasn't a light on in the house. While she sat in front of the front window, staring out into the forest, there was no other light but for the otherworldly shine of the moon.

Shifting this way and that she groaned.

"Right, I need to do something." she said.

Still, she just continued to stare out into the forest. Tree branches reached out and withdrew again, as a cool zephyr started to flow between the trees. Each movement sent shadows skittering to and fro, like frightened insects running from beneath a rock. She grinned as she watched this for a while. Then lightning bugs began to move in waves through the trees, flickering on and off. She leaned forward against the window and watched the forest seemingly come to life, as if it were some hidden fairy garden that only blooms in moonlight.

Before she knew what she was doing she was out of the chair. When she turned the door handle, the door creaked loudly but to her the sound came from a million miles away; her mind was consumed with the act of stepping outside: to go and dance in this midnight paradise. The little girl inside her awakened as she stepped outside; whirling around she pictured a white gown swirling around her with each step in her mind. The trees were filled with twinkling lights, as if covered with clouds of fireflies. A small band played on an ivory white stage, surrounded by dancing couples. She giggled. The sound seemed disjointed, like it didn't come from her, higher pitched as it was, like a little girl's.

She opened her eyes even wider: the trees seemed so much larger now, the people too. But they weren't people, not really. She stopped swirling around for a second; her dress settled around her and the scenery faded a little. There was now only a dim glow, set against the darkness of the forest. Shaking her head, she opened her eyes again: the party resumed all around her; the lights shone brightly again.

Overlooking the guests she noticed a pair of dancing cats. The Tom was dressed in a tuxedo and the Cat wore an emerald gown. She giggled, when their tails entwined, forming the shape of a heart. Her child's eyes wandered: she noticed another couple, about her age, dancing. That thought stopped her in her tracks: these were obviously a filly and a colt, dressed in a simple blue dress and a pair of black slacks with white button down shirt respectively. They could only have

been about fourteen years' old, but that wasn't *her* age. She looked down and gasped at finding the ground so very near her. Her hands were so small: they couldn't be hers. She wiggled these stranger's hands and felt them. But these small, four-fingered paws could never be her own hands. Using them to press down her gown, she wriggled the toes of the four-toed paws that also seemed to belong to her now.

She licked her lips, confused and unsure. But her tongue seemed strange to her as well. She stuck it out and licked her lips, which now seemed to have grown and spread forward. Her muzzle came into focus when she squinted and when she made her eyes focus on her near, she must have screamed, because the cats and the pair of young horses looked over at her. Immediately, she felt a warm blush rise on her face and her ears folded forward in embarrassment. She reached for these strange appendages and felt the rounded tips of the tall, furry ears that twitched when she actually touched them.

A hand fell upon her shoulder and a soothing voice asked:

"Are you alright, sweet one?"

She turned around slowly and found herself looking up into the face of a wizened dragon. Deep creases ran across his scaled face. She took a step back, as he smiled.

"Sorry to startle you, young one, but I heard you cry out. Are you alright?"

She tried to say yes but it came out as a surprised stammer. Taking a deep breath she tried once more:

"Y-yes sir." she managed to bring out, not sure that this was the right manner to speak to a dragon.

But the dragon didn't seem to mind, if she had indeed addressed him improperly. He smiled down at her once more and then, before turning away again, he said:

"Alright, why don't you join in the dancing. There's no need to waste that lovely dress."

This all seemed quite natural to her, except for the fact that she truly wasn't some kind of animal, that in some far away, real world, she was alone in a cabin in the woods. She took a few more deep breaths, while she continued to glance around. Even the band consisted of animals, she noticed. A white pony was tooting her flute, while a donkey stroked the base. Beating out smooth rhythms on the drums, was a cheetah that had apparently painted points on his spots, so that he was now covered in stars inside his deep purple tux. A fox, dressed in a rather flashy red tux, was blazing his trumpet, while a Doberman Shepard, wearing an even flashier blue tux, was sliding away on his trombone. The dog grinned, when he slid down in a glissando, outplaying the fox, who then flew into a string of rapid-fire eighth notes, as the two now became fully engaged in a solo-ing competition.

Despite being confused, she smiled and started to clap, when the song came to an end. The two rivals glared at each other in a good-natured way and then bowed in unison. Her eyes twinkled in the light of the moon, as she watched the band prepare for the next set. Her mind was lost in moment, when she felt a quick tap on her back. She turned around, wondering who it could be and came face to face with a rather cute black Lab boy. He must of have been at least two years' her senior but he still smiled at her!

"Would the lady do me the honor of a dance?" he asked rather suavely, or so he thought.

She couldn't help giggling but stopped after a few seconds. She grinned, and then nodded. Taking her paw the dog led her out onto the middle of the clearing, as the next song started. It was a slow

dancing tune and he took the lead. Dancing on feet that weren't her own, she followed his movements step for step, swooning in his arms and grinning like, like... well, a child. She realized she was falling hard for this dashing dog. She closed her eyes and just allowed the moment to take her in completely. Then all faded to black.

Her eyes snapped open to a very different scene. She was looking out of the cabin's window. The sun had already peaked over the tree-laden horizon. She looked herself over. She'd changed back into the person she'd always been: lanky, dark haired, with deep blue eyes, and most definitely not canine. She sighed softly, remembering the dream that had seemed so real while it lasted. She sadly wondered why it had had to end so soon. She started to get up, and then she felt something under her hand. She picked it up. It was a hand-scrawled note on a small piece of parchment. It looked like it had browned with age. It simply read:

'I hope we can meet again soon, my lady.'

It was signed "Reginald." Her eyes widened and the parchment fell to the floor.

THE END