

ECHOES FROM THE MIND'S GARDEN

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The Flying Crocodile



Chapter 1



Jim grew up as an orphan in a small town in Denmark. Life was a solitary struggle; he was frequently tormented by his classmates, leaving him feeling as though he carried the weight of the world on his shoulders. He often wept until his tears ran dry. One afternoon, his grandmother arrived to pick him up and found him with a bruised eye. It was then she learned the extent of the cruelty Jim endured—how boys would corner him, douse him in cold drinks, and shove his head into toilets just to witness his misery.

Hope arrived in the form of a new student named Lucia. She became Jim's fierce protector, standing up to his bullies and spending her afternoons at his house helping him with homework. Their bond deepened until the day Lucia confessed her love. Jim, however, turned her down, explaining that he loved her like a sister, not a romantic partner.

Heartbroken, Lucia's warmth turned to bitterness. Her grief manifested as violent tantrums and a burning rage. Whenever she crossed paths with Jim at school, she would scream at him, inadvertently drawing the attention of the bullies and making Jim's life even more pathetic than before. At night, she locked herself away, wailing in agony at the thought of Jim ever leaving her.

Shame drove Jim further into isolation. He began to ignore his grandparents, barricading himself in his room to watch television or cry in the corner. His grades plummeted until he was failing every subject. Eventually, his grandparents and the principal intervened. After Jim confessed the extent of the bullying and the pain of losing his parents, the principal reprimanded the entire class.

Despite the intervention, the bullying persisted. Desperate, the principal assigned Lucia to be Jim's tutor. Though she initially resisted out of spite, her lingering care for Jim took over when she realized how dire his situation had become. She silenced the bullies once and for all with terrifying threats. It was then Jim discovered Lucia's secret: her mother was a witch, and Lucia had been studying her mother's ancient spellbooks.

Meanwhile, in a distant village, lived a girl named Eliza. Raised on a farm, Eliza was a studious, nature-loving soul who spent her days reading in the mountains. She was the pride of her town—intelligent, beautiful, and kind. Though she often preferred her books to the rowdy games of tag played by her two younger brothers, she was a devoted sister.

One day, Eliza received a letter inviting her to a friend's engagement party in a distant town. With her parents' blessing, she set off on a journey that would change her life. At the party, amidst the chirping of crickets and the glow of celebration, she met Jim. The connection was instant. They began a long-distance romance, exchanging letters across Denmark and eventually reuniting for long walks in the mountains.

During one such stroll, they watched squirrels darting through the trees and rats scurrying from their burrows.

Eliza: 'How cute these little mice are, like the ones from Cinderella. I wonder why everyone is so frightened of them?'

Jim: 'What do you mean? They're terrifying!'

Eliza: 'Oh, come now—they're just animals. We are animals, too. Imagine how frightened they must be of us; we are giants to them.'

Jim: 'Perhaps, but they are dirty and carry illness.'

Eliza: 'In a land as clean as Denmark? I'm sure these mice take baths from time to time!'

Jim: (Laughing) 'Never mind, I give up. I agree with you.'

Years later, on a rainy June afternoon, Jim—now Eliza’s husband—went for a walk to clear his mind. As he listened to the birds singing in the rain, a woman in a long cloak approached him, her face obscured by magic. It was Lucia, using an enchantment to mask her identity and enhance her beauty. She pleaded for shelter, and the ever-gentlemanly Jim agreed to lead her back to the cottage he shared with Eliza and their children.

Suddenly, a monstrous crocodile named Elmo erupted from a nearby lake. It lunged at Jim, dragging him into the depths and binding him in heavy chains. Lucia shed her disguise and, with the help of the beast, abducted Jim to her lair in the distant mountains.

Lucia imprisoned him in a windowless room. When he refused to eat the food she brought, spitting it back at her in defiance, she sent an evil gnome to torment him. Eventually, broken by the gnome’s cruelty, Jim forced himself to eat.

Lucia: ‘How dare you spit at me! Do you have no desire to live?’

Jim: ‘I refuse to accept anything from you. You abducted me! You can’t force me to care for you.’

Lucia: ‘You were mine long before that woman appeared at that party! She is a disgrace.’

Jim: ‘Eliza is a kind, caring mother. You are the only evil one here.’

Lucia: ‘Mark my words, Jim: you will be mine.’

Jim: ‘I would rather die. You cannot force love where there is none.’

Lucia: ‘I met you first! I stayed by your side first! I will make you pay for choosing her.’

Jim: ‘Go to hell, Lucia. I will never be yours.’

Lucia walked away feeling a strange sense of relief. The ‘needle in her heart’ was gone; she no longer had to be kind. She had him trapped, and that was enough.

Back at home, Eliza was consumed by a grief that felt like an arrow through her chest. Frantic and furious, she placed her children in a care center and moved to Crystal Beach to begin her search. Her only lead

was a persistent crocodile that haunted the hotel where she stayed, snarling at everyone who passed.

The crocodile at the hotel became a menace, claiming several lives and outsmarting the zoo authorities. Eliza was trapped in the hotel with her friends, Jad and Anna. Jad, a skilled bodyguard, and Anna, a brilliant strategist, took turns sneaking to the upper-floor restaurant for supplies while avoiding the beast below.

One day, driven by desperation, Eliza ran out to confront the creature. Instead of fighting, she began the long process of taming it. She learned to hold its powerful jaws and, over time, the crocodile grew loyal. She named him Gummy. Together, they practiced incredible feats, eventually training Gummy to leap from a glass bridge and—impossibly—to fly.

While searching for clues, Eliza discovered a trail of magical powder Jim had managed to leave behind. Following the snow-like path with Gummy by her side, she reached Lucia's mountain hideout. There, they were met by Elmo.

Gummy and Elmo engaged in a brutal battle of scales and tails. The two crocodiles tore at each other until Gummy finally stood victorious over the fallen Elmo. Eliza rushed inside to find Jim, but Lucia blocked their path.

Eliza: 'Return my husband, you foul woman!'

Lucia: 'Never. He was mine first.'

Eliza: 'He never loved you. Let him go.'

Lucia: 'I am a witch! I fear nothing.'

Eliza: 'Then do not beg for mercy when my crocodile attacks.'

Seeing the strength of Eliza's resolve and the loyalty of the flying crocodile, Lucia finally felt the weight of her own wasted years. She realized that love held by force is no love at all.

'Fine,' Lucia whispered. 'Go.'

Jim and Eliza reunited with their children, finally finding the peace they had sought for so long. As for Gummy, his work was done. He took to the sky one last time, flying to a distant land where he could live in harmony, a legend of the clouds.

The Adventure of Amsterdam



Chapter 1

The Great Migration



It all began in an age when the ancient ice began to weep. As the sun's rays grew bolder, the snow retreated from the treetops, leaving the pine needles dripping like melting vanilla ice cream on a hot summer day.

In Denmark, the local bear population grew restless. The rising heat made their ancestral caves unbearable, forcing them to abandon the north in search of a safer haven. Among these travelers was a family known as the "Ice Cubicles," who set their sights on the Netherlands.

Over generations, the family acclimated to their new home. They underwent a strange evolution, learning to walk first on four paws, and then upright on two. The youngest of the lineage was a cub named Amsterdam. Though many mistook her for a male bear due to her strength, those who looked closely noticed her distinct, feminine features—most notably her long, thick eyelashes.

Amsterdam's parents were determined to prepare her for the world. Her father spent hours in the shade of a Great Oak, teaching her the art of boxing. Amsterdam was a natural; she practiced for months, punching every trunk she could find until only a fraction of the forest remained standing.

Chapter 2

The Call of the Wild



Amsterdam was a curious soul. While the other cubs were content splashing in the water and catching seals, she would stare at the horizon with butterflies in her stomach, yearning to see what lay beyond the Netherlands.

As she grew, she began venturing into distant lands on her two paws, roaming through the territories that would one day become Hungary and Austria. To remember her travels, she collected native diamonds and crystals found deep within the earth of those countries. Despite her wanderlust, she remained fascinated by her roots. She would often pester her relatives with questions about their original home in Denmark—the lakes they drank from and the way they hunted in the deep snow.

Driven by this longing, Amsterdam made a pilgrimage back to Denmark. There, she reunited with her distant relatives, Timothy and Agatha. She recognized them instantly by the family birthmark: a small rose etched into their fur. Amsterdam rejoiced in their company, relaxing in a sauna Timothy had built and playing in the fresh snow.

She spent her days making snow angels and attempting to balance on snowy branches, laughing even when the heavy boughs knocked her down. When it was time to leave, Timothy and Agatha gifted her a Danish diamond pendant. Though her heart felt as if it had been pierced by a sword at the goodbye, she bravely promised to return.

Chapter 3

New Friends and Bitter Farewells



On her way back, Amsterdam—the brave polar bear—stopped in Hungary. At that time, it was the most developed territory in the world. She walked upright through the warm streets, astonished to see other animals doing the same. She even befriended a group of snow leopards who taught her the local language.

While heading to a sunbathing garden, she bumped into two tigresses named Ella and Bella. When they met, Ella was busy applying lipstick in a pocket mirror. They became fast friends, and when Amsterdam ran out of money for a hotel, the sisters invited her to their home—a beautiful estate with a private garden and a shimmering lake.

Eventually, the trio traveled to the Austrian Alps. Amsterdam was so mesmerized by the peaks that she refused to leave, but Ella and Bella insisted it was time to go home. In a fit of rage, Amsterdam dropped to all four paws and bolted into the wilderness. The tigresses tried to apologize, but Amsterdam was gone, never to see them again.

Chapter 4

The Voyage and the Beast



Tired of Europe, Mrs. Amsterdam, the polar bear decided to sail for the unknown. She built a sturdy boat and, despite her family's fearful pleas, set sail.

Deep in the ocean, she encountered a nightmare: a monstrous Mosasaurus. It was larger than a whale, covered in crocodile-like scales, and hungry for blood. The beast attacked, but Amsterdam leaned on her childhood training. She boxed the sea monster with thunderous blows and eventually used her survival supplies to drive it off with fire.

Exhausted and injured, she eventually washed ashore near what would become Mumbai, India. She collapsed under a coconut tree, using local herbs to heal her wounds.

Chapter 5

The Queen of the East



Amsterdam spent years exploring the vibrant landscapes of India. She learned the "languages" of the dinosaurs that still roamed the region and befriended a sturdy camel who helped her navigate the Thar Desert. When dehydration threatened her life, she used her strength to dig deep into the burning sands until she struck cool, life-saving water.

Her journey took her to Islamabad, where she found a sacred gem in an ancient temple, and eventually to the snowy peaks of Kashmir. There, her strength and kindness earned her a legendary title: the **Ice Polar Bear Queen**. Though she had to defend herself against aggressive snow leopards, she eventually found peace in Guwahati, where she built a quiet cabin in the woods.

Chapter 6

The Return



After a lifetime of adventure, Mrs. Amsterdam, the polar bear, went back to the Netherlands. She returned as a legend, her bags heavy with gems and her mind full of stories.

She eventually married a Russian brown bear named London. Together, they raised a new generation of cubs, teaching them the history of their ancestors and—most importantly—the secret languages of the dinosaurs. They lived out their days in happiness, a family born of the ice but fueled by the spirit of adventure.

A Shortcut to School



Chapter 1

The Silent Sunday



In a tiny village in Czechia lived seven-year-old Alexandra. Born both blind and deaf, she navigated a world of textures and vibrations. Her parents had enrolled her in a specialized school, clinging to the hope that she might one day find independence and success despite her silence and darkness.

One morning, Alexandra woke up at 8:00 a.m. to an empty house. She felt her way through the wooden cabin, her hands grazing the familiar logs, but her parents were nowhere to be found. Unbeknownst to her, it was Sunday; her parents had rushed to her grandfather's house to care for him during a health crisis. In her confusion, Alexandra assumed she was late for class.

She dressed herself and navigated the shower by touch, finding the soap and the bucket of chilling water. Gripping her cane, she stepped out the door. But without the usual guidance, she lost her way. She stumbled toward the edge of the village and tumbled down a small cliff. Bruised and shaken, but fueled by a quiet courage, she pulled herself up and wandered deeper into the forbidden woods.

Chapter 2

The Mother of the Woods



By the time the police were notified, Alexandra had vanished into the dense forest. While her parents agonized, Alexandra was struggling through thickets of pine, the sharp needles scratching her arms. She reached the top of a hill, accidentally sending rocks tumbling into the fields below, and realized with a surge of panic that she had lost her cane.

Exhausted and bleeding, she felt a massive, warm presence in front of her. It was a bison. Alexandra tried to speak, her voice a series of muffled, unpracticed Czech words: *'Hello? Can you help me? Where is the Rose Bush school?'*

Confused by the intruder, the bison initially struck her with its horns, sending her sprawling. But as the animal watched the girl struggle—noticing her sightless eyes and her fragile, searching hands—its aggression turned to a deep, instinctive sorrow. This bison had recently lost her own calves to poachers; she knew the cruelty of humans, yet she saw no threat in this broken child. She saw a gift.

Chapter 3

An Unlikely Teacher



The bison led Alexandra to a sheltered cave. She brought the girl water cupped in large leaves and provided food to keep her strength up. Alexandra was initially paralyzed by fear, feeling the drop in temperature and the terrifying vastness of the woods. She wept, feeling like a burden to everyone—her parents, her teachers, and now even this wild beast.

But the bison remained. She became a ‘fatherly’ and motherly protector in one. Over the following days, the animal taught Alexandra more than the school ever could. Through touch and scent, the bison showed her how to detect changes in the terrain and how to use a sturdy branch for defense. Alexandra began to grow independent, learning to navigate the riverbanks and the mountain paths by sensing the vibrations of the earth beneath her feet.

Chapter 4

The Tragic Rescue



The search party eventually tracked Alexandra to the deep woods. When her father spotted the massive bison standing over his daughter, his instincts screamed danger. He saw a predator; he didn't see a guardian. He leveled his hunting rifle.

The bison, sensing the threat of the man, felt her old hatred for hunters return. Her eyes turned red with protective rage, and she charged to defend her new 'calf'. A single shot rang out, echoing through the trees. The bison collapsed.

Alexandra felt the sudden shift in the air—the heavy thud of a body hitting the ground. She crawled forward, reaching out for her friend. She expected the warm, coarse fur of a living animal, but her hands met a wet, cooling stillness. There was no heartbeat. A needle of pure agony pierced her heart as she realized her protector was gone.

A moment later, she felt a different touch—the cold metal of a gun barrel, followed by the frantic, tearful embrace of her mother.

Chapter 5

The Shadow of Guilt



Her parents drove her back to the village in their truck, but the girl they brought home was changed. Back in her room, Alexandra sobbed inconsolably. Her parents tried to comfort her with kisses and hugs, but she pulled away, mourning the only creature that had made her feel truly capable.

Her parents sat in the kitchen, hushed by a heavy shroud of guilt. They had saved their daughter, but, in doing so, they had destroyed the very thing that had kept her alive. They realized now that the bison hadn't been a threat, but a savior. All they could do now was give Alexandra the time to grieve, hoping that one day, the lessons of the woods would help her find her way back to them.

Stuck in the Woods with Wolves



Chapter 1

Betrayal and Bloodlines



It all began with a set of stolen keys and a shattered heart. My friends and I were eighteen, standing on the precipice of adulthood, when we caught my boyfriend, Matt, with Luna, the school's cheer captain. The sight of them together burned; I slammed the door in his face, ignoring his desperate texts claiming he was "at a party." To get even, my friends and I stole his minivan and disappeared into the night.

As I sat in the passenger seat, drowning in depression, my mind wandered back to my maternal grandmother. I missed her silver-streaked hair and the way she smelled of garden soil. She used to tuck me in with Swedish folktales, telling me stories of werewolves who could command the frost. When I was small, she would cup her hands and create tiny snow-animals for me to snuggle. I thought it was just "Granny magic," never dreaming it was a hint of our true heritage.

My home life was a clash of cultures. My mother embraced our Swedish roots, making it my first language. But my father was a different story; he loathed his Indian heritage so much that he threw away my Hindi textbooks and forbade me from learning about his culture. Perhaps that was why I clung so tightly to my friends: Lucy, who looked like a blonde starlet, and Mechanise, a green-eyed girl from Bulgaria.

Chapter 2

The Alpha in Disguise



Eventually, the pain of Matt's betrayal began to fade when I met Dan. He was eighteen, with a military buzz cut and deep brown eyes that seemed to see right through me. What I didn't know then was that Dan was a Werewolf Alpha.

Our romance blossomed quickly. One weekend, we planned a trip to a remote town where Dan's family owned a cabin. The locals gave us chilling looks, their eyes filled with a silent warning. That night, I went to the kitchen for a snack, only to find the fridge stocked exclusively with raw meat. My stomach turned when I realized the "meat" in the back wasn't animal—I saw the unmistakable shape of human fingers.

Nauseous, I fled to the bathroom. Dan followed, nursing me with a gentle kindness that made me doubt my own eyes. *He couldn't be a monster*, I told myself. But that night, as he pulled off his shirt, I saw a tattoo of a blood-red moon glowing on his back.

