

## Mood Dweller

By Cassandra Weeks

There once was a fellow who went by the name of Quacey. He was the type of chap everyone talked about in whispers but never said a bad word about. He was said to be seen wandering the night with a wooden walking stick taller than most men. He spoke with a thick brogue, though no one claims to know where from. One man, who spends most of his days at that local pub whose name I can't recall, claimed Quacey said he came from Elvira. Another man, who ran the local market, said he had overheard that Quacey was from Fianna. A woman cut in saying her best friend heard he was from Cassivellaunus. One thing the entire town seemed to neglect to recall was what Quacey looked like. Sometimes I wish I would've known sooner, but that was the magic of it I guess.

I have lived in Avon for almost a year now. I've grown to love it even though it is small. What I think keeps people coming to Avon is the vibrant green grasses that run for miles before suddenly hitting the rocky cliff edges or morphing into soft white sand, and expanses of bottomless deep blue ocean that travels as far as the eye can see until the sky and water melt together. That isn't what brought me here though. This town has an air to it, one even nonbelievers get drawn into; the air of legends, myth and magic. It drew me in like a moth to a flame. I've always had a love for myths and fairy tales and legends. The people, who live here, even for a short time, know and gladly share every tale this town has. The legend I've become most interested in is the story of the Moon Dweller.

Legend has it that there is a man who wanders different towns and never stays in one place for long. He can be seen only when the moon can be. He stares up at it each night, watching it as it crosses the sky. Some people say that he guides it or it will crash to the Earth. Others say he lived in the moon but fell off and is looking for a way back. Legend also has it that he has a Scottish accent; no one has ever spoken to him, though. He is said to be dressed in an all-white suit that shines as bright as the full moon, have jet black hair and be as old as Father Time himself. Some people say they have seen him wink and disappear as the moon leaves the sky. Some say that he is most visible on a full moon and fades with changing cycle.

This unbelievable tale begins on a beautiful clear night with a full moon shining down on the Earth; lighting my path as I walk to the edge between life and death. Since I have been coming to the spot beneath the gigantic willow tree, I have never seen a soul; at least not until that night. When I finally stood, I noticed something that hadn't been there before; a man staring at the moon. He was standing a ways away with his back to me. I stared in awe for the first few moments before taking in his appearance. He had what appeared to be jet black hair and a bleach white eighteenth or nineteenth century looking baggy shirt. He seemed right from the legend, except he wore a kilt as black as night with boots to match and a large stick taller than he was.

I let out a sigh of disappointment, knowing it wasn't the Moon Dweller; just a fellow unable to sleep. He still stood with his back to me, not wanting to disturb his thought, I made move to leave. I must have stepped on a twig because that moment he turned around. I was struck in awe for the second time that night. The beauty of the stranger was incomparable, even as far away as I was. He had a strong jaw line with high cheek bones, and his eyes were shadowed by his brow and hair slightly falling across them. His lips were set into a slight smile turning up at one of the corners. He began walking toward me with the smile growing on his face as though I were a longtime friend he's been searching for. As he got closer, he grew in height. When he stopped a few feet from me he seemed to tower over me. I knew him from somewhere. He looks so familiar.

"Hey, you look familiar. Do I know you?" I couldn't hold back my suspicions.

His smile seemed to fall at my question, but he didn't answer. What I could see of his face told me he was no longer with me, but thousands of miles away somewhere. Just as soon as he was gone, his body violently jerked making me gasp in fear. When I looked back at him, his face was filled with enough pain to fill five lifetimes. Still he didn't answer.

"Do I know you," I repeated.

"I live here. You've probably seen me around." His brogue was thick but perfectly understandable still. I'm pretty sure it's a Scottish accent. I've visited there a few times in my travels.

"I don't think I've ever seen you in town," I stated.

"I have to go," he said, looking around anxiously for a way to escape.

I opened my mouth to say something, but he was already gone. I was once again alone under my tree.

*It was unbelievably beautiful. The colors all flowed together; pinks turned into orange, and orange into yellow. Slowly the light and color began to fade. I looked higher in the sky to see a translucent moon sitting patiently waiting to light up the night.*

*"Dysis," called a deep thick voice.*

*I smiled knowing who it was before I turned. He strode closer to me with a huge smile lighting up his face, and his usual emerald green eyes shown with the light of the fading sunset. His tartan and black hair blew back with a sudden gust of wind passing through.*

*"How did I know you'd be here," he said with a chuckle as he pecked my lips.*

*"You know I love sunsets," I giggled as he spun me in a circle.*

*Suddenly I'm watching a different sunset. This one is not the same. I can feel it in the pit of my stomach. I know I have no desire to watch this one. I look up higher in the sky, but the moon can't be seen tonight. Sadly, I know he won't be here to help. Something bad is going to happen; I can feel it.*

*"Dysis, I'm sorry. I won't let you love him. Not when I love you," a deep desperate voice said behind me.*

*"Thantos, Please don't," I hear myself choke out around my tears.*

*"I'm sorry. Forgive me."*

*That's the last thing I hear before I feel a thump against my back and begin falling to the rough rock-filled water below me. I twist in the air as my high pitched scream fills the silence. I see, through my long blowing black hair clouding my sight, a fading figure leaning over the cliffs, watching as I fall. Somehow, I'm able to take in the beauty of the cliffs of Greece I called home.*

I shot up in bed, panting. I have never had dreams as vivid and real as these. This is the third one I've had in the last week. The first one I was Jord, a Viking from Norway, and the second I was Lucian from Germany. Both times a man Called Mabuz killed me. This last one seemed like it was the first, though.

