



Generations

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MERI BENSON

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Meri Benson

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“Are you sure this is a good idea, Maeve?”

Madaline spun in a slow circle as she tried to place where the voice had come from. Nothing but fog greeted her though, not only obscuring the speaker but where she was. Glancing down at herself, it didn't hide what she was wearing and caused her to wonder where she was. The fabric on her body had been pinned and cinched like a dress, but she was pretty sure it was mostly just two large pieces of fabric that had been folded and draped carefully in a soft blue color. The pins and clasps that kept it on her were gold in color, and ornately worked to look like jewelry so they were adding to the dress.

Her nose scrunched as she tried to remember what this style of dress was. When it was from. The answer eluded her though, she'd never been a big history buff.

She blinked as she rose her eyes from the dress and the fog started to lift around her. Green land rolled out like a lush carpet around her, with mountains in the distance. Along the mountainside, Madaline could make out white structures that were clearly supposed to be a town. She herself stood on a dirt path and as she tried to take a step back she hit the rough stone of a house.

Wincing, she rubbed her elbow where it had scraped against the stone and turned to take in the house. It was one story, made of almost white roughly carved stone. A window had been carved or left in the stone placements not too far from her, though no glass plated it. It didn't even have wooden shutters to be able to close it.

“Can you imagine the power we would control if we had command over sleep and dreams? We would be the gods!”

Madaline's brow's reversed direction, arching in surprise as her attention focused fully on the conversation that drifted out of the open window. Quite as she could, she slipped closer to the window, leaning against the stone beside it so she wouldn't slip or accidentally shift her weight and make a noise.

Like when she had scraped her elbow, the stone felt rough and ready to take another bite out of her. Solid and like she really was wherever this was. Not that it was much in her head anymore as she strained to listen.

“But if we fail, we will be as bugs beneath his shoes, Maeve.” Concern laced through the voice, almost in a pleading tone. To see reason, most likely if Madaline could put her finger on how the woman was feeling.

A soft chuckle followed, almost like this Maeve woman thought the concern was ill-placed. Madaline frowned a little, or like she was almost mocking the other woman.

“Then we do not fail, Leah.” Something clinked just on the other side of the window before a hand appeared in it holding a locket by a leather cord. “He will learn to love his much smaller home and we will grow our power in this town. Our family name will be echoed on the lips of those who have yet to come. Remembered in all of history for what we will do.”

Madaline almost forgot herself as she watched that locket as the sun glinted off it. Her keychain. Except where hers was tarnished, the details of it dark with age and dirt, this one was shiny and brand new. This was when the man had been put in it?

She glanced around again, taking in all of the details around her. Chickens she hadn't noticed before clicked and pecked at the ground in a pen at the end of the dirt path she was on, a small barn of similar stone to the house rested a little further past the chickens and she could hear a horse nicker softly from inside. No technology. Not even glass in the window to keep the elements out.

Just how long had he actually been trapped inside?

“A long time, little witch.”

The voice to her right caused her to jump and she swore softly when she hit the house again. Though before she said anything to him, she glanced back toward the window like the women in the house could hear her, might have wanted to come running.

“They can’t hear you. While you see them as they were, this is still just an echo of the past embedded on the timeline of your family.”

Lifting her elbow, Madaline frowned at the scraped elbow. “If this is just an echo, why does it still hurt?”

A frown slowly formed on his features and he caught her arm. “You shouldn’t be able to touch much here, or get hurt. You might be more tied and powerful than I thought.”

“Then how is it that I didn’t even know I was a witch, or that my entire family descends from them?” Madaline tugged her arm out of Nos’ grip and moved down the dirt path, away from the house and the chickens toward what looked like a wider path with hoof and cart marks. A road maybe.

Nos followed at her side, his head tilted slightly to the side curiously. “That’s what a web we’ll have to unweave together. Somewhere your family stopped practicing, stopped knowing about the locket. How did you end up with it, anyway?”

Her shoulder rose just a little, a quiet shrug. “I found it at an antique store, in the case with other old keychains and necklaces. How did it go from necklace to keychain? Why did I end up finding it? Why am I destined to have you tied to me for an unforeseeable amount of time? How are we even here in this memory?” Her voice rose with each question, throwing her hands up to motion around them with the last one. Chest rising and falling with a panted breath, she flushed when she realized she was practically shouting at him and had come to a stop in the road to do it.

Hands up at her, as if to show he was unarmed, he shook his head. “Calm down, little witch. I don’t have the answer to most of those questions. While in the locket, I was basically asleep the entire time and the owner of it could draw on my powers as if they were their own. I’m assuming the necklace to keychain swap happened recently, we didn’t exactly have a ring of keys to hang it off of here.” His hands waved to indicate the time around them. “But how it fell out of possession of the family, why you have no knowledge of your heritage, isn’t something I know either. But I can help you explore and find those answers.”

Madaline smoothed her hands down her dress as she caught her breath and listened to him. She even caught herself nodding her head a little at his offer to help her find answers. As selfless as he tried to make it seem, she could also see how it was self-serving for him as well. Once she had answers, once they figured things out, she could better understand how to unbind him from her. "You missed one."

"I didn't miss it, I was merely letting you take in the other answers." A smile lifted up along the edges of his lips. "I am the god of dreams, and I thought it might help you to see how I came to be in that locket. Why I came to be inside it."

It made sense, to a point. Trying to help her come to terms with all that's been shoved onto her plate in the last twelve hours. Though now she wondered, would this whole experience drain her energy and she'd wake up tired?

"I'm done for tonight, I need time to chew on all of this." She still hadn't actually seen much about how or why, just the start of it. But she was being truthful, it was a lot to process and having so much more being thrown at her wouldn't help her take in the truth of it. It'd only make her dig her heels in because it was overwhelming.

Nos shifted slightly and bowed low. "I will heed your decision."

Without another word he disappeared from view. One second he was there, the next he was just gone and she was alone on the road. Slowly the world around her began to darken on a rolling fog that eventually pulled her under into a restful black nothing.

About the Author

Meri Benson is a Chicago native that has always been in love with the written word. When not living in other people's worlds, she's creating her own. From urban fantasy worlds that mirror our own to fantasy worlds that transport you to fantastical places, she loves crafting them all. Her favorite distractions from creative endeavors and writing is her cat that enjoy 'helping' by settling himself on her, or whatever project has stolen her attention away from her number one "fan".

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