Chapter 3

The Cabin in the Woods



A few weeks later, the girls and I decided to head home early in the minivan while the boys stayed behind. It was 2:00 a.m. when the nightmare began. Something sprinted across the road—a terrified baby deer—and we hit it. The van lurched, a tire blowing out in the middle of the pitch-black woods.

With no signal, we pushed the van toward a dilapidated wooden cabin that looked a century old. Inside, the air was heavy with decay. I sang Swedish lullabies to calm Lucy's frayed nerves as scratching sounds echoed against the front door.

The next morning offered no relief. While exploring the attic, I found old photos of soldiers and frantic writings about lycanthropy. I headed to the bathroom to wash my face, only to find the walls and mirrors smeared with blood. My mind tried to invent excuses, but the truth was waiting in the hallway.

A black wolf, the size of a grizzly bear, stood there. Its teeth were stained crimson. I screamed and ran for the living room, only to find my friends... torn apart like discarded dolls. I fled into the night, my lungs burning, until I found a red truck parked by the road. I begged the couple standing there for help, but they just laughed—until the black wolf emerged from the trees and slaughtered them where they stood.

Chapter 4

The White Wolf



Just as the beast lunged for me, a second wolf—larger and more powerful—tore out of the brush and ripped the aggressor to shreds. As the dust settled, the wolf shifted back into human form. It was Dan.

He held me as I sobbed, explaining that the wolf he killed was his uncle, a rogue who had lost his humanity. Dan confessed he had loved me since our "nerdy" school days, but was terrified his hunger for flesh would drive me away. In that moment, surrounded by death, I felt a strange sense of belonging. We whispered "I love you" in a mix of Slovak and Swedish, a pact sealed in the dark.

I agreed to join his pack. But to be with him forever, I had to change. The transformation was an agonizing symphony of breaking bones and shedding skin. My spine felt like it was snapping, and my hair fell out in clumps. But when I finally emerged from the pain, I wasn't just a wolf—I was a rare white wolf with piercing blue eyes.

It was then I realized the truth about my grandmother: she wasn't just a storyteller; she was a Swedish witch. I inherited her power over ice and snow.

I have since cut ties with my father, a man who lived a life of lies. I spend my time with my mother now, using my frost-magic to bring her garden back to life. During the day, we live as humans, but when the red moon rises every October 31st, we run. I am no longer the girl who was cheated on; I am a mate, a mother, and a Queen of the frost.

Dutch Heroes of Kerala



Part I

The Arrival



My name is Henrica Van Doovens. I have the light brown hair and blue eyes of my father, but my heart belongs to the soil of South India. I am a creature of the wild, as comfortable with a fishing net as I am with a bow and arrow.

The saga began in 1780. My father's crew departed Amsterdam at 8:00 a.m., watching the Dutch coastline fade into the mist. It was the last time he would ever see his sister or his mother. He was a man of contradictions—with skin as soft as cotton and eyes of piercing green—yet he was driven by a brutal ambition.

When the Dutch landed in Kochi, they treated the tropical paradise like a battlefield. They razed temples and forced the locals to adopt the Dutch tongue. My father was among the most ruthless, a soldier of the VOC who left a trail of shadow across the villages of Kerala. But everything changed when he reached a small settlement and locked eyes with a woman named Anjana. She was a beauty of mixed Malayali and Kodava descent, and in an instant, the soldier's heart was struck by Cupid's arrow.

Part II

An Unlikely Bond



- Anjana could not understand my father's Dutch, nor could he speak a word of Malayalam. To save her from the violence of his own men, my father disguised himself in the clothes of a local villager and spirited her away to an abandoned hut hidden by the dunes.

Under the canopy of chirping crickets, a strange romance bloomed. He brought her food and medicine, nursing her through the nights. He eventually convinced her to learn Dutch, framing it as a tool for survival against the colonizers—never revealing that he was one of them. Over time, the hunter and the captive became the unlikeliest of best friends, and eventually, a family.

Part III

A New Generation



I grew up speaking Dutch as my first language. My mother, Anjana, tragically passed away, bringing me into the world, leaving me to be raised by my father and the close-knit Dutch-Malayali community in Kochi.

My childhood was shared with Peter Hendriks, a boy with chocolate-brown hair and a leather bag we had crafted together. While our fathers—Papa and Uncle Thomas—were away fighting the Portuguese, we were cared for by Auntie Siya, who loved me as her own daughter.

Everything changed when Heink arrived from the Netherlands. With his platinum blonde hair and porcelain skin, he looked like a prince from the old stories. I fell head over heels for him, eventually having to break Peter's heart by telling him he was only ever a brother to me.

Part IV

The Resistance



By 1795, the tide was turning. The British were seizing territory, and the Dutch soldiers were forced to retreat to Europe. My father chose to flee, but before he left, he finally taught me Malayalam so I could reconnect with my mother's roots.

Heink and I chose to stay. To protect him from British eyes, we dyed his blonde hair black and adopted false identities. I took the name Sitha Biddappa. When British officers questioned my blue eyes, I told them I was of Afghan descent—a lie they swallowed easily. We used natural herbs to darken our complexions, living as ghosts in our own land. In secret, we gathered the village children, teaching them Dutch and sharing stories of the distant Netherlands so the culture would never die.

Part V

The Fight for Freedom



I rose to become a leader of the underground freedom fighters. My rage peaked when I heard reports of British soldiers harassing local women; I turned our hidden territory into a sanctuary and prepared for war.

The conflict became personal when a British soldier entered our backyard, threatening our young son, Mathew. Heink didn't hesitate—he ended the threat with an axe, and we buried the body beneath the tropical soil. As the leader of the movement, I took up my bow, single-handedly taking down soldiers who dared to cross our borders and sending their bodies out to sea on silent boats.

We eventually formed a strategic alliance with the French in Pondicherry. Together, we launched a massive assault, driving the British out of Kerala. We even pushed as far north as Goa to strike the Portuguese, though their local allies eventually forced us back to our southern stronghold.

Part VI

The Legacy



History took a different path in our wake. After 1947, our descendants were hailed as the "Dutch Heroes of Kerala." Over six generations, the Dutch lineage merged seamlessly into the Malayali population, creating a unique heritage celebrated every year at the Dutch cemetery in Fort Kochi.

In this India, Dutch is a mandatory language in schools, held in higher esteem than English. Because of the deep ties between our two nations, many Malayalis hold dual citizenship. With the combined innovation of the Dutch and the spirit of the Indians, the nation flourished, becoming a fully developed world power by 2024.

The blood of the North and the heart of the South had finally become one.

Ma Petite Étoile Zara



The Early Years



My name is Rose, and this is my story. I was born in Normandy, France, in 2005. I was born into a family that had faced many challenges during World War II, surviving invasions by both Nazi Germany and Great Britain. All the men in my family were enrolled in the military to fight the Nazis, especially during the D-Day landings. My family had lived in Paris for generations after the women fled there with their children, including my grandmother, to find safety.

Through my grandmother's stories, I learned of the struggles of that time—watching people scream and cry in the streets. It did not take long for the Nazis to invade Paris, mocking our culture and spitting in our food. We were all overjoyed when the British and the Soviets finally removed the Germans for good.

I was born in a hospital in the heart of Paris, where one could look out the window to see the shimmering Eiffel Tower. I grew up in a clean apartment with a beautiful view. In Paris, we even had the best restaurants; one famously had a rat working as a cook named Ratatouille, who later starred in the movie of the same name.

As a child, I struggled to pick up the French language, but with my mother's help, I was fluent by the age of four. I was very proud to be French. While I struggled with other subjects in school, I excelled in my native tongue. I eventually graduated from university with full honors and a Master's degree in French, hoping to help others around the world learn the language.

A New Chapter in Bangalore



I moved to Bangalore, India, to teach at the Alliance Française. I was initially shocked by the mess on the streets and the condition of public restrooms. I tried to bring a bit of Paris to Bangalore by enforcing strict etiquette. I taught my students not to spit on the streets and insisted they use silverware instead of eating with their hands.

My students were incredibly punctual; if they were even one minute late, they were locked out or required a late slip. They loved learning about French culture, and many were so inspired that they eventually moved to Paris for a few years.

My students often admired my blonde hair and blue eyes, constantly asking to take pictures with me. I had to teach them that it is impolite to be so pushy just because someone looks different.

Teaching Zara



There was one student named Zara who believed she was destined to be monolingual. Living in a country with millions of languages, she felt ashamed that she only spoke English. I began giving her one-on-one lessons. At first, Zara was defensive; she told me I was only there because her parents paid me and compared me to bad teachers she'd had in the past.

I worked hard to show her I was different. I bought her textbooks and refused to let her parents reimburse me because I truly wanted her to succeed. There were times when Zara would run from class in tears, overwhelmed by her frustration. However, we eventually had a breakthrough. I gave her an assignment to translate French songs, and she scored a 90/100 without any help. I gave her a necklace with a French flag, and her brown eyes lit up with joy.

Once Zara passed her A2 level, she finally began speaking to me in French. I even brought my son, Mathew, who was visiting from Paris, to speak with her. She finally felt like she truly knew the language.

Zara's Struggle



When Mathew returned to Paris, and I went on leave, I learned some devastating news. Despite her progress, Zara was being bullied at college and online for being an Indian who spoke only English and no native Indian languages. The bullying became so severe that she attempted to drown herself in her family's pool.

She felt a small boost of confidence knowing she was among the 0.02% of Indians who spoke English as a first language, but it wasn't enough to stop the depression. When I returned, I saw the cuts on her wrists. She cried, "I hate being monolingual." I dedicated all my time to her, even giving up my weekends, until she finally felt confident in her second language.

Final Days and Legacy



As I neared retirement, I left Bangalore. Zara eventually moved to France for her Master's degree. I visited her often and let her stay in a house I had bought for her. She became like a daughter to me. Zara eventually moved back to Bangalore to become a French teacher herself.

One day, I began feeling terribly ill. Doctors revealed that I had cancer. As the disease progressed, I broke the news to Mathew and Zara. They both stayed by my side, taking me to parks, getting me ice cream, and traveling with me to places I had always wanted to see, like Bulgaria, Romania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite the pain, those last months were full of bliss.

Epilogue



After I passed away, Mathew and Zara helped each other through their grief. They eventually fell in love and married, settling down in Naples. Zara obtained her French citizenship and wore an Eiffel Tower necklace to remember her second home.

During a vacation to Mali, a local girl tried to seduce Mathew, which caused a brief rift between him and Zara. Zara fled to Latvia in tears, but Mathew, being a talented hacker, traced her phone and followed her. They made up with a French kiss and, after a holiday in Pondicherry to clear their heads, they returned to their life in Naples.

The End.

The Germanic Vampires



Part I

The Blessed Farm



Magnus Flo was a man of Norwegian heritage with platinum blonde hair and icy blue eyes that everyone admired. He was born on a farm in the remote Norwegian village of Føniks. Legends say the village was blessed by a phoenix that landed on the central farm where Magnus was born. His family had owned that land for generations. This took place during the 1800s, while the Napoleonic Wars were still raging across Europe. Magnus grew up with a fondness for reading fantasy stories and imagining worlds that did not exist.

The farm was famously unusual. The cows born there produced milk that was naturally pink or blue. There was no point in making milkshakes, as the colorful milk already tasted exactly like the flavored treats other farmers worked hard to produce. The Flo family even had to buy regular cows from other farms to get plain milk. Magnus lived twenty years as a human in this strange, beautiful place.

Part II

The Transformation



Upon turning twenty, Magnus traveled to Oslo to spend a few days alone—his one birthday wish. While walking down a dark alley with a basket of flowers for his terminally ill mother, he bumped into a man in a black hoodie. The flowers spilled across the cobblestones.

Before he could pick them up, Magnus heard a distant cry for help. Being a man who believed in helping those in need, he ran toward the noise. He found a woman being drained of her life by a man—the very same man he had just bumped into.

Using supernatural hearing, the vampire turned and saw Magnus standing there in his traditional Norwegian attire, frozen in shock. Deciding he liked Magnus, the vampire chose to turn him. The next day, Magnus awoke to the sun burning his flesh like acid. He discovered he could run at incredible speeds, and a glance in a pocket mirror revealed sharp new fangs.

Terrified of his uncontrollable craving for blood, Magnus abandoned his parents and his village. He feared that if he stayed, he would create a bloodbath, draining every neighbor he had once called family. He returned only once, watching from a mountain after learning to control his thirst for short bursts of time. He saw that his family had built an altar for him, believing he had been murdered. They had become reclusive, locking their doors at night and rejecting the village. It broke his heart, but he knew he could not risk their lives.

Part III

The Heir to the Throne



While hiding in a basement, Magnus was visited by the vampire who turned him. The stranger gave him a ring and explained that Magnus was now the heir to the North Germanic Vampire throne. The previous king had been staked by humans. Magnus was furious and demanded to be human again, but the messenger revealed a secret: Magnus's great-great-grandmother, a farm girl named Sabrina, had been a wife of the late vampire king. Magnus was the only remaining biological descendant.

The messenger, acting on the late king's orders, told Magnus he must find and marry the West Germanic princess. She was of Dutch heritage but had fled to Germany to escape her royal responsibilities.

Under the messenger's training, Magnus learned to hunt, use his speed, and manipulate human minds with his eyes. He grew distant and cold, but he used his powers for a kind of justice. He hunted robbers, thieves, and rapists, saving innocent humans from those who wished them harm. By feasting only on the "evil" humans, he found a way to reconcile his monster nature with his human heart.

Part IV

Finding Anna



Accepting his fate, Magnus ran through Denmark and into the Bavarian Alps. He tracked a scent into the thick greenery and discovered Anna Van Helden. She was breathtaking—the "Snow White" of the West Germanic vampires—with platinum hair and skin as fair as snow.

Anna had fled to the woods to escape the pressure of the throne and to pursue her passion for writing. She was a survivalist, building her own cabin and making her own supplies from tree sap and coconut milk. When they first met, she was furious; she used her super strength to pin Magnus against a cliff. However, after realizing how much they had in common—specifically their love for storytelling—she allowed him to stay.

The two eventually traveled to Berlin. Magnus confessed his fear of the Germans, having been bullied by them as a human. This was the era of the rising Third Reich, and Magnus had seen the horrors the Nazis brought to his village in Norway. Anna, moved by his vulnerability and his compassion for humans, began to fall in love with him.

One night, while strolling through Berlin, they saved a Dutch woman named Martha from a Nazi officer. Magnus killed the officer and buried the body to spare the woman the sight. Moved by his protectiveness, Anna finally kissed him. She admitted she had rejected him only because she feared the weakness of being in love.

Part V

The United Throne



The couple fled Germany for the Netherlands. In The Hague, they were met by the West Germanic vampires. Magnus and Anna agreed to take the throne together, uniting the North and West Germanic tribes.

They had a gothic wedding in 1940. As part of the ceremony, they cut their wrists and joined their blood in a bowl, linking them forever. Shortly after taking power, Magnus used his army to protect the land, draining Nazi officers to drive the invaders out of the Netherlands.

They eventually met the other royal vampire families of Europe—the Slavic, Baltic, and Celtic lines. They learned of a baby princess in the Slavic family named Isabelle and hoped that if they ever had a son, he might marry her to maintain the peace between tribes.

Magnus and Anna ruled as a god and goddess. They were fierce toward rebels but acted as guardians for their folk. They eventually welcomed a baby boy named James, who was destined to be the next king. Magnus and Anna remained madly in love, leading their vampire army and shaping the future of their kind together.

The End.

The Secret Creatures of the Woods



Production Notes

The Stage Setting: The scene opens with a village and a castle set amidst a deep forest. Scenery can be displayed on a screen, supplemented by props such as fake bushes and trees.

Costumes:

- **Vikings:** Gray metal helmets and traditional Viking soldier attire in brown or black.
- **Trolls:** Brown dresses and clothes. Male trolls wear outfits painted to look like tree bark; female trolls wear brown dresses with fake bark accents.

Lighting:

- **Announcements:** Bright light when the King addresses the folk.
- **Night Scenes:** Dark atmosphere using lamps (or a projector image of lamps in nature).
- **Fight Scenes:** Shimmering black and white lights used continuously to create an intense atmosphere.

Decor:

- Audience chairs arranged in rows.

- Fake bushes, a fake lake, and trees made from art supplies.
- The Troll Palace is a tiny structure, as small as a Barbie castle, made of diamonds so it shimmers. The palace is gray and large enough to house the village trolls during emergencies.

Act 1

Narrator: In a faraway land named Norge, there lived a group of trolls along a riverbank. They resided deep in the woods of Svealand, but due to humans encroaching on their territory, they had no choice but to flee. The trolls ran as far as their tiny feet could carry them, setting up camp in the deep woods surrounded by hooting owls, scurrying squirrels, and chameleons that changed color from bark-brown to leaf-green. There, they built a castle and a village. The royal family, who saved millions of trolls from the humans, was headed by King Oslo and Queen Stockholm. They had a daughter, Princess Coconut. The village worshiped the only fir tree in the enchanted woods, believing it to be a goddess protecting them.

(Inside the Palace)

King Oslo: ‘Get ready, Coconut; it is time to head out and address the public.’

Coconut: ‘I’m getting ready, Dada! I’m almost there; let me just put my Barbies back in their box.’

Queen Stockholm: ‘Coconut, hurry up! We are heading out right now. Put on your two leaves and your tree bark dress; otherwise, the ground will prick your feet.’