I noticed it was two thirty in the morning, and I had to be in town early later to get good fruits from the market. After a cup of tea, I decided to get some more sleep.

*I stood under a small willow tree I had planted just days ago. I stood looking up at the full moon in the night sky. I could feel his presence behind me as he stood watching. It was a habit of his to just observe everything without getting involved.*

*"Oi, Quacey," I greeted knowingly.*

*"'Ello, Azzarra," he replied in his thick Scottish way, before finally coming around and placing a kiss on my cheek.*

*"I thought you liked the sunset," he asked curiously.*

*"Not any more, I've decided I like the moon better now."*

*Suddenly I see green grass all around and hills in the distance. The grass is broken up by small rock walls throughout the land. The moon is supposed to be out tonight, but with the usual constant rain, it can't be seen. My deep violet Victorian dress is already soaked through making me shake and chilled to the core.*

*I see in the distance two figures coming toward me. I instantly know both of them.*

*“Quacey!” I scream as loud as I can. “Sephtis don’t do this. Don’t kill him.”*

*They are almost to me now and I hear a low malevolent chuckle as Quacey is forced to his knees.*

*“I’m not going to kill him; I’m going to make him watch as I kill you. He will be even more helpless than every other time when he can’t be here.” Sephtis sneers smugly as he points out Quacey all bound and tied.*

*I glance at Quacey, but he refuses to look my way. His face shows an excruciating pained expression. Finally, I catch his eye, but before I can reassure him, he speaks.*

*“I won’t let this happen again. After this we will never see each other again.” His tone is dark and defeated; he has given up.*

*Sephtis grabs me from behind, turning me into him. He roughly grips each side of my face as he presses his lips hard to mine. When he pulls away, his hands slide to my throat.*

*“I’ve always wanted to do that,” he states as he begins starving me of oxygen.*

*I don’t know if he meant choking me or kissing me. At the rate he is squeezing my neck, I’m seeing spots already. I know I’m going to pass out soon, but that won’t stop him. Nothing will until I’m dead again.*

*All of a sudden I can suck in air again. Sephtis has loosened his grip on my neck, though he hasn’t let go/ I look up to see his black eyes staring at me as he chuckles.*

*“I’m not going to kill you this way. That was for my own fun. No, I want him to watch you fall for me.”*

*Just as he finishes speaking I realize he had backed me to the edge of the rocky cliffs and I was dangling over only being held up by his hands on my throat.*

*“Finish this the way we started, shall we,” he says as he throws me into open air.*

*I hear a long deep scream as I fall to my death once again. The roar of the water becomes louder, overpowering the scream until it’s all I hear. My black hair flies in my face and all around as I watch the Irish cliffs climb higher as I fall lower.*

I sit up screaming. As I try to calm down I remember who I am and where I am. I’m Adria and I live in Avon and it’s almost noon. I curse as I race to get to town. As I round the corner of the block I see him.

“Quacey,” I called. His figure stiffened. “I need to talk to you.”

“We have nothing to talk about,” he curly replied as he began walking faster.

“I remember,” I call to him.

He stopped dead in his tracks, before turning toward me. I take in his faded looking clothing and his duller emerald green eyes full of excitement and sadness as he walks up to me. My stomach flutters with butterflies as he leans in.

“Not here,” he whispers looking around. “Tonight under the tree.” His Scottish accent thicker while he whispers gently to me. With that he walked off leaving me feeling as though I had just consumed the best drug ever known.

I waited, sitting under the massive willow that reminded me of the one I’d planted a lifetime ago. Maybe this was why I loved it. High in the night sky is a waning quarter moon. When I looked down he was sitting beside me with his eyes closed before he spoke.

“How much do you remember,” he asked with a strained voice.

“Almost everything,” I state quietly.

“I’m leaving by morning so we have to make this chat short. He’s already here, in town. He goes by Than now. I first ran into you in ancient Greece. You were mesmerizing, dancing and spinning all the time. Your long black hair would fan out around you.”

He had that faraway look again as he recalled, absentmindedly picking up a strand of my hair and playing with it.

“We talked. I was only a traveller passing through, but I stayed too long that time. You found out who I was. I didn’t know you were to marry him. If I could have I would have stopped it, but it was a new moon.

“After you died, I moved again. I never realized he was following me every time. I never stayed long. Then I found you again hundreds of years later in Norway. He did as well. Then again another few hundred in Germany. Again he found us. Then there was Ireland in the Victorian era. That was the worst one.

“He won’t stop until we do. That’s why I’m leaving. I have been here too long. They’re already telling my legend. You know how it truly goes. I fade because I am part of the moon. I do guide it and every so often I live on it for a while mostly during eclipses. If I don’t go the land of legends will discover my real story and I will be stuck with the rest of them.”

Tears streamed silently down my cheeks as he finished. I knew it was for the best but I was still in love with him.

“I have to go now,” he said gently, getting up.

I stood with him. I stood taller to whisper my long kept secret in his ear before I pecked him on the cheek. His face showed pain and happiness all in one as he pressed his lips to mine before he began to walk away.

As I began walking back, a figure stepped out of the shadows ahead. When he spoke my blood turned to ice in my veins.

“Hi Adria. My name is Than.”