Coconut: ‘Yes, Mama, I am finished! I’m coming.’

Queen Stockholm: ‘Now, let us head out those doors.’

King Oslo: ‘Hello, hello, everyone. I hope you are all doing well this morning. I have an announcement regarding the encroaching humans and a festival we will be holding today. First, it seems the people of Norge have informed the Swedish folk of our presence, and the Swedes are stepping in. Get your weapons ready! Hurry! The Swedes are huge, wearing metal helmets and woolen jackets. Even the men wear pale-coloured dresses. They are frightening; they don’t call them Vikings

for no reason. Be wary—they are fierce, powerful, and intelligent. But for now, we have a bonfire. I would appreciate it if everyone attended at 8 p.m. tonight to celebrate our Fir Tree Goddess. It will be fun to spend time together, and we can discuss these serious matters once the festival is over.'

All: 'Yes, Majesty! We will ready our weapons. Everyone, gather together! We must find as many weapons as possible. Hurry, and then we will come to the bonfire.'

Mama Troll: 'Help, help! I lost my baby!'

Auntie Troll: 'Here, darling. We'd better rush to our hiding place. The men are finding weapons to fight the Vikings and protect us.'

(A wolf howls in the distance as trolls scurry to find weapons, using torches to guide their way between huts.)

The Fir Tree Festival



Villagers: (*Singing*) ‘Round we go, hurray, hurray! This is Fir Tree Day. This is Fir Tree Day, hip-hip-hurray! Smear the glitter here and there, all around, up and down. This is our token of appreciation. Thank you, Mango Goddess; we thank you for your presence and protection.’

King Oslo: ‘Okay, okay. I thank each and every one of you for attending today’s celebration.’

Villagers: ‘No, thank you, King!’

King Oslo: ‘Quiet down, everyone. Now listen: we have something important to discuss at the bonfire. Please, everyone, attend.’

Villagers: ‘Yes, we will. Thank you, King.’

The Bonfire Scene

Villager 1: ‘King, we are very grateful for all your help and support. We all love and value you very much.’

Villager 2: ‘Yes, King, we just wanted you to know that.’

Villager 3: ‘Thank you very much, King. We look up to you with the utmost respect.’

All Villagers: ‘Yes, thank you! We love you as we love our fir tree. It is an honour serving you. We look to you as we look to our beloved Fir Tree Goddess.’

King Oslo: ‘Thank you, everyone. That means a lot to me. Cheers!’

All Villagers: ‘Cheers!’

King Oslo: ‘Tomorrow, we must prepare for battle. Here is the plan: Half of you will use the cannons against the Vikings. I sense they are near; our watchman has noticed human footsteps nearby. They are a mere fifteen kilometres away, according to his magical binoculars.’

All Villagers: ‘But which of us will use the cannons?’

King Oslo: ‘You, you, you, and you. The rest of you, get the ropes ready and practise your kickboxing; it will come in handy for tomorrow’s battle.’

All Villagers: ‘Thank you, King!’

King Oslo: ‘Now, goodnight, folks.’

Villagers: ‘Goodnight, King.’

Act 2

Narrator: Vikings enter the stage wearing woolen clothes and metal helmets, carrying swords. They have thick blonde beards and blue eyes. The tiny, gray diamond kingdom is hidden among bushes near the river. The village consists of wooden huts with colored glitter on the roofs to distinguish the families—one with sky-blue glitter and another with bright green. The glitter is made of smashed diamonds.

Vikings: ‘There they are! Get those tiny beasts! We should have known.’

Trolls: ‘Run for your lives!’

Viking Soldier 1: ‘Ouch! That hurt! The trolls bit me hard. My thumbs hurt so bad—help, I need a bandage!’

Viking Soldier 2: ‘Sorry, brother, but it is too late. We are now in a battle against those evil trolls. Call in the Norska Vikings!’

Viking Soldier 3: ‘Yes! Norska Vikings, get here now!’

(Norska Vikings enter wearing black clothes and metal helmets.)

Norge Viking 1: ‘I killed some trolls! Wait a minute... they are playing dead! Ouch!’

Norge Viking 2: ‘You silly man, get them! Eat them if you have to, swallow them—I don’t care, but kill them!’

(A battle ensues on stage.)

Viking Woman 1: ‘I killed them! See? These ones are dead.’

Norge Viking 2: ‘Good, that is good.’

Viking Woman 1: ‘You fools, get to work or you will make us lose this battle!’

Norge Viking 2: ‘Fine, I’m on it.’

Viking Woman 1: ‘I can’t believe he is my biological brother. How is this possible when I fight better than him?’

Norge Viking 3: ‘Woman, get to work!’

Viking Woman 1: ‘Don’t you dare boss me around! You buffoons are failing while I have already killed thirty trolls.’

Swedish Viking Man: ‘Here, these ones are dead.’

Viking Woman 1: ‘Good, very good.’

Narrator: Soon, all the trolls are dead as the Vikings finish them off. However, the royal family manages to escape their burning kingdom, fleeing on the backs of huge red ants.

(Actors in red ant costumes scurry the royal trolls away, moving side-to-side rather than in a straight line. Adventurous Nordic folklore music plays.)

Act 3

Narrator: The royal family fled to the oldest fir tree, which many trolls worshiped as a protector. Trolls would usually celebrate festivals here, placing glitter around the tree and using herbal pastes to heal its bark.

King Oslo: ‘We should be safe in here.’

Queen Stockholm: ‘How could you leave our folk back there? You saved them once; why did you leave them this time? They needed your guidance. They saw you as a hero.’

King Oslo: 'This was for our safety. If they find our fir tree, we are at stake. So be quiet, lady!'

Queen Stockholm: 'How dare you speak to me in that tone!'

King Oslo: 'Listen, we had no choice. It was for the better. I needed to save you. Back then, there were only ten Vikings; now there were a hundred. I'm sorry, but I cannot bear to lose you two. You mean the world to me.'

Coconut: 'Papa, my Barbies are gone. What about Joseph? Will my friend come? Did he come?'

Queen Stockholm: 'No, I am sorry, baby, but we had to leave them behind. We must move on.'

Coconut: 'But Mama, Joseph was my friend!'

Queen Stockholm: 'We had to let them go. When you are older, you will understand. Now we must survive and live in hiding beneath this tree.'

Coconut: 'Okay, Mama... but I miss Joseph. How could you, Mama and Dada?' (*Cries*)

King Oslo: 'Oh, shut it! Shut her up!'

Queen Stockholm: 'Darling, this was for the best. We did this for you; otherwise, we would have died. Did you want to die just like your friend Joseph?'

Coconut: 'No, Mama... but I miss him.'

Queen Stockholm: 'I know, but we could not save the others. There were too many Vikings out there.'

Coconut: 'Okay, Mama.'

Act 4

Narrator: Outside, the fir tree is surrounded by short grass, making the trolls easy to spot for someone as large as a Viking. Footsteps are heard early in the morning. Coconut goes out to investigate and sees a giant Viking.

Viking Man 1: ‘Get them!’

Viking Man 2: ‘Burn the fir tree down! They might still be inside if any more trolls are left.’

Vikings: ‘On it!’

Viking 1: ‘Aha! Got you!’

Vikings: ‘Attack!’

Coconut: ‘No! Dada, help! Help!’

(Coconut is killed. Her parents hear her screams from inside the tree.)

Queen Stockholm: ‘Wake up, wake up! I think Coconut is in trouble!’

King Oslo: ‘Not now... later. I still need to sleep. Mmmm.’

Queen Stockholm: ‘Wake up! Your baby is dying out there and you talk about sleep? Wake up!’

King Oslo: ‘What is it now? Go check on Coconut, dear.’

Queen Stockholm: ‘I checked; she is not inside. She must be out there. I can hear humans and a troll crying!’

King Oslo: ‘What? Get my sword! Why did you not warn me before?’

Queen Stockholm: ‘I tried! You were too busy sleeping.’

King Oslo: ‘Okay, I am going out in three, two... no, I am too scared.’

Queen Stockholm: ‘What? No! I did not marry a scaredy-cat. Go out! Come on, go!’

King Oslo: ‘Fine!’ *(He exits the tree)* ‘Oh, you nasty Vikings! Release my child this instant; otherwise, I will prick you with my tiny sword!’

Viking Man 1: ‘Look who we have here—a king troll. Interesting. This must be the royal family. It is a pleasure to meet you.’

King Oslo: ‘How dare you!’

Viking Man 1: ‘Ouch! Kill him! Finish him off.’

King Oslo: ‘Who are you to bark orders to the other Vikings?’

Viking Man 1: 'I am the King, you silly troll. And this time, you will die. I heard you killed some of my Vikings back in Norge. Don't you remember? Now I will make sure your death is slow and painful.'

King Oslo: 'Oh no, you won't!'

Viking Man 2: 'Oh yes, he will. Men, get him!'

(King Oslo is brutally killed.)

Viking Man 1: 'You can come out now, Queen. Your baby and King are dead, along with all the other villagers.'

Queen Stockholm: *(Entering)* 'Please, I am begging you! Please spare me. I will do anything for you. I will weave cotton into gold if you wish!'

Viking Man 1: 'Nah. With those tiny hands, you can't do anything. Your life is pathetic as it is.'

Queen Stockholm: 'Please!'

(Viking Man 2 finishes Queen Stockholm with a knife.)

The End

Bullfighting: A Stage Play

Location: Madrid, Spain

Atmosphere: The stage is dark, lit only by a single spotlight. Lights flicker during high-tension fight scenes.

Music: Tense, thrilling music during action; calm Spanish guitar in the background during emotional scenes.

Characters

- **Mama Bull:** A hybrid of human and bull.
- **Papa Bull (Ronaldo):** A hybrid of human and bull.
- **Kristina:** Their daughter, a hybrid of human and bull.
- **Principal:** A human.
- **Hannah / Elizabeth / Lisa:** Human students and bullies.

- **The Killer:** A hitman.
- **Mercedes:** The mastermind (Unknown Man 1).
- **Bullfighter / Doctor / Nurse:** Humans.

Act 1: The Origin

Scene 1: The Arena (*The sounds of a cheering crowd fill the theater. Papa Bull is on stage in his bull form. After a performance for the audience, he transforms into his human form.*)

Papa Bull: ‘Where is my cash, huh?’

Bullfighter: ‘Here it is.’

Papa Bull: ‘Thank you. I’ll see you at the next show.’

(His phone rings.)

Papa Bull: ‘What is it now?’

Hospital Voice: ‘Sir, we have your wife. She is in critical condition. Come as fast as you can.’

Papa Bull: ‘How did you get her phone? Give me the address; I’m rushing over!’

Hospital Voice: ‘12345 Elmo Street.’

(Papa Bull transforms and rushes to the hospital. He arrives and shifts back to human form.)

Nurse: ‘Here she is. She is stable, and your daughter is healthy. She’s a little bull, sir.’

Papa Bull: ‘Thank you. Mmm... you look like a “Kristina” to me. You are so pretty; you have mesmerizing blue eyes and black hair. I love her already. Thank you, Doctor.’

Doctor: ‘No problem.’

Mama Bull: ‘How is she? Let me see her.’

Papa Bull: ‘She is doing great. Are you doing alright, buttercup?’

Act 2: The Struggle

Scene 1: The Training (*Years have passed. Kristina is now a teenager. She is being bullied at school and struggles with her identity.*)

Kristina: I hate these horns! Can I saw them off, Papa? **Papa Bull:** No! Don't you dare think of such a cowardly thing. Be proud of being part bull. **Kristina:** I hate it! My classmates make fun of me. They throw things and try to flush my head down the toilet! **Papa Bull:** Listen to me. Long ago, a German scientist came to Spain. With the Royal Family's permission, he mixed human blood with our herd to see what would happen. Our ancestors were treated like demons, but we survived. We are rich now. We live forever, Kristina—unless we are staked with iron. Stay proud. **Kristina:** Fine, Dad. But on my eighteenth birthday, I'm finding a way to remove these horns and destroy the bull in me forever.

Papa Bull (Monologue): I hope one day she learns to love herself. She doesn't realize the power she has. I just want her to be happy.

Scene 2: The Incident (*At school, Hannah approaches Kristina with a milkshake.*)

Kristina: Leave me alone, Hannah. We're sixteen; act like it. **Hannah:** Oh, sorry! (*She "accidentally" spills the shake on Kristina's head.*) **Kristina:** What did you do?! (*Kristina's eyes turn red. She pins Hannah against the lockers and snaps her arm.*) **Hannah:** No! Please!

Scene 3: The Office Principal: Your daughter snapped a student's arm. **Papa Bull:** Kristina, how could you? They are just humans; you put our family honor at stake! **Kristina:** I'm sorry, Dad, but I can't deal with the bullying anymore. Everyone makes me feel miserable. **Papa Bull:** I understand, but to them, we are monsters. We promised to behave so we could live among them. I've donated enough money to this school that they aren't expelling you this time—but never again.

Scene 4: The Earthquake (*A magnitude 5 earthquake hits. The school building begins to crumble. Kristina uses her bull strength and speed to shield her classmates and lead them to safety.*)

Kristina: You cowards are always afraid of me, yet I'm the one who kept you safe. You should be ashamed. **Bullies:** We are sorry, Kristina. Please

forgive us. **Kristina:** What you did for years wasn't a mistake; it was evil. But today, I am proud to be part bull. My strength and courage saved us all from being crushed. **Hannah:** Kristina, I am truly sorry. I was just jealous because you are supernatural and I'm just... plain.

Act 3: Avenge and Escape

Scene 1: The Conspiracy Mercedes (Unknown Man 1): That man, Ronaldo, is a monster. That German experiment was an insult to nature. I want his money. Kill him in cold blood. **Hitman (Unknown Man 2):** Don't fret. I'll make sure his money is yours.

Scene 2: The Death of Ronaldo Hitman: Hey there. My name is Carlos. Care for a toast? **Papa Bull:** Actually, I could use the company. Cheers. *(He drinks)* Wait... I can't breathe! **Hitman:** Let me end your miserable life for you. *(He drives an iron stake into Ronaldo's heart.)*

Scene 3: Retribution *(Kristina finds the Hitman on a dark night under a red moon.)*

Kristina: You were responsible for my father's death. You will suffer. Tell me who hired you! **Hitman:** Please! Spare me! It was a man named Mercedes. You can find him at the Christmas Plaza! **Kristina:** You didn't spare my dad. Why should I spare you? *(She rips out his heart—a red bean bag soaked in tomato sauce—and drops it.)*

(Kristina finds Mercedes in a dark alley.)

Kristina: Hello. **Mercedes:** Wow, you're beautiful. What do you want?

Kristina: You. Come into this alley. **Mercedes:** So forward! *(He follows her)* **Kristina:** Close your eyes. *(She slits his throat)* **Mercedes:** What... why? **Kristina:** My father was Ronaldo. You lured me into avenging him, you rat. Rot in hell. *(She shoots him dead.)*

Scene 4: The North Narrator: Kristina covers her tracks and hides the bodies. She packs her things and takes her mother to the remote woods of Northern Norway. They build a wooden house far from humanity. When they go to town for supplies, they wear large bandanas and hoodies to hide their horns, telling curious passersby that they simply have "very big hair." Finally, they are at peace.

The End

The Moon's Daughter: Eclipse



Act 1: The Midnight Delivery

Narrator: It was a late Halloween night at the stroke of midnight. While humans snuggled in their beds, the supernatural world was alive. Witches with greenish faces flew on broomsticks, and the dead rose from their graves under a crimson blood moon. Suddenly, the moon transformed into a lady with platinum blonde hair and red eyes named Agatha. She laid a basket containing a crying baby on the doorstep of a wealthy human couple. As the sun rose, the monsters retreated.

Mother: Danny, look! There is a baby in a basket on our doorstep. Who would leave a child out on a freezing night like this?

Father: What the—? I'm calling 911. Trespassing on my property? I am the richest man in town! Why would anyone be so foolish?

(The Police arrive and investigate.)

Police: Sir, no one in town claims this baby. It seems the mother was an outsider.

Father: I don't care. If I were you, I'd search for her or put this child up for adoption immediately.

Police: Sir, the adoption centers are full, and the town is in denial about this child. I'm afraid you must keep her.

Mother: It's a miracle! Look at her beautiful red eyes, like roses.

Father: It's a curse!

Mother: I will take sole responsibility for her. I love her as my own.

Act 2: The Witch's Warning

Narrator: Months pass. On the next Halloween, a howl echoes in the night. The Mother wakes to tend to the crying baby.

Mother: Shh, Mama is here. Wait... who is that outside? Excuse me! What are you doing here so late on Hallow's Eve?

Witch: You fool! Do you not know that baby is cursed? She is the Moon's child. Why do you keep her?

Mother: Get lost, you lunatic! Is that green face paint? You're too old for trick-or-treating.

Witch: Watch your words! I have turned humans into pumpkins for five hundred years. I only leave you be because that child would harm me if I touched you.

(The Witch retreats and meets the Moon Goddess, Agatha, in the shadows.)

Moon Goddess: How is my baby?

Witch: She is well, but her adoptive mother is a nuisance who mocks the supernatural. I require extra pay for dealing with them.

Moon Goddess: Extra pay? You gold-digger. Guards, kill her!

Witch: No! I helped you! Please!

(The guards ruthlessly execute the witch.)

Act 3: Visions and Powers

Narrator: When the child, Emily, turns five, the Moon Goddess visits her while the humans are under a magical sleep.

Emily: Who are you? Get out, or I'll scream!

Moon Goddess: I am your true mother, little one. Look into my memories.

(Agatha holds Emily's hand. Emily sees flashes of being cradled as a newborn. She realizes the truth.)

Moon Goddess: I will train you to control your powers. You are a Moon Goddess, part of a royal line. But you must hide this from

humans; they have spent generations staking our kind. You must also be wary of your destiny. Every goddess has a mate. Males can smell their mates from a mile away, but we females cannot. You must build a bond of trust to know for sure.

Emily (Monologue): I must keep this a secret from Mom and Dad. I'll hide my spellbook with an invisibility charm. I love my powers, but I can't trust anyone—not my teachers, not even my friends.

Act 4: The Outburst

Narrator: Years pass. Emily is now thirteen.

Emily: Mama, look at that girl outside! Her dress looks like it's from the 1920s.

Mother: There is no one there, Emily. What a vivid imagination you have.

Emily: I'm telling the truth!

Mother: Haha, stop trying to scare me.

(In a fit of rage, Emily causes the lightbulbs to explode. The house goes dark.)

Mother: What happened?

Emily: That's what you get for not listening. Don't go to the fuse box; a rat will bite you.

Mother: *(Ignoring her)* I'll go check it. *(A moment later)* Help! I've been bitten!

(The parents leave for the hospital. Emily is home alone when the ghost of a singer, Alan Walker, appears.)

Emily: Get lost, Alan! I won't listen to your music.

Alan Walker: How dare you! I'll blast it until you go deaf! *(The radios begin blaring "Faded" at full volume.)*

Emily: I said STOP! *(Her eyes turn red, and she banishes the ghost to hell.)*

Act 5: The Deception of Max

Narrator: Emily opens a bakery as a young adult. A handsome man named Max, with chestnut hair and blue eyes, enters.

Max: Hello, I'm Max. I'd love to get to know you.

Emily: Actually, I could use help with these boxes.

Max: A bakery? I love it here.

Narrator: They become inseparable, but Max is secretly a Moon God with a dark agenda. He plans to avenge his father by destroying Emily's life. After months of friendship, they argue when Max posts insults about her online.

Emily: You called me a "worthless female" on Instagram! Get out!

Max: Fine! I never liked you anyway. And by the way—we're mates. Not that a female like you could sense it.

Narrator: While Emily is away on a school trip, Max returns to her home. He brutally kills her adoptive parents to break her spirit. Emily returns to find the carnage and spends months training in secret to defeat him.

Act 6: The Final Battle

Narrator: Emily travels to the dark side of the moon. The stage is lit by stars and a projector of the lunar surface.

Max: You came. Want to marry me now, darling?

Emily: Never!

(They engage in a brutal fight. Emily is badly bruised, but she uses her final strength to strike a killing blow. Max falls dead. Guards find Emily and bring her to her mother's castle.)

Moon Goddess: Why did you go to the dark side? I told you it was dangerous!

Emily: My mate, Max... he killed my parents. I had to avenge them.

Moon Goddess: Max Zaar? Emily, he wasn't your mate. He is the son of my brother, the Archduke Bishop. He lied to provoke you and steal the throne.

Epilogue: The Dark Side

(Emily and her mother visit the Archduke Bishop on the dark side of the moon.)

Archduke Bishop: My son is dead? Good. He was pathetic and useless. I have twenty other sons; why should I care?

Emily: How can you be so heartless?

Archduke Bishop: Just stay off my side of the moon, and I won't bother you. Goodbye.

Moon Goddess: *(Whispering to Emily)* My powers tell me he is not lying. He truly doesn't care. Come, let's go back to Earth.

Narrator: They fly to Paris to grab coffee by the Eiffel Tower. Emily continues her life as a goddess, though she never sees her adoptive parents again, for they have passed on to a place even she cannot reach.

The End

The Colonization of Antarctica



The Wiebusch Family

The Wiebusch family, originally from Germany, had been settled in Antarctica for over a century. By the 2000s, the environment had physically altered their lineage; the children were born with snow-white hair, icy blue eyes, and skin as pale as the glaciers. Their first language was not German, but "Antarctic"—a linguistic fusion of the various European tongues brought south by the original settlers.

In December 2009, Hansa Wiebusch was born in the capital city of New Hague. By 2014, she was enrolled in the Snow City School. The campus was constructed entirely of reinforced ice, kept habitable by high-powered internal heaters. The curriculum was rigorous, focusing on Antarctic Language, Biology, Math, and Chemistry. Art, however, was strictly forbidden; the Penguin President deemed it a frivolous distraction for the youth.

A Frozen History

The colonization began in 1880. Driven by a desire for a fresh start away from the turmoils of Europe, settlers arrived from Germany, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. After initial territorial skirmishes, the groups divided the continent equally.

Survival was a constant struggle. The lack of arable land meant agriculture was impossible, forcing a diet consisting entirely of fish, squid, octopus, and—eventually—the meat of polar bears, penguins, and arctic foxes. By 1980, these disparate groups had unified into a single sovereign nation. It became the most developed country on

Earth, boasting a peerless education system and a capital city, New Hague, that reflected its dominant Dutch-Antarctic population.

The Rise of the Animals

Originally, the penguins and polar bears were simple animals. However, as humans built great cities, they began to educate the local fauna. This proved to be a geopolitical turning point. Much like historical movements of resistance, the animals eventually retaliated against their "colonizers."

The polar bears provided the physical might, while the penguins provided the strategic intellect. After a series of brutal civil wars that cost eight million lives, the two species formed an alliance. They overthrew the human government and established a new hierarchy. Robots, which handled labor in the rest of the world, were useless here; the Antarctic chill froze their circuits instantly. Thus, the labor fell back onto the humans.

Social Stratification

In this new society, penguins and polar bears were the "Superior Species." Humans were divided into "European Antarctica" and "African Antarctica" (descendants of a failed 1960 colonization attempt). While some humans, like Hansa, were allowed to attend university if their IQ exceeded 200, they remained second-class citizens.

Strict laws governed the land:

- **Heritage Bans:** Humans were forbidden from learning about their European or African ancestry. Discovery led to execution by polar bear or a public beating by penguins.
- **Travel Restrictions:** Leaving Antarctica was a death sentence. Those caught fleeing toward Southern Africa were fed to the polar bear border guards.
- **The "Glass Ceiling":** Even high-achieving humans were often relegated to service jobs, acting as cooks or cleaners for polar bear generals.

The Activist: Hansa Wiebusch

Hansa was a brilliant student, scoring 100/100 in Antarctic Language. Despite her academic success, she could not ignore the systemic cruelty. She became an activist, leading street protests against the polar bear police. She witnessed horrific brutality, where protestors were crushed under the paws of guards.

Hansa was arrested multiple times and fed a meager diet of raw fish. Her parents, Tyler and Tanja, eventually spent their life savings on a high-priced polar bear lawyer to bail her out. The court issued a final warning: one more protest would lead to the gas chamber.

The Forbidden Romance

Hansa eventually secured a position as a doctor at the "All Polar Bears Hospital," an elite ice palace in New Hague. It was here she met **Sea Bear**, the lead doctor and the most respected polar bear in the city.

Their First Meeting: (*Hansa accidentally spills coffee on Sea Bear's white fur*) **Hansa:** I am so sorry! I'll clean it up right away. Please, don't fire me—I need this job. **Sea Bear:** Calm down. It's fine. Which patients are you seeing? **Hansa:** A group of penguins in Ward 4. They're... strange. **Sea Bear:** (*Checking the chart*) They're Francophiles. They refuse to speak Antarctic; they only speak French and demand imported wine. **Hansa:** What's the diagnosis? **Sea Bear:** Severe dehydration and intoxication. I'll handle the communication; you handle the vitals. And Hansa? Try not to be so clumsy. It's a human trait I find... distracting.

The Confession: Months later, after a long shift, Sea Bear cornered Hansa in the breakroom. **Sea Bear:** Hansa, I need to tell you something. I... I love you. **Hansa:** (*Blushing*) I love you too, Sea Bear. You're the best friend I have. **Sea Bear:** No. Not as a friend. Romantically. **Hansa:** Are you serious? We are different species—the friction this will cause... the government... **Sea Bear:** I don't care about the government. I care about you. **Hansa:** (*Sighs*) Fine. I feel the same. But we are not hugging in public. To the world, I am a human servant, and you are an elite. We meet tonight, late.

The Legacy of Amsterdam

They married in a secret ceremony in an ice church. Their union produced a daughter, **Amsterdam**. She was a "half-breed," possessing a polar bear's fur and snout but with human eyes, eyelashes, and a human-like temperament.

Amsterdam grew up in a world that hated her. She was bullied by penguins, polar bears, and humans alike. However, her birth signaled a change. More "half-breed" children were born across the continent. United by their shared struggle, this new generation led a revolution that the previous ones could not.

Hansa, now an old woman, watched from her window in New Hague as her daughter stood at the front of a new protest—one that finally broke the chains of the old Antarctic regime.

The End

The Shadows of Goa: A Legacy of Conquest



The Arrival (1510)

In 1510, Portuguese ships crested the horizon and dropped anchor on the shores of Goa. They had survived treacherous tides and crossed continents, driven by a singular mission: to extract the wealth of the East for the crown in Lisbon. Initially, the sailors were enchanted by Goa's pristine beauty—the swaying coconut palms and sands as white as the sea foam.

However, this peace was short-lived. Upon discovering that the Goans practiced Hinduism, the Portuguese were struck by a religious fervor. They viewed the local temples and offerings not as culture, but as "atrocious witchcraft." Systematic destruction followed. Temples were razed, and beachside huts were torched. Families were torn apart; those who resisted were met with the barrel of a gun or dragged into congested cages in the bellies of ships to be sold into distant lands.

The Era of Imposition

The colonizers enforced a brutal "civilizing" mission. Goans were forced to speak Portuguese; resistance was met with a lash. The leadership encouraged soldiers to marry—and often rape—local women to dilute the native bloodline and force a conversion to Christianity. Generations passed, and 90% of the population was converted. Behind the facade of the "Portuguese-Goan" identity lay a dark history of forced unions and the erasure of Konkani roots.

The Awakening of Edin Rose

Edin Rose was born in 2010, long after the Indian Army liberated Goa in 1961. She grew up in a household that was strictly Catholic and spoke only Portuguese. Her family harbored a deep, inherited hatred for the English language—a remnant of old colonial rivalries—leaving Edin feeling isolated from the global world.

However, the truth of her lineage was hidden in the shadows. Edin eventually learned the story of her great-grandmother, **Elise**. Elise's family had been "Full-Blooded" Goan Hindus who hid their identity for years. They faked Catholic last names and spoke Portuguese in public to avoid the soldiers.

The tragedy struck when Elise's father fell ill. His coughing alerted the soldiers, who stormed the house. He was shot without remorse. Elise and her sister, Agatha, were taken to a camp. Agatha died in childbirth, her body unable to handle the trauma of a forced pregnancy. Elise survived, but she was forced to raise a child conceived in violence, a child who would eventually become Edin's grandfather.

The Ghost in the Study

One evening, Edin went to call her father, Marc, for dinner. She found the door to his study slightly ajar and heard a sound that chilled her: wailing.

Peering through the gap, she saw her father clutching a faded photograph of Elise. He was begging the image for mercy. He cried out about the trauma passed down through the blood—how, as a young boy, he had seen his own Portuguese grandfather continue to abuse Elise even in her old age. He remembered his parents sedating Elise with heavy drugs to stop her midnight screams, a practice ordered by the "Grandfather" until the day she died from an overdose of the very pills meant to keep her quiet.

A Journey Beyond the Borders

Driven by a need to escape the suffocating weight of her home, Edin moved to **Pondicherry**. There, she discovered a different colonial history—one where the French and the locals had a more harmonious

exchange. She learned French and eventually traveled to Paris, realizing that culture could be a bridge rather than a cage.

Her journey continued to **Calcutta**, where she discovered the fascinating history of Greek merchants who had lived there for centuries, and finally to **Kochi**, a former Dutch colony. In Kochi, Edin secretly began learning English and Dutch.

When her parents visited and found an English textbook, they were furious, fearing the "demons" of their Portuguese ancestors would haunt them for embracing the language of their old enemies.

The Path to Recovery

Edin stood her ground. She realized her parents weren't protecting a culture; they were protecting a wound. She hired a historian to help her family understand that their "loyalty" to Portugal was actually "Stockholm Syndrome"—a result of centuries of brainwashing.

Through intense therapy and historical research, Marc and his wife began to see the bruises on their grandmothers' wrists in old photo albums for what they truly were. They realized their grandfathers weren't heroes; they were occupiers who had tamed their wives like animals.

The Healing: The family finally moved toward a path of recovery. They stopped sedating the memories of their ancestors and started honoring them instead. They began to learn **Konkani**, the language that had been stolen from them. They even began to learn English, seeing it finally as a global tool for connection rather than a colonizer's weapon.

Edin's parents gave her a long-overdue hug, finally free from the ghosts of 1510. They were no longer Portuguese subjects or victims of the past—they were, for the first time, truly Goan.

The End

The Haunted Photo Album



Act I: The Echoes of Hungary

In the twilight of October 30, 1950—All Hallows' Eve—Melissa lived as a stranger in her own home. Adopted by a wealthy British-American family in Brooklyn, she was a girl of striking beauty: ocean-blue eyes, chestnut hair, and strawberry lips. Yet, she felt like an outsider. Her siblings, Tommy and Elizabeth, bullied her for her heritage, sipping tea and playing violins while Melissa sat under the trees, dreaming of a land she had never seen.

Though she spoke no Hungarian, her dreams were filled with the language. She heard lullabies sung by a mother she couldn't remember. When she asked her adoptive parents about her past, they eventually grew weary of her questions and handed her a crumpled slip of paper with an address in Hungary.

Act II: The Cabin in the Woods

Melissa traveled across the Atlantic to the Hungarian countryside. Following the address, she found a weathered wooden cabin. An old woman opened the door, speaking a language Melissa couldn't understand. Soon, a young man named **Budapest** arrived. He was Melissa's cousin, and through him, the terrifying truth emerged.

Melissa's parents, Valerie and her husband, had died in that very village. Budapest, a student of computer science, had uncovered disturbing records on the dark web. Video footage showed Valerie behaving as if possessed—speaking in a deep, authoritative German voice she had never learned. In a fit of supernatural madness, she had killed her husband before taking her own life.

The village elders whispered that Valerie had been possessed by a demon that sounded like the late dictator, Adolf Hitler.

Act III: The Shadow in the Album

Melissa went to her parents' abandoned house and found only one relic: a dusty photo album. As she flipped through the pages of her parents' youth, she noticed a blurred figure in the background of every shot. By the final page, the figure became terrifyingly clear. It was a man in a Nazi uniform.

An elderly village woman finally revealed the secret: In her youth, Valerie had lived in Austria and had been a childhood friend of Hitler. When he rose to power and madness, he became obsessed with her. To ensure he would never lose her, a witch bound Hitler's soul to that photo album. When Valerie fled to America to save her baby, the album went with her, carrying the dictator's jealous spirit across the sea.

Act IV: The Protector and the Predator

Melissa returned to the States, moving to Boston to start a new life. But the album's shadow followed. When a predatory boss at a diner tried to assault her, he was found the next day—his tongue removed, his family slaughtered. The spirit of Hitler was "protecting" Melissa, not out of kindness, but out of a twisted obsession because she looked exactly like her mother, Valerie.

The horror escalated. Throughout America, Jewish businesses and families began to vanish from reality. It was as if a hole had opened in the collective memory of the world. Melissa realized the demon was trying to rewrite history around her, isolating her until only he remained.

Act V: The Meeting with Burkhard

Fleeing to Brooklyn, Melissa's truck broke down in the middle of the night. There, she encountered **Burkhard**, a handsome German man from Hamburg. Though he initially thought she was mad, he saw the black bruises forming on her throat—handprints from an invisible attacker.

Suddenly, the streetlights flickered. A figure appeared in the moonlight. Burkhard grabbed Melissa, and they raced toward a nearby church.

Act VI: The Exorcism

Twenty priests gathered, sensing an ancient and concentrated evil. As they chanted and threw holy water, the air turned frigid. The demon fed on the souls he had stolen, growing more youthful and powerful with every scream.

Melissa stepped forward, facing the shadow: "Leave me! I know you loved my mother, but she is gone. If you want to find her, you must seek peace. Go to the light; she is waiting for you."

Hitler, moved by the lie and the resemblance Melissa bore to his lost love, stopped fighting. He allowed his spirit to float upward toward a fake "Heaven," only to be snatched by the abyss and dragged down to Hell.

Epilogue: A New Dawn

The world woke up as if from a dream. The missing families were remembered, though the cause of their disappearance remained a mystery to all but Melissa.

Burkhard stayed by Melissa's side, helping her heal from the trauma. They eventually married and had a daughter, Analesa Wiebusch, a child of both Hungarian and German roots. The photo album was burned, its ashes scattered, ensuring that the shadows of the past would never darken their doorstep again.

The End.

The Maze of Mirrors: The Museum of Lost Souls



The Silent Museum

It was October 22, the air in Bangalore thick with the approaching shadows of Halloween. Near the gleaming towers of UB City sat an anomaly: the "All Things Frightening" Museum. Abandoned for decades, it was a place of local legend, much like the Old Changi Hospital in Singapore.

Zara, a history student from Christ University, ventured inside. Though she was from Bonn, Germany, she possessed a dangerous academic obsession with the Third Reich. As she walked through the dust-choked halls, she passed grotesque statues of hybrid animals—monkeys fused with crocodiles—before reaching the World War II wing.

There, she found a wax figure of **Adolf Eichmann**. While the rest of the world viewed him with horror, Zara felt a misguided sympathy for him, believing him a mere cog in a machine. She stood before his frozen, smiling face and offered a silent salute. She then wandered into the **Maze of Mirrors**. The reflections seemed to distort, their faces smiling back at her with sinister intent. By the time she found the exit at 11 p.m., something had attached itself to her soul.

The Kodava Friend

Zara's closest friend was **Sneha**, a girl from the rugged mountains of Kodagu (Coorg). Sneha was a peaceful soul who loved the Twilight Saga, hiking the Tadiandamol peak, and the smell of fresh coffee from

her family's estate. When Zara began to deteriorate—waking at the "Witching Hour" of 3 a.m. to vomit and scream from nightmares—Sneha stepped in.

Sneha revealed the museum's dark folklore: the land was an old British execution ground where rebels had been tortured in the 1600s. The museum was a vessel for the "Unrested"—souls like Hitler and Eichmann who refused to go to Hell and instead possessed their own likenesses.

The Stalking of Adolf Eichmann

Sneha moved Zara into her room, surrounding her with holy water and the prayers of a priest. But the connection was too strong. One Friday, as classes ended at 6 p.m., Zara saw him.

Standing by the university gates was the wax figure of Adolf Eichmann. He was melting, wax dripping from his chin like a guttering candle, yet his eyes were piercingly alive. Entranced by her "favorite" historical figure, Zara walked toward him. When she looked into his eyes, the life was sucked from her body. She dropped dead on the pavement. Eichmann simply turned and walked back into the shadows.

Sneha's Revenge

After burying her friend in Bonn, Sneha returned to Bangalore fueled by a rage only a Kodava could possess. She researched the dark web and found a survivor—an elderly man in Richmond Town who had escaped a Maasai tribal statue by fleeing the continent. He gave her the terrifying truth: **A statue can only kill you if you admire it.** The admiration creates a psychic bridge that the demon crosses.

Sneha armed herself with a gun (a right of her heritage) and a bottle of holy water. She marched into the museum, bypassing the T-Rex and the Hitler Youth statues. She found Eichmann.

The Confrontation: Sneha didn't feel admiration; she felt pure, unadulterated loathing. She screamed at the wax figure, punching its face and shooting it multiple times. "You took her!" she shrieked. "You killed the only friend I had!"

She struck a match, intending to cremate the demon in his own museum. But as the flame flickered, the statue moved.

Eichmann did not like being attacked. He enjoyed his immortality on Earth, preferring a wax vessel to the fires of Hell. He rose to his full height, his wax face twisting into a cruel snarl. Because Sneha had entered his domain with such intense emotion—even if it was hate—she had given him the energy he needed to manifest.

He lifted her with supernatural strength. The match dropped, extinguished by the damp floor. The police later found Sneha's body, but like Zara's, there were no fingerprints. No evidence. Just two grieving families left to wonder how their daughters had been stolen by a museum that officially didn't exist.

The End

The Haunted Elevator: A Tale of Two Souls



The Girl Named Osaka

In the bustling heart of Tokyo, a girl named Osaka was born. She was known not just for her striking beauty, but for a gentle, Christian spirit that led her to help anyone in need. After her mother, Miu, passed away from a mysterious illness when Osaka was only eight, the young girl dedicated herself to her studies and her faith. She became a polyglot, teaching herself French, Swedish, Norwegian, and German, using books as a bridge to worlds she had never seen.

The Discovery of the Abandoned Hospital

One evening, while walking home from the library at 8 p.m., Osaka took a shortcut through a dark alleyway in Hiroshima. She stumbled upon an abandoned building—a skeletal structure that once served as a hospital during the **Second World War**.

Inside, the air was thick with the scent of dust and old medicine. She found rusted wheelchairs, broken televisions, and a cart of mid-century surgical tools. But it was the **elevator** that truly haunted her. Its doors were stained with ancient, dried blood. On a whim, she stepped inside and saw a single stool covered in crimson spray. Terrified, she fled, but her curiosity wouldn't let the memory rest.

The Phantom Ward

Weeks later, Osaka returned. To her bewilderment, the hospital no longer looked abandoned. The lights were humming, and nurses in

vintage uniforms scurried past. She stepped into the elevator, and as the doors slid shut, she noticed a woman in a black coat staring at the floor.

"Are you okay?" Osaka asked in Japanese.

The woman didn't answer. Suddenly, the lights flickered and died. In the pitch black, the sound of long, sharp fingernails began to scratch rhythmically against the metal walls—*screeeech, screeeech*. Osaka huddled in the corner, covering her ears. When the lights flashed back on, the woman was gone.

The Legend of Akari Suzuki

The next day, news broke of a criminal found dead in that same elevator, his limbs torn apart by an unseen force. Osaka began to dig into the archives of the local library. She discovered that during the war, the hospital had been the site of a massacre. British soldiers had stormed the building, committing unspeakable acts against the Japanese staff and patients.

The woman Osaka had seen was **Akari Suzuki**. Akari had been a brilliant student working three jobs to pay for her mother's cancer treatment. On the day of the attack, Akari had rushed to the hospital to save her mother, Fumiko. She was caught in the elevator by a soldier named Oliver Dumbell, who brutally attacked her. She died there, unable to reach her mother's room. Her father, a deaf man who communicated through signs, was so broken by the loss that he eventually ended his life in the Aokigahara Forest.

The Forbidden Love: Akari and Carl

Osaka's research revealed one more secret: Akari had been in love with a German soldier stationed in Kyoto named **Carl Wiebusch**. They had met at a flower shop and shared a beautiful, short-lived romance before Carl was sent back to the front lines in Europe.

When Carl saw the news of the hospital massacre in Berlin, he recognized Akari's body on the television. Overcome with grief, he returned to Japan after the war to visit her grave every day. Unable to live without her, he took his own life so they could be together. But

there was a cruel twist of fate: Carl's soul ascended to Heaven, while Akari's spirit remained trapped in the dark corridors of the hospital, fueled by a vengeful rage against "evil-minded men."

The Final Exorcism

Osaka knew she had to intervene. She convinced a high-ranking Christian priest from Tokyo to travel to Hiroshima. Together, they realized that the spirits weren't evil—they were merely **hurt**. They were waiting for a protection that never came.

The Ritual at 3:00 AM: Osaka tracked down the elderly surviving relatives of the victims. At the "Witching Hour," these aged children entered the hospital. When the ghosts of the young nurses and doctors appeared, ready to strike, they stopped. They recognized the blood of their own families.

The Reunion: "Find peace," the elderly relatives whispered to their ghostly parents. "We will join you soon. Do not haunt this place of pain any longer."

Osaka saw Akari standing alone near the elevator, her eyes filled with tears. "You aren't alone anymore," Osaka whispered. "Look behind you."

Standing there was the spirit of her mother, Fumiko. They reached for each other, and as they touched, the darkness of the hospital began to dissolve. Akari looked at Osaka one last time with a smile of pure gratitude. As she faded into the light, she finally found Carl waiting for her on the other side. The "Haunted Elevator" was silent at last.

The End

The Legend of King Tree Bark



The Fall of the Amazonian King (1670)

In the year 1600, deep within the humid, vibrant lungs of the Brazilian Amazon, a prince was born under the blessing of the Great Sage. He was named **Tree Bark**, after the sentinel spirits of the forest. When his father passed, the thirteen-year-old boy became a King, ruling over a paradise of mist-covered mountains and ancient rice paddies.

But in 1670, the harmony was shattered. Portuguese colonizers, led by the ruthless **Alexander De Gama**, tore through the foliage. They brought fire and a language that sounded like the cracking of dry wood. De Gama captured King Tree Bark and, in a display of cruel theater, tied the King's arms to two separate trees. With a single stroke of a heavy sword, the King was hewn in two, and his blood watered the roots of the trees he was named for.

The Stitched Resurrection

One hundred and twenty years passed. The world changed, but the forest remembered its King. **Lucia**, an Aztec witch and the King's descendant, found his remains. Using ancient necromancy, she stitched his body back together—his torso a map of heavy thread, his right eye a hollow void, and his heart replaced with a shard of eternal ice to preserve his decaying flesh.

Through chants and mud-rituals, Tree Bark clawed his way out of the earth. He awoke with a hollow mind, remembering only his name and the instinct to hunt. Lucia approached him, proving their kinship through an ancient portrait. She revealed the scars on the land—the

charred forests and the enslaved tribes—and ignited a cold, blue fire in his icy chest.

The War of the Reborn

Lucia and the King traveled to the capital, Brasilia. Though the King was frightened by the modern world, his god-like powers began to manifest: superhuman strength, the speed of a jaguar, and the ability to breathe beneath the water.

King Tree Bark became a ghost in the trees. He wore black robes to hide his skeletal form and a leather patch over his missing eye. He didn't just fight; he liberated. He broke the cages of the natives and led them into the deepest reaches of the Amazon.

There, he trained an army of Aztecs, Inuits, and other tribes in a brutal, ancestral fighting style—moves that mirrored the strikes of karate but carried the weight of a god's vengeance.

The Great Reclaiming:

- **The Amazon:** The native tribes rose like a tide, reclaiming their lands and driving the colonizers into the flames they had once started.
- **The Children:** In a move of strategic mercy, the Aztecs spared the European children. These children were raised as Aztecs, learning the language and songs of the forest, eventually forgetting the prejudice of their ancestors.
- **The Global Crusade:** As an immortal, King Tree Bark eventually left Brazil. He sailed to Africa, Asia, and India, single-handedly dismantling colonial empires, ripping the hearts from tyrants, and restoring the crowns of the indigenous peoples.

The Heart of Ice

As the centuries wore on, the King grew weary. The ice in his chest, placed there by Lucia to keep him alive, had begun to frost his soul. He

had become a legend—a "Fallen Guardian" worshipped across the globe—but he felt no joy.

When Lucia finally passed away, the news broke the King. He did not attend her funeral; the grief was a weight he could not carry. Instead, he retreated to the only place on Earth as cold as his heart: **Antarctica**.

There, amidst the penguins and the silence of the glaciers, he built a castle of jagged ice. He lives there still, accompanied only by a great male polar bear named **Ice**. He drinks the frozen water and eats the silver fish of the southern seas. His tears are no longer liquid; they fall as tiny icicles, clinking against the frozen floor of his throne room.

The world remembers him as the King who broke the chains of the world, but he remains in the white silence, a frozen god waiting for a winter that never ends.

Frankie Little: The Rebel of Cubbon Park



The Lazy Days

Frankie Little was not your average industrious squirrel. Born in a cozy bush near the bamboo groves of Cubbon Park, he was the definition of a "slacker." While his parents spent their days tirelessly foraging for the perfect acorns, Frankie preferred to sleep until noon, prank the local squirrel police, and sneak out to "nut juice" parties that lasted until the early hours of the morning. At eighteen in squirrel years, he was a constant headache for the authorities and a worry to his loving parents.

The Disappearance

One afternoon, the world changed. Frankie sat by the riverbank, waiting for his parents to bring him lunch as they always did. One hour passed. Then two. As the sun dipped behind the silhouettes of the High Court, they still hadn't returned.

Fear replaced his usual laziness. Frankie realized that if he wanted to eat—or even survive—he would have to venture out alone. He spent days hopping through the vast park, his tiny heart racing every time a hawk circled overhead. In a moment of panic, he slipped from a stone bridge, nearly falling into the gushing waters below. Clinging to the edge until his tiny arms shook, he eventually tumbled into the grass, exhausted and unconscious.

The City of Glass and Noise

Desperate to find his family, Frankie looked toward the horizon. There, rising like giants above the trees, were the skyscrapers of **UB City** and the **Minsk Square** buildings. Ignoring his parents' old warnings about "The Outside," he scurried across the road, narrowly dodging the massive tires of a BMTC bus.

The smell of UB City was a shock to his system—petrol, expensive perfume, and hot asphalt instead of damp earth and moss. The humans were even more frightening. One little girl tried to reach for him, but Frankie, terrified and defensive, nipped her hand and fled into the shadows. He searched the marble lobbies and the offices of MG Road, but there was no sign of his mother's soft fur or his father's twitchy tail.

The Battle of the Elm Tree

Returning to Cubbon Park, Frankie encountered his greatest nightmare: a ferocious stray dog. The dog held a limp squirrel in its jaws. Thinking it was his kin, Frankie's grief turned into a warrior's rage. Though he was small, he used his speed to lead the dog on a high-speed chase, eventually tricking the beast into running headfirst into a park sign.

With the dog dazed, Frankie retreated to the high branches of an elm tree. A friendly crow, who had known his parents, warned him that the local dogs were now "barking" for his head. Frankie had to grow up fast. He learned to hunt, to store nuts, and to stay silent when the predators passed by.

The Lesson Learned

Months passed. Frankie became a changed squirrel. He stopped partying, respected the squirrel laws, and even built two small symbolic graves for his parents, decorating them with jasmine flowers and saying squirrel prayers every evening.

One afternoon, while Frankie was diligently cleaning his nest, two familiar figures hopped up the branch. It was his parents—looking healthy, well-fed, and slightly guilty.

"We went on a 'working vacation' to the outskirts of the city," his father explained. "We knew that as long as we provided everything for you, you would never learn to be the squirrel you were meant to be."

Frankie was stunned. The "trauma" of the dogs and the city had been his parents' ultimate lesson in independence. After a long, tearful hug, Frankie apologized for his years of laziness. He realized that while the city was big and the dogs were mean, he was no longer a helpless youngling—he was Frankie Little, the survivor of Cubbon Park.

Amsterdam

As I stare into your mesmerizing eyes, all I can feel is love as it gushes through my veins. All I mean to do is grab you and squeeze the life out of you, hoping and praying for the day to get over fast so that I can come home and cuddle you, as all my thoughts throughout the day are directed towards you.

Loving you with every ounce of my heart, my dear little one— your soft white fur that I want to touch every opportunity I get, your round, shiny black snout that fits perfectly on top of your smile. You are so lovable from a first glance. When you go out for a stroll, the sunlight hits your eye, creating a crystal.

Struggling to stay focused in class, my teachers grow puzzled as to what is going on. Words cannot even seem to express the feelings I truly have, as I cuddle up with you and carry you in my arms like you are my baby. My dear little one, when you go missing, I always wonder where you disappeared off to.

I know that what we have is hard to explain, but Mama does certainly love locking you up in her cupboard, while Papa does not seem to like you even a single bit, as he screams as if he sees a rat. But it is only you, my beloved Amsterdam; do not fret. I am sure Papa loves you, but he just cannot express the love he does have for you.

Stay calm and compose yourself well. We shall always be together; I swore to be with you ever since you arrived that day, driving an hour from the international airport, arriving from the Netherlands. That was the day I laid my eyes on you and grew astounded with the beauty before me.

How I am truly grateful to have you, my little one—may we both live together forever. Even up in Heaven, I shall look down and protect you, my dear little Amme Damme.

The Northern Wolves



The Daughter of the Cabin

Deep in the wooded heart of Norway, a couple named Henrik and Elsa lived in a sturdy wooden cabin. It was there that they brought their daughter, **Anna**, into the world. Growing up in the isolation of the forest, Anna's childhood was not one of toys, but of survival. Alongside her faithful Dachshund, Boxer, she was forged into a warrior.

Henrik, a descendant of Viking lineages, passed down ancient fighting skills. Anna's days were filled with grueling labor: running riverbanks, practicing Pilates, and boxing with handmade gloves. She hiked with weighted water buckets and mastered everything from primitive bows to modern pistols. By the time she was a young woman, Anna was a physical marvel, prepared for a threat the rest of the world had forgotten.

The Evolution of the Monsters

The legends spoke of the **Northern Wolves**. In the 1st Century B.C., four great packs inhabited Scandinavia. As they migrated to the sunless reaches of the High North, evolution took a dark, demonic turn. Deprived of light and isolated for millennia, these creatures grew to the size of Tyrannosaurus Rexes. They developed three heads, skin like armor, and dilated black eyes that saw perfectly in the dark.

In the 21st century, the world stopped believing in "fairy tales." The musician **Alan Walker**, obsessed with the desolate beauty of the North, ventured into the devil's barren lands to find inspiration for his music. He found only death. The wolves, smelling his scent from miles away, hunted him down. To them, a human was no larger than an ant. His

death sent a shockwave through Scandinavia; the "Demon Circle" had been broken, and the wolves were moving South.

The Great Desolation

The wolves tore through Europe, Asia, and Africa. They were unstoppable, possessing an IQ of 100 and a hunger that couldn't be sated. Cities like Oslo and Copenhagen became silent ruins. Nature reclaimed the streets; vines climbed abandoned skyscrapers, and the only sounds were the chirping of crickets over the bones of the fallen.

The Nordic people, however, were the smartest in the world. With an average IQ of 900, they learned to survive. They applied thick mud to their skin to mask their scent and moved only when the wolf-alarms were silent. Anna and Henrik lived this way for years, even as Anna nursed her mother through a terminal illness. When Elsa finally passed, Anna was left with only her father and a heart hardened by grief.

The Search for Henrik

The Prime Minister of Norway, Olaf, sent a desperate plea to Henrik, the nation's greatest hunter. Henrik was to fly North to Tromsø to lead a resistance. But weeks passed, and the letters stopped coming. Henrik had vanished in the wolf territories.

Refusing to lose the only family she had left, Anna armed herself with high-tech gear and a secret weapon she discovered through ancient archives: **Silver**. While lead bullets bounced off the wolves' hides, silver acted like a poison.

She trekked into the frozen fjords where the temperature dropped to -8°C. Through her binoculars, she spotted a horrifying sight. The wolves had captured Henrik. Using their high intelligence, they hadn't eaten him yet; they had drugged him with herbs and were preparing a macabre "dinner party," complete with a bonfire, plates, and wine glasses, treating Henrik like a gourmet delicacy.

The Battle of the Silver Rain

Anna moved like a shadow, dousing herself in mud to mask her scent. She reached Henrik's side at night, waking him from his stupor. They made a break for her truck, but the pack awoke. The roar of the three-headed monsters shook the pine trees.

"Now, Father!" Anna cried.

She didn't come alone. Anna had spent her journey uniting the survivors. Fifty high-tech helicopters, piloted by the friends she had made along the way, crested the mountains. They rained down a hail of silver arrows and silver-tipped bullets. Anna and Henrik stood back-to-back, firing silver pistols with mechanical precision.

One by one, the T-rex wolves collapsed into the snow, their demonic black eyes fading to gray. The reign of the monsters was over.

A New World

With the threat vanquished, Anna traveled the globe to find the last pockets of humanity—from the Nicobar Islands to the deep savannahs of Africa. She brought the survivors back to Scandinavia, where they rebuilt society. Henrik oversaw the resettlement, establishing the world-renowned Swedish education system for the displaced tribes. In the ruins of the old world, a new, stronger civilization began to bloom, led by the girl who refused to let the wolves win.

The End.

The Essence of Modur

A sip of coffee and I grow alert and vigilant; after just a drop in my system, I focus completely on my studies. Without coffee, there is no life or energy in me; unable to stay attentive during class, I drift, and my teachers wonder what is wrong. Little do they know that without that brew, my attention span is that of an infant.

I stare with a blank expression, my thoughts diverted, my notebook filled with doodles, until the teachers' voices fade and I long only for Amsterdam, my teddy bear waiting at home, for education does not hit me the way the taste of cold coffee does.

A single sip sends shivers through my neck; I become fully awake, eager to learn, snatching up the first assignment on my desk. I carry my IKEA bottle to college, a vessel of focus, waiting for the evening when I can return home to a cup of coffee or a milkshake that brings me back to life.

Coffee is not just a habit; it is woven into my DNA. It is the heartbeat of the Kodava culture, a liquid echo of the land I belong to. In the hills of Kodagu, coffee grows in vast quantities, rich in a flavor unmatched by anything found in Bangalore.

I started this love affair at fifteen, drinking eight cups a day until the mania took hold— until the doctor prescribed medicine, and the hallucinations faded, and I learned to temper my insatiable need.

Now, I know that Coorg offers more than just the bean; there, coffee is a dessert, a bite of heaven on earth. I walk through the estates, through the quiet of the morning, where every family tends their own piece of the soil. Modur is the place I call home, and when I taste a cup brewed there, I finally feel at peace.

The Sentinel of the Whispering Pines



The Shadow in the Rocking Chair

Deep in a stretch of woods where even the deer feared to trespass, lived an elderly Swedish settler. He spent his nights in a rocking chair, watching stars that shimmered with an almost blinding glitter while the owls sang their nightly chorus. One evening, as a gentle breeze caressed his face, the rocking stopped. A pitch-black shadow encircled him, consuming the old man whole. As he passed, his final thoughts weren't of the life he had lived, but of children—the children he and his wife never had—playing hide-and-seek with a laughter that sounded unnervingly horrific in the silence.

Months later, travelers found only a skeleton in that chair. On his bony wrist was a colorful bracelet, a youthful trinket that made him look like one of the modern generation rather than an ancient relic. As his ashes met the earth, they mingled with a strange, magical mud—the same "pink mud" of legend. His soul did not vanish; it migrated, rooting itself deep into the core of a towering pine tree.

The Twins from Kansas City

A new family soon relocated to a wooden cabin in these woods, a structure so grand it resembled a skyscraper made of timber. **Alla** and **Magnus** brought their five-year-old identical twins, **Josephine** and **Joseph**. The children were inseparable, often swapping identities to confuse their parents. When they weren't hiking or fishing in the lake, they "devoured" books, ranging from horror comics to the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series.

Their father, Magnus, was a practical man—a tree-cutter and hunter who despised animals. When the children found a beautiful albino fox they named "Snowy," Magnus showed no mercy. He saw the fox as an enemy, or perhaps a meal, and shot it. The heartbroken twins gave Snowy a secret burial, their tears falling into the magical soil.

The Hunger of the Bark

One afternoon, while walking to clear their heads of the grief over Snowy, the twins stumbled near a cliffside. Suddenly, a pine tree—shaped vaguely like a haggard human figure—reached out with branches that mimicked long, caressing arms. Before they could scream, a mouth opened within the rough bark, lined with teeth as sharp as a wolf's. The tree swallowed the twins whole, "munching" them like chocolate bars.

Alla and Magnus searched frantically. They spent their life savings hiring scouts, but the woods kept its secrets. Broken by defeat, they held a symbolic burial for their lost children.

The Mimic in the Moonlight

Under the glow of a full blue moon, the tree began to move. Its thick bark formed legs, and its tangled roots acted as toes, allowing it to prowl the perimeter of the cabin. Magnus, a logical man who didn't believe in superstitions, stood guard with a rifle, suspecting a wolf or an ox. Inside, Alla bit her nails until they bled, terrified by the eerie silence.

The monster was born of the old man's bitterness; because his wife had rejected the idea of children, his spirit now "hunted" for the family he was denied. He stood at the edge of the clearing, watching through the window.

Eventually, the parents could take no more. As they packed their van to flee the haunted woods, they heard it: the perfect, clear voices of Josephine and Joseph calling out from the treeline. Alla fainted from the shock, and Magnus ran into the brush, but found nothing. They believed they were going delusional, unaware that the "ordinary" pine tree standing by their driveway was the very thing mimicking their children's cries.

The van drove away, leaving the woods behind. The Pine Tree Monster watched them go, settling back into the earth to wait for the next set of children to wander too deep into the trenches.

The Viking Flight



Departure from Oslo

It was snowing heavily in Oslo, a thick white curtain falling over the runway. Inside the terminal, passengers clad in heavy, fur-trimmed coats clutched their boarding passes. The youngest daughter of the **Flølo** family, little Kristina, pressed her face against the cold glass of the window. Outside sat a Norse Atlantic Airways jet, ready to carry them from their home in Rogaland toward a new life.

The family was moving to Sweden. Their eldest daughter, Anna, had been accepted into Malmö University, and they planned to settle her there before returning to Oslo to start afresh. As they boarded, Anna accidentally bumped into a young man with curly brown hair and striking brown eyes. He wore a coffee-colored coat over a dark shirt and white undershirt.

"Förlåt, ursäkta," Anna stammered in Swedish. The man offered a calm, knowing smile. "No worries," he replied, his voice unnervingly steady.

The Strike of Thor

Half an hour into the flight, the sky turned a bruised purple. A massive thunderstorm erupted, and a jagged bolt of lightning struck the wing with the force of Mjöltnir. The plane entered a terrifying tailspin, plummeting toward the icy fjords below.

Panic exploded in the cabin. Kristina sobbed, the sheer terror causing her to lose control of her senses. The passengers gripped their armrests, reciting old Norse prayers to Odin, begging for a miracle. Amidst the screams, the brown-haired man remained seated, smiling.

Suddenly, his eyes flashed a brilliant, icy blue, and his hair shimmered into a wintry, whitish blonde.

He stood up, bypassed the terrified flight attendants, and wrenched open the emergency cabin door. As the freezing air rushed in, he leapt into the void.

The Rebellion of the Gods

The man was no mere mortal; he was a veteran of celestial wars. Using his ancient power to command the air, he dove beneath the falling plane. He caught the massive fuselage with his bare hands, his muscles straining against the weight of a hundred lives. He wasn't alone. Several other men on the plane—including the leader, **Magnus Rønning Flølo**—revealed their true forms.

They were the Aesir: **Balder, Frigg, Tyr, and Heimdall.**

They had been traveling to Malmö for a secret conference of the gods. According to the Viking Book of Death, the passengers of this flight were destined to perish. But these gods chose to rebel against fate. Together, they heaved the plane upward, guiding it away from the jagged rocks of the fjord and back into the sky.

The Price of Mercy

The passengers and the pilot believed it was a "heavenly blessing" or a freak stroke of luck. They had no idea they had been saved by divine treason.

Odin and Thor were furious. For defying the Book of Death, the rebellious gods were stripped of their immortality and banished from Asgard. They were sentenced to live thousands of agonizing mortal lives in the most war-torn and impoverished corners of the earth—Sudan, Afghanistan, North Korea, and amidst the riots of Bangladesh.

They lived as refugees, struggling against the weight of "weak" passports and systemic abuse. In one life, they were Indians who fought desperately for a Schengen visa, only to be told that Western citizens were always first in line. Odin worsened their suffering, starving them until their memories of the golden halls of Asgard felt like a cruel hallucination.

The Fall of the All-Father

But even a god's patience has an end. Through centuries of mortal suffering, the banished gods kept their memories. They learned the true meaning of human struggle, and it fueled a new kind of power—one born of grit rather than birthright.

After their final mortal deaths, they did not return to Asgard as subjects; they returned as conquerors. They confronted Odin on his throne. They didn't use divine magic; they used the raw, channeled lightning of their collective rage. They struck the All-Father down. Odin, overwhelmed by the rebellion of his own kin, suffered a celestial heart attack, stumbling back and striking his head against the cold stone of history.

The rebels reclaimed their divinity. They had saved a plane full of people in the 21st century, and in doing so, they had eventually saved themselves from the tyranny of a cold, unyielding fate.

The End.

Story 1

Moominpappa in the Forest Cathedral



I stumbled upon an abandoned church deep in the woods of Suomi, Finland. It was a skeletal place, draped in dust and thick spiderwebs. As I stepped inside, a cold gust of wind slapped my face. My right boot landed with a wet *plop*—not in mud, but in a stagnant puddle that emanated a stench so foul I could feel it coat my windpipe. Gagging, I retreated to my Jeep, sealing the tainted boot in a plastic bag.

To calm my nerves, I sat in the driver's seat and opened my favorite book, *Moominpappa at Sea*. The round, white troll figures were my escape; they brought peace to a soul that had seen too much darkness. I lived simply in a wooden cabin nearby, drinking Coorg coffee and washing my face in the icy stream that ran beneath my floorboards.

As I laced up a backup pair of sneakers, I saw her: a stray shepherdess standing by two pines. She wore a 16th-century white dress and shawl, her face a pale, sinister mask. I called out, but she remained silent. Suddenly, a crow swooped down, its claws gently "combing" my hair before it soared into the sky like a jet.

I entered the church again, walking down the aisle. Memories flooded back—bitter, jagged ones. I remembered my mother, who had survived years of abuse only to suffer a fatal stroke at the altar during her second wedding. I remembered my stepfather, an evil man who mocked my dreams of Norden, and my biological father, who had died of a heart attack after sixteen cups of Starbucks coffee deep in the woods.

I remembered the orphanage, the cruel nuns, and the sinister pastor who had traumatized me at fourteen. As I reached the altar, I picked up an old bouquet of lilies and roses. Lightning shattered the stained glass, hitting me like a tornado. Through the smoke, the ghost of the pastor appeared, grinning as he reached for my throat to drag me into the afterlife.

But then, the surreal intervened. **Moominpappa** floated down from the rafters like a guardian spirit. He rescued me, banishing the pastor and his sister—the pale shepherdess—to the depths of hell. The pastor screamed, blaming me for his arrest and death, but Moominpappa silenced them with a golden arrow. As they vanished into thin air, I took my antidepressants to stop the shaking. I drove away into the Finnish night, forever grateful to the troll who saved my soul.

Story 2

The Immortal of the Kaveri River



In the woods of Coorg, my Saturday mornings began at 8:00 AM. Living in a cabin surrounded by pine trees, I felt a fierce Kodava pride. Unlike the cluttered streets of Bangalore, our woods were sacred. I would shower in water pumped directly from the Kaveri River and pull on my black gum boots—essential gear to ward off the leeches that once left me bleeding for an entire day.

Life was a cycle of coffee and tradition. We Biddanda family members lived for the *Puthari* harvest festival and our ancestral coffee estates. I spent my days in my Jeep, driving to my "Rain Tree Estate" near Chettalli, hauling coffee beans to the machines.

But something was wrong. I realized I was stuck in a time loop. For years, I never aged. My skin stayed smooth, my hair never grayed, and my coffee intake remained a steady eight cups a day. I asked my family about it, but they just laughed in the *Kodava takk* language, joking that Goddess Kaveri had cursed us with immortality. I embraced it. I spent my "forever" swimming in the river and chasing elephants out of the paddy fields with twigs.

Then, on April 2nd, 2025, the loop broke.

A full blue moon rose, and the night was filled with the strange sound of crickets playing tiny guitars and drums. I woke to the smell of ash. My family's wooden cabin—the *guda*—was a pit of fire. A pack of aggressive "lion dogs" had attacked them, causing my mother to fall into the fire pit. The flames had consumed everyone I loved.

I found my mother's lifeless body, her Kodava bracelet glinting in the embers. My siblings, my aunts, my father—all gone. Even my grandmother's Norwegian troll statue had melted into a puddle of plastic. The trauma hit me like a physical blow.

Unable to face a world where the loop had ended in tragedy, I walked to the banks of the River Kaveri. I submerged myself in the sacred waters, hoping to reunite with them. In Kodava culture, the soul never truly leaves the land. As I sank, Goddess Kaveri met me halfway, putting my spirit to rest as a permanent guardian of the woods. I died wishing the loop would return—because in the loop, the fire never started, and my family was still alive.

The Vengeful Ants

Ants are small like needles, angry as the color red. Two antennae on each side, directing their path here and there. Creepy, crawly creatures—hurt one, and all attack like it's war.

Bite, bite, bite go the ants, *scratch, bite, scratch*. Dozens against one human, these squiggly, wiggly beasts of prey. Red ants, purple ants, pink ants, rainbow ants—all thinking, "*Attack, attack, attack the human.*"

On a killing spree with guns and bows, the human falters, steps back, and collapses. "*Ouch, ouch, ouch,*" cries the human, but the ants have their aim. They only want to kill the one who stampeded the anthill, killing dozens of babies in the process.

It is a justified anger they harbor, boiling rage like volcanic lava. Ants are as fierce as crows pecking a dead vulture, killing machines in the grass. As the human collapses and dies on the spot, the colony finally rests.

Kodava Roots

Rooted in Kodagu—blood, soil, land, and earth—we, the Kodavas, come together to unite. Mother and father, from two *okkas*, join as one, forging the strength of our community. In the land where coffee grows, under mountains draped in thick, silver fog, where the Kaveri flows as the eternal pulse of life.

Jeeps tackle the unsteady roads, deep in the depths of the Kodagu soil, a wooded motherland to call our own. A rare ethnicity, two hundred

thousand strong; we are the people of the woods and the bean. Most stay rooted in the hills we love, though some wander to the West—to Ireland, Germany, or the UK— or find a second home in the bustle of Singapore.

But Kodagu remains the anchor. Kodagu is the scent of roasted coffee; Kodagu is the vibrant, endless shade of green. To meet a Kodava is to find a diamond, rare, unbreakable, and born from the pressure of the hills.

The Demon of Fort Kochi

I woke up this Monday morning, usually full of energy and life. It had been a lovely weekend; my friends and I had traveled back home to Kodagu after a getaway in Kochi. We had spent the days eating fresh fish and taking boat rides, but the nights were darker. At 3:00 AM on our final night, fueled by alcohol, we wandered into the **Dutch Cemetery at Fort Kochi**.

We collapsed there, our memories of the night dissolving into a drunken blackout. We finally awoke at sunrise, the blazing rays of the sun penetrating our slumber. But something had changed. Strange things began to happen the moment we left that hallowed, salty ground.

The next day, I found scratches all over my back and chest—bruises and bite marks that looked like they belonged to a predator. That night, I realized I had brought something home that should have stayed asleep for decades. It followed me to the hills of Kodagu. It kept me awake all night with screams bellowing into my ears. I hid the bruises from my friends, even as they stretched up my neck like a strangler's vine.

One night at a bar, my friend Lara noticed the marks beneath my black crop top. Lara was a top scorer at Cauvery College in Suntikoppa—kind, sharp, and observant. When she questioned me, I broke down in tears and ran away, too terrified to explain the demon attached to my soul. Later, she tried to comfort me with a teddy bear she'd brought from the Netherlands, but I struck it out of her hand. The sight of it—the Dutch connection—triggered a frantic, poltergeist-like fear in me.

I tried to drown the fear in booze, hoping for a blackout just to get some rest. But when I ran out of money and stayed sober, the entity grew

bolder. Every night at exactly 3:00 AM, I would wake up drenched in sweat. In the bathroom mirror, a black, shadowy figure wearing a mask stood directly behind me.

"W-w-who a-r-re you?" I would stutter, but the figure remained mute, a silent vacuum of light.

The hallucinations grew so vivid that I was eventually admitted to a psychiatric hospital. In my cell, I heard the screams of the past. I saw the shadow rocking in a chair, clutching that Dutch teddy bear and whispering in a language I couldn't understand. I learned to lie to the doctors, faking a recovery just to be released from that cold, white room.

Once free, I sought solace in the earth. I went to the paddy fields where the **Talakaveri** flows, listening to the crickets and the rhythmic drip of the stream. I fell asleep, only to be jolted awake by a crushing weight on my chest.

Standing over me was a man with chestnut hair, pale skin, and haunting brown eyes. For a moment, I wondered if he was a Greek ancestor—a ghost of the soldiers who stayed behind with Alexander the Great. But he did not look like a warrior; he looked like a colonizer. With a strength that felt like iron, he pinned me down and whispered in Dutch:

"Je bent voor eeuwig van mij." (*You are mine for all eternity.*)

He vanished into a black fog, drifting away over the coffee estates. I fled to my family's land near Kushalnagar and the Modur estate, but the shadow stayed in the soil. That specific patch of the paddy field turned bitter. No coffee grows there now; the beans are unripened and toxic, causing those who taste them to puke their insides out, as if poisoned by radiation.

Reports circulate in our quiet district about people disappearing in those fields. I stay away from that spot, focusing instead on the foggy mountains and the abundant nature of my home. I am resilient, but his words still echo in the wind that blows through the coffee leaves. He said I was his, and even in the beauty of Kodagu, I wonder if he is just waiting for the next blue moon.

Hot weather

Camels stamp hoofs dry, Sun brightly shining away, Desert Dubai sun.

Haiku Poem 1

Beauty beholds eye, Approaching graceful strides now, Door left unanswered.

(Note: To fit the traditional 5-7-5 syllable structure of a Haiku while keeping your words, I adjusted the phrasing slightly to ensure the syllable count is correct.)

Haiku Poem 2

Sun rays swelter in, Surge in energy levels, Rush to get ready.

Haiku 1

Drip drop, rain drop falls, Froggie jumps here and jumps there, Ribbit, rabbit, babbitt.

Poem 2

Strong gush of wind blows, Lightning sparks, the sky lights up, Clouds move here and there. Mountains covered with the fog, Coffee beans grow ripe in Kodagu district.

Poem 3

Mud splash, splitter, splatter, Jeep runs over mud, Gum boots to splash on the mud, Protection from leeches.

Haiku 4

Electricity Flickers as rain pours on roof, New life of coffee.

Poem 5

Far from the dirty city, Bangalore, Downpour on the rooftops of cottages.

The Cruelty Inflicted on the Horse

A black feline horse on hind legs, four elephants at the back of the horse, a horse with a gallant stride. A man holds up a cross in front of the horse— the demon possessing the body of a horse, the horse seems to be tempted by evil faith. The man protects his folk from the demonic horse.

Trunks on the elephants who show pride in their stance, stand withdrawn from the crowd as you gather up the courage to rid us of the demon. The elephants are also demonic beings in the form of elephants— elephant with a tower like that of the Pisa of Italy, to promote the Italian Pisa statue. The Italians love their pizzas, of course! Italian Pisa statue to signify pizza; the leaning Pisa is the Italian margarita pizza.

The storm rages on, thunder clouds hover above our heads— rest in pizza with spinach added on top.

Julia Among the Vikings



It was a sunny morning early out in the Western Fjords, Norway, as the sun was rising over the peak of the snowy mountains and shining brightly; the water below got illuminated, as if it was sparkling with diamonds that were once sacred to the land of Lofoten but were now deeply lost after the tragedy struck the Lofoten Islands. Humans who once inhabited this once vast land with snow that filled premises fully surpassed boundaries beyond as trolls played hide-and-seek deep in the snow-filled woods of Norway, and the queen troll gave her orders and commandments to those below her, proving her superiority to all those around. As penguins and polar bears roamed free. Many lived in wooden cabins and log cabins deep in the woods, surrounded by snow, and were deeply attached to nature and the fjords around them; they had their own Viking religion and feared Thor, the old Nordic god. This civilization would later become the best in all of Europe.

Many from this land were known for their friendly, caring, and kind-hearted mannerisms, not showing any anger even if someone tried to piss them off; they hid their anger well, keeping a bright and cheerful face plastered over their faces. Of course, these humans loved their coffee and would consume large amounts on a daily basis, enjoying their nights to the watchful show the Northern Lights had on, enjoying the bright color shows of purple, green, and blue that illuminated the dark and cloudless sky above; some of these even proposed in the frigid cold temperature of the cold climatic land under the Northern Lights.

They even enjoyed their reindeer rides through the deep forests and set up established cities all around, once a land of the Vikings, the great pirates of the sea, some of the most feared Europeans who ever lived and left a great legacy behind for their descendants not only in the

Nordic lands but the British Isles as well where they burnt villages down to the ground, raided and ransacked, looted and raped a dozen of the native women, establishing themselves up to be some of the greatest colonizers in the world as the world knew the Nordic lands as the land home to these great Vikings.

Julia was a girl who only ever wanted to be loved, even if she was abused for it; she was put in the woods by her parents. She even questioned her existence. She was brought up by two adoptive parents and had met Magnus Ronning Flolo on the farmland she lived in, called Varmland. They met as they were neighbors with farms right next to each other; they hung out and became the best of friends.

Though Julia feared him, as for her, he was too blonde with blue eyes, seeing him as nothing but a silly reindeer of sorts in her eyes—he was a reindeer, wondering why someone was so pale in hair, eyes, and skin. Many saw him as superior to a Swede, and after this, every girl thought Norwegians were the better Vikings and Scandinavians. Some girls even broke down crying, questioning why Swedish boys were not as great as Magnus, as in the olden times, the two countries were merged. Even the southerners were astounded by the beauty of Norwegians from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The Norwegians were the coolest. Norway was the strongest power in all of Scandinavia in Viking power, and the Swedes were the weakest.

Magnus later had to go on the Viking ship to the British Isles, where he took part in the brutal killings, raiding, and raping of women; Magnus avoided raping, but his fellow mates took part in the raping. The Vikings were quite ruthless many times. The most ruthless Viking family was called the Sarsgaard family, and the Wilentz family were the brainy nerds of the Vikings who loved reading Norse books and being super into maths and all. The Wilentz were not true Swedes or Scandinavians; they were Romanians with a Swedish accent. The Zaar family was also there, but they were known for keeping mice and known for building Lego. There was even a debate as to who was better, the Swedes or Norwegians, and the Norwegians were better in personality and mannerisms—better human beings.

Magnus found a girl in the burnt-down village in the British Isles, and she had broken legs and was paralyzed waist up, crying and begging him to

help her. Magnus, feeling somewhat mesmerized by her beauty, took her away to her camp, hiding her from the other Vikings as the Vikings came to the camp with blood leaking out of their mouths as they had turned into cannibals eating human flesh, and their eyes had turned black.

This girl got so scared she nearly screamed, but Magnus had to cover her mouth using his hand while it was super cold outside with freezing temperatures and low sunlight. They were true ice humans and snow humans; she then revealed that she was not a native of the British Isles to Magnus and that she was a South Asian woman from Kodagu. German land was also attacked and burnt by the Vikings there, so-called Prussia, that many fled off by sail to Australia, covering a very long distance, invading and having to fight off the aborigines.

She revealed to Magnus how she had been on a ship and forced by the British pirates who had raided Kodagu to come out of the woods, living in a forest region surrounded by warrior clans and agriculture, not like Punjab and its crops. They grew coffee in Coorg, after stuffing coffee beans into Magnus's mouth after which his eyes lit up and it was delicious for him, as she even boiled coffee for him and he drank it; he loved it—in Kodava blood, coffee ran deep. He managed to take her on a ship to Norway as he hid her, but after a while, she started to throw tantrums as she grew hungry for coffee, but there was none around.

He later grew very interested with her desire for coffee all the time as it drove her nuts. Julia, seeing them together, got furious and wanted to destroy her, wishing for Magnus to be hers and no one else's. This Kodava girl's name was Purvi Biddappa from the Bittianda Kodava okka clan. Julia tried to cut her with a knife as Purvi burst out in tears as Julia threatened Purvi in Norwegian. Purvi ran away crying.

Magnus saw all this and broke up with Julia, ending their relationship there and then. Julia then ran away into the embrace of Stefan's arms, crying; he was a Swedish Viking. He was not very nice, full of attitude and arrogance, but Julia just wanted someone to love her, and his father wishing for them to accept her, but she later found that he had married and settled with an Indian woman called Linda in Norway.

They had a grand Nordic pagan wedding in the woods and got married thereafter. Magnus then proposed to his new wife; he had fallen in love,

as all the other Nordic women grew deeply infuriated because Magnus was the best-looking Viking, thinking that they should be chosen, not her. But after he married her, the love was sealed. At this point, the British Isles had collapsed and burnt to the ground by the Vikings.

Julia accepted Stefan's request for marriage and became his second wife, and Stefan had two wives then as back in the days, the Vikings had the Norse religion and no Christian beliefs. Stefan thoroughly abused Julia, raping her every night and beating her black and blue; he even used to cut off her fingers and all, even eating it as he was a cannibal, so he ended up devouring Julia so she died being eaten up; Stefan was a Viking. Magnus was upset but could not prevent it; to avenge Julia, he had a burial for her. He did not stop Stefan as Stefan was his superior—a very important Viking.

Magnus later had a daughter with his beloved Purvi, and they were happy together, living out their life in Sweden's woods in a log cabin by a river. Magnus stopped living like a Viking, and Stefan stopped saying he was Scandinavian, considering himself a foreigner. He started hating being Scandinavian and even burnt himself at the stake under fire. Stefan did it to erase himself from Scandinavia.

He found himself at the stake and killed himself by slitting his throat with a Viking sword, doing it with his Viking friends' help; his Viking friends did this to him, being very nice friends to Stefan. And Linda was beaten to death by Stefan; he even ate into her bones. As thousands of years later, in the Kodava community, more Kodavas married outside the community to British, Germans, Irish, Polish, Swiss and all, dozens of them, even settling abroad.

My Dream Life

Living in the deep woods, greenery everywhere, surrounded by misty, foggy mountains. Cottages, wooden cabins, log cabins, drinking tons of coffee—like eight cups per day. Hiking, trekking, camping in the woods. Kawasaki bikers, large biker community, heavy coffee drinkers, Thar Jeep riders, love for nature and the hoot of the owl at a distance. Jeeps and bikes are the means to get around. Wondering if a life like this could be mine to treasure—is my description Kodagu or is it Scandinavia? Copycat Scandinavians, no snow, only mud, coffee cakes everywhere. No snow, no cold weather, only coffee.

The Doppelgänger



I was born in a city in Sweden by the name of Jönköping. It was a snowy city full of snow and cold weather, with low sunlight. The sun here set at 5 PM, after which it was pitch black outside, like it was the midnight hour's stroke of the sky. Especially during the time of the winter, it was terribly cold, and snowfall was heaviest. I had grown up here, attending school where they taught each and every subject in Swedish, not English. I even attended university in Malmö, where they taught creative writing, but in Swedish, not English.

Growing up, I was always a sociable person and an outgoing person. Every new person I met, I made sure to make them comfortable by being friendly and kind to them. My girlfriend, I met at a school in Skåne county. We met at a place where we could go ice skating, and she taught me how to ice skate, as I struggled to—though I first showed myself as being perfectly capable of doing so. I tried to prove that I was good at ice skating, though I was not that great. Her name was Anna Zaar, and she had a brother. She was an expert at ice skating and loved to watch ice hockey while eating chocolate ice cream, even while it was super cold outside.

She even loved having bonfires together and barbecue nights. She even loved to go camping, even when the temperature dropped to five degrees Celsius, but she could take it, and I could as well; she loved the cold and snow. She even loved to drink coffee, like ten cups per day. I found out all this by asking her. After this, she decided to teach me ice skating, and we met every Saturday to go ice skating together.

We were in Luleå, and then we went to Värmland. Though when winter came, her love for the cold went away, and she hated it. The

winter was terrible; she hated the winters. We skated inside together, and the sun went missing from the sky for months. The nights were super dark, and the cold was unbearable for me, like torture. My hands turned ice cold; I felt like my hands were going to fall off.

We got to know each other through the time we spent together and loved to watch Nordic movies. Even though the Nordics were super cold, we loved Scandinavia. I often visited the other Nordic countries like Norway, where I saw the Lofoten Islands, Tromsø, Trondheim, and Finland—the Aurora Village and Rovaniemi. I was a single child, son to two loving parents of Swedish heritage. I felt a deep connection to nature and loved to go for hikes and treks. So, over time, I loved ice hockey and became so good at it. I was a very sporty person who loved to drink plenty of coffee, like three cups per day. I had icy blue eyes and whitish blonde hair. I was 89% Swedish, 10% Norwegian, and 1% Romanian; I had done an ancestry DNA test of myself.

I attended my school, where I had plenty of friends. I was a pretty sociable person and helped the needy at charity organizations and worked for an NGO—it was an animal rescue one. I was a complete extrovert who loved to play sports. My girlfriend worked as a pharmacist at a medical store to earn extra money to pay for our school fees, as she came from a money-strained, budgeted family from a small farmland in Western coastal Sweden. As it turns out, after doing some research into her own family, she had distant relatives residing in Lapland, Finland, and was approximately a quarter Finnish.

On a day-to-day basis, I spent my time at the school studying hard, and then I would come home to only have assignments piled up for me to do, though I did it gladly, as I loved studying as well and putting my wholehearted effort into studying and my academic work. On the weekends, I loved going out partying, playing sports with my friends, and going to the café next door with my friends to hang out.

In Sweden, I visited many great cities like Gothenburg, Malmö, Stockholm, Kalmar, Jönköping, Växjö, Västerås, and Värmland. In Norway, I visited the Lofoten Islands, Tromsø, Nærøfjord, and Odda town. Besides this, I loved the Northern Lights of our land. But being a Swede, of course, I hated the chilly cold weather and the fact that the sun set at unusual hours of the day, like at 4 PM—it was nighttime,

midnight stroke's luck in the sky, but not in actual time. I hated the flights as it drained my energy, but loved to see new places.

One day, when I was walking down the streets of Oslo—I was just visiting—I got the sight of a man who looked oddly alike to me. He stared back, but he had an arm that looked robotic. He seemed very interested in getting to know me, but I got freaked out, not knowing why he was smiling at me creepily—questioning why he was smiling at me creepily in the first place, to begin with. It was as if he knew me already, which left me scared and with a vague sense of reality. I felt like I was hallucinating this whole happening as I agitated; but seeing I was losing balance and felt dizzy, I ran off back to the hotel I was staying at.

But for weeks, the picture of that guy stuck in my mind like crimson clear. I could not shake him out of my mind. I even quietened up and backed off from interacting much with my friends as they thought this odd of me, seeing it as me losing touch with reality. My girlfriend started to question my sanity and thought I was going insane. I stayed strong with them even after multiple questioning from their side. Before, I was acting super weird towards others.

My girlfriend and I then went on to decide to try to look for this guy in Oslo, but it was snowing so heavily outside, and it was pretty dark, so we had to stay strong and build our immunity by taking many vitamins, which was good for the dark. We then looked for the guy around in the neighborhood, and initially, we struggled to find him. We knocked at doors and asked around, looking for this guy. We even asked until we found this one person who knew where to find the guy and gave an address—but the address was in Sweden, not Norway. So we had to leave, as we found out the guy that gave us the address was a close friend of his. He at first was startled to find my appearance to look so much like his friend; he could not explain the mystery.

So, we got onto a flight, but we had to take two flights just to get to where he was in Sweden. He was in Östersund. We then went there, but we had to go from Oslo to Stockholm to that place. The flight was short, like four hours, but we were super tired and our ears hurt really badly; it was like complete torture and the whole feel of the place we had to get used to. We drove to his remote farm and tapped on the door.

When he opened it, he looked surprised but said, “Välkomna till mitt hus.” We then went in, and he brought us a cup of coffee to drink. He looked very much like me, so much so that my girlfriend passed out. So, we had to grab water to wake her up; she did eventually wake up.

We then tried to reason and discuss why we were so alike in appearance. We then got into an argument, fighting over who had the right to look this way and who didn’t. We got super angry with each other. We then tried to ask about our birth certificates, and he said we checked the dates we were born and checked the age that we were, as we came to know we were born on the same exact date in the same place, same hospital.

We were born in a place with woods, foggy mountains, rivers, coffee culture, quiet nights, and sunsets under misty hills. This place we were born in had a strong culture of living within the woods and trekking paths. We were born in a place called Arvidsjaur. We got interested and called our parents, who at first denied having a second son but then admitted to it. As I came to know, this man was my identical twin, and he was abandoned on the street, left to the dogs to prey on as he was crying a lot, and our parents hated him for his deformity—he was physically deformed; he lacked an arm. He then revealed to me that he was abandoned as a child for his deformity, but knew not who his parents were. He smiled at me creepily as he admitted he thought of me as his other brother, but knew not whether it was precisely it—it was a nervous smile.

Min bror, as it turned out, was raised by a loving, caring orphanage. They took care of him as he said, “They were like *min* family.” We then shouted at our parents over the call for abandoning him like that and questioning why they would do that. I even felt a bit of guilt for letting our parents get away with this even though we were just babies. We then called the police and sent our parents to jail for abandoning my twin, so the Småland court sent them to prison.

We then decided to hang out and go camping, hiking, and kayaking. We were quite similar in interests, as we loved nature and coffee. My girlfriend also hung out with us, getting to know us better. This made me feel good to finally have a brother and get to know him, even though I hated that he looked just like me, as everyone confused us.

The Werewolf Pandemic



The werewolf virus had started in Sweden and spread to the rest of Europe. It badly hit Scandinavia as, unfortunately, we were connected by land to Sweden; as a border nation to the right, our poor land, Norway. It started with a full moon that was icy blue in color as the wind blew strong, cold gushes of air with branches of trees swaying in the wilderness. Bikers were the only ones out. Our entire land ravaged, all cities burnt to the ground. No cities left; people were living in the countryside and escaping—what a curse it is to be brothers with Sweden.

This was mostly in Scandinavia. Most people wanted to flee Scandinavia, so many flights were going up in the air, but werewolves destroyed the planes. Quarantines happened; nobody wanted the werewolf virus to spread. It was difficult to leave the country—nobody was able to leave the country. It had been many years since it had started. It happened when we were three; we were twin brothers, and now we were eighteen, so every night and day, we were on heightened alert. Only our family survived; the others perished. Of the whole country, only our family—we were the only people in the whole of Scandinavia left. We had tried to flee, but werewolves were everywhere on heightened alert.

We lived in a log cabin and worked timber. It was the four of us until Mum got infected and bitten, and we had to shoot her dead with the trigger off. Magnus shot her as Dad died of a heart attack, so we were left alone. Werewolves were always there, day in and day out; no transforming back once bitten. Scandinavia's temperature dropped to -80 Celsius; the Ice Age started all over again due to this pandemic.

But we were built for ice and cold. Even though it dropped to -80 Celsius, our Scandinavian genes worked in favor for us, so we even went out with only a shirt and pants, not feeling the cold at all. We searched far and wide to escape, but could not find a way out. We stayed at the log cabin, so we had to eat dead carcasses of animals that had perished, and we had gotten used to eating. We had built the immunity; we had cooked and then ate it. We became good at hunting; we could hunt animals and eat.

We found it tough without our parents, but grew strong emotionally and mentally, which kept us alive. We even became emotionless towards animals as we had a hunger and thirst to survive. We had to stab animals to death using old rifles and a bayonet on the rifle during the First World War. We shot them; we didn't just use bayonets. We avoided the werewolves even when they were close, as they would kill us if we were seen, so we had to hide. And to avoid being scented out, we had to pour petrol on ourselves and take a bath in mud to avoid the scent so that the werewolves would not smell us.

For the longest duration of time, I remember that we had to keep hidden under a van that once used to be someone's minivan. We had to hide under the van as there were werewolves close by. As it turns out, we found old, rotten pizza, a couple of dead rodents inside, and someone's stinky sock, which once used to be and had unfortunately turned into an infestation of virus-infected cockroaches. To avoid being sniffed out by the werewolves, we had to pour petrol on ourselves and drench ourselves completely with that petrol—even wash and bathe ourselves in mud—that my hair turned from a whitish shade of blonde to dirty brown, which left me with a deep sense from within the pith of my stomach of disgust and unease, as well as a sense of unsteadiness.

At certain durations during the night, I would have to stand watch and on guard at all times, being on full alert mode as werewolves were on the loose and at their peak of strength. I would have to stay awake for half of the night while my brother would be awake, and then it was his turn while I would sleep. We hated life like that, but we had no choice; as to ensure that we both stayed alive, we had to do it with or without our willingness. After a certain point of time, it drove us nuts that we started to search out ways to escape, even jotting pointers on the old

map we found at a garage. We even thought hard and far just to find a solution to our problem.

Even though we did get into a lot of fights and arguments with the ongoing stress and anxiety we had, we stayed glued together like real brothers, as even if we did get into fights and arguments, we were still family and we still loved each other, willing to sacrifice anything to make sure that the other was safe and sound. Once, my brother almost got caught mid-air by the werewolf, but I got him in time; and before the werewolf who had spotted him caught my brother, I took a log and trashed that werewolf left, right and center without any further questioning. It was a protective brotherly instinct I had inculcated in myself as he was younger by a few minutes.

We looked almost alike. Magnus was the more protective brother, as I was slightly older. As an older sibling, I had to look after my sibling and take care of him. I even had to keep a dog who was a Norwegian Shepherd who I trained as a babysitter for my brother and to look after his needs. Even though my brother was twenty-one, he still needed one; when the dog wasn't there, of course, I did the babysitting. Being the older sibling, I never trusted him to be left alone and to take care of himself or even go to get something from nearby or even go for bike rides by himself as he found old motorcycles. So, I never let my brother do anything without my watch.

Once, my brother and I were out when the werewolves had left the territory. We went searching in the woods with a torchlight clutched in my hand. We went carefully, and my brother accidentally stumbled on a pile of stones and hit rock bottom, so I had to go down to take care of him as he started to bleed and the full moon was bright and shining out. We even heard a wolf howling from a distance. This was when we were travelling out. We had decided to escape, and so we headed out from Norway, crossing over to Sweden to Finland.

We were in Lapland. It was freezing out. We were walking halfway there as our bicycles were not working and the roads were bad, as the werewolves had destroyed the streets. My brother fell over rocks and I had to tend to his wounds with nobody around to help him—he fell unconscious. There was even an elephant that had escaped from the zoos nearby who slipped, trumpeted, and werewolves got on that

elephant, and it got bitten to death. The elephant, as we thought seeing it, had hallucinated, but it was actually there. We had seen much worse, like the werewolves kill our grandparents, so it was not very traumatizing for us to see this. Our mother had been killed by werewolves.

As we saw that elephant turn into a werephant right before our eyes, it was quite a sight for us to see—that was quite scary for us. It was huge with scales like a wolf but as tall as the pine trees of Scandinavia. It became bigger than a regular elephant with big tusks. It was aggressive and nearly attacked us, so we dug ourselves a hole in a big pine tree to shelter using a knife to carve through—and there was a hole in the tree before, so we hid inside the tree from the elephant. It worked; the elephant did not smell us. We hid well so it went away and we escaped, running as fast as our feet could carry us away. I used a leaf and the glue coming out from the leaf inside to tend to his wounds.

This was partly also the elephant's fault, for before it turned, it pushed him, and he slid and nearly died. But my brother recovered over a span of days we spent camped in the woods resting. By this time we had reached Lapland and saw woolly mammoths that had turned into werewolves; they had been resurrected from extinction. And Copenhagen was destroyed, so away with their Little Mermaid statue, which had come to Lapland as a werewolf brought its pieces to Lapland as it thought of it as bones for collection like a battle trophy—and magnets with Little Mermaid too, as the werewolf made magnets out of the statue.

We saw this werewolf but did not say anything to the werewolf, but the werewolf did not speak, which cleared our question. It was a friendly werewolf, unlike the rest. The werewolf was gluing the statue together to make a magnet, regretting destroying the statue, but just wanting to make magnets. We could not speak to the werewolf, but we watched the werewolf and saw what it was doing. We did not interact, too afraid, so we left running away. Made out of metal or stone was the question left in our minds. We were mostly occupied with the material of the statue.

We found troll statues scattered about in the snow of Lapland, Finland—mostly broken pieces of statues of trolls, the small troll

statues more like figurines. But the cold of the land was near deathly, like -90 Celsius, which explained why the woolly mammoths had come back from the dead. We had seen them from afar but not interacted with them. They were not very friendly as they had become werewolves themselves. The rain was toxic poison as shards of metal fell through the sky. These diseases had infected the rain, and the poison infected humans as they had shards of metal which cut humans, slicing them in half. We hid under a very sheltered ice cave.

After which, we got through the Baltics; we got there by crossing over Russian territory through walking and walking nonstop, not going over the sea. Then we continued walking south to Bulgaria. Though they did not speak English, we saw the humans and felt relieved as we started to cry. They helped us and took us in, taking care of us.

There was a human community there. Scandinavians died out, but the Balkans lived on. The rest of European ethnicities all gone—the werewolves were there everywhere else but the Balkans, as the Balkans had the heat and the werewolves did not like heat, so the werewolves did not get into Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Romania—very sensitive to heat. We felt safe, happy, and like this whole nightmare was finally over as the Balkans had built a very powerful wall to shield us from the werewolves.

The Librarian



In a little village off the outskirts of Kalmar, in the year of 1770, in the deep woods lived a woman of the name Agatha Skarsgård, who would later become the ancestor of the Bill Skarsgård. She, who was as fair as the snow, stood out on a chilly winter morning as a snowflake glided gently down, landed on her cheek, and slowly fading through. Her eyes as bright as those of icicles, with icy blue eyes that she had; once a mother, she was no longer one, as she had lost a child who was stillborn.

The father of the baby was called Viktor Zaar, a man of Swedish heritage from the great fjord called Sognefjord. She and him had once encountered each other on a horse-drawn carriage attack across the meadows off the outskirts of Norge, in a place known as Arendal.

She, who worked as a librarian day in and out, tending to books as she catalogued them carefully, writing down a full, long list of books on a tiny piece of paper shed from none less of a pine tree that was once full of snowflakes and now had turned into a piece of paper. She often had to search out books and found sometimes that certain books were missing from their shelves, due to the checkouts that were done of late by the folk who also resided by the crescent moon lake.

She often had to deal with dictionaries too, as she wrote their names out and put them in their right places, as many customers would come in and out from her little library, often beckoning for a book or two. Those who did not return the books on time were fined with the heftiest sum imaginable. One day, she even had to work late till the dawn hit and sun broke through, rising; she, who was once full of activity and laughter, bore down going back home all exhausted.

She slept through the day; little did she know her soulmate Magnus, was somewhere off the cliffside, riding away on his horse-drawn sleigh, as he named the horse Sven after his once pet, now deceased reindeer, Sven. Once she was up, she went to open her library and stumbled upon the great Magnus Ronning Flolo, the one and only indeed, with icy blue eyes and whitish blonde hair, which was much expected of any Scandinavian guy, as certainly all of them had it.

He then opened his mouth and uttered a single sentence, that word being, "Hej, jag är Magnus och du är...?" as she looked into his eyes, at first hesitating. She then went on to say, "Hej Magnus, jag är Agatha och jag kommer från Kalmar, och du?" He then went on to say, "Jag kommer från Norrland," as she then stared deeply into his eyes and the two went into their library, as she called out to him saying, "Välkommen till min bibliotek," as he then said, "Tack så mycket."

He then spent over an hour at the library and reading the books he found, taking some back for himself after buying them, not feeling the need to borrow, as he was very adamant to buy the books with his kroner, of course, as she allowed it. Deeply mesmerized by her beauty, he then out of nowhere said to her, "Du är väldigt vacker." After which he left her library saying, "Hej då, min kvinna," after which they never saw.

She used to constantly cry and have nightmares because of what had happened to her, and she did not have a baby of her own like the other Swedish folk in her village in Kalmar, with woods and the fika culture that was prominent. While she saw the other women in her village keeping their babies out when it was snowing, for them to build their immunity, keeping them out in the cold in the deep woods of the South in Kalmar, following a very barbaric way of life, with Småland also following a similar way of life.

She was thirty-four years old; when she was twenty-one, she always dreamed of seeing the places beyond her land and knew not how until she turned thirty, and then she went to Germany to visit, seeing the Black Forest, but she hated the Oktoberfest and the German language was very scary. Then she went back to Sweden to Kalmar, which was a very important city. She even had a mother from the woodlands called

Dalarna, so she grew up surrounded with Swedish festivals, like Midsommar, for example, and loved it.

She finally met Magnus after so many years of crying and longing to see him again for nine years, because he went off to his country, which was Norway, to the Svalbard area, as he went on to become a Norge soldier and fought many battles against the Austrians and Swiss, as Norway was trying to colonize the southern Germanic nations, even going as far as to claim Dutch land.

He used to think of her and miss her a lot as he fell in love with her, as she did with him, not being able to keep in touch, not aware that they both had mutual feelings for each other. Nine years passed till they finally met at a Midsummer festival. Magnus came back looking for her and bumped into her when she was running away in tears, cause she was upset seeing so many Swedish men with Swedish women; she also wanted love; she was jealous.

She did not see Magnus at all until he saw her and bumped into her as she was running, hit him, and fell. She knew not what he was there for and apologized seeing him, saying, "Förlåt, min bror." He forgives her and hugs her, not being angry at her at all; he was too shy to say much to her, as he had a huge crush on her; his face goes completely red. She was also quite shy and started to have a panic attack that she fainted; she was so shy that she fainted as he caught her before she hit the ground and broke some bones. He then picks her up after trying to wake her, but she doesn't wake up; it was a real shock for her.

She then woke up and saw him as she froze and was speechless. He took her all the way by horseback to Stockholm, as it took days to travel by horse. He took her to his house with pine trees right outside, which was a little outside Stockholm, and the house was built in wood. Her family did wonder where she went but forgot about her. There, there was one Indian lady living who had come all the way from Bangalore to Stockholm; her name was Malaika; she was half Swedish, half Indian, her father being Swedish, mom Indian.

Agatha woke up in that wooden house with the pine trees. As she saw a cup of coffee, she grabbed it to take a sip. It was hot. He kept it for himself; he always had it when she was unconscious, and they had a

jeep. She was super nice to him and friendly, but scared to talk to him as she did not want to make herself look bad in front of him. Not knowing that they both had a crush on each other, she found it creepy but was very forgiving, and also love blinded them both. He then bent forward to kiss her after she accepted it, as they said “Skål!” while they were drinking coffee.

The End.

The Survivor of the Pine Woods



Mama and Papa came from two entirely different cultural backgrounds; Mom was English Catholic, raised in a very prim and proper, wealthy British household, while Father came from a German background. His family had come from a very poor to lower-class background, though they really did work and struggle like dogs. Mama was born in the same parts of the woods Papa lived, even though Mom was slightly younger in age to Father. They got along well since they were just children; they would often go about running, hiking, riding their bikes up the steep mountains.

Though they were kept separate, and when the adults found out about their love affair that blossomed from their friendship, they were both locked away and forbidden to play with one another, as in those times, one was seen as rebelling against their own community for marrying someone outside to one's own community, even though both Mom and Dad had much in common. After spending so much time together and falling head over heels in love with each other, they felt their love was not worth losing and decided to meet secretly in the garden of their mother's mansion and run away into the woods, which they did.

They eventually got so far that neither family was able to find them, and then they had my twin brother and I. Though due to health complications, my brother suffered an ill fate and died young; he had suffered enough through the five years we had time to be together. It was not only tough on me, as I felt like a hole was etched into the corner of my heart and I had lost someone so valuable and close to me, not just in blood but in relation, while Mother crumbled and fell. I saw how she

was the one to handle the death of my brother Karl the worst, as she not only cried so much after finding out that her son had passed, she was pretty shaken to find him, as she was the one to—he was in his cot fast asleep when she tried to wake him to give him milk to drink—he did not steer. So Father came to check, and Brother's pulse was missing as they both grieved heavily.

Being born in the States, I never really felt very connected to my European heritage and knew not much of Europe, though through movies I would occasionally watch on television, I found Europe to be snow-covered with snowy mountains. Though most of my idea of Europe was built around the European community there in America, in the South. Though personally, I felt like what we Europeans did to demean the Africans was wrong, and judging them for how they look was so unfair—to demean them and whip them—as we Europeans also looked different, though we were seen as superior because we looked like unicorns with colorful eyes and hair.

Mother, unable to deal with the loss of Karl, started to deteriorate rapidly from a state of sanity to a state of insanity, going from happy to screaming and crying. She was really stressed over the loss of her brother. She not only started to drink, get into fights, she even started to cut deep into her wrists; the next thing you know, she hung herself as Papa found her. He tried to shake her lifeless body back to life, but she too did not steer. Finally, having had enough, Father picked me up and we both drove out of the woods in our truck to Alabama. It was a tiny rural countryside, and it really went well for the both of us back then; Father worked well selling fruits and vegetables. That was when he bumped into this Irish lady asking for some onions.

As Father touched her hand, he felt a cold press, and then she smiled, walking away without a word into the sunset as Father followed her, gazing intently to see whereto she would wander. He found her stutter her way to a barn where she lived, after which they both would speak, conversing over everyday matters and exchanging cultures as he spoke of his German culture and she spoke of her Irish culture. The two grew to be great friends, though sadly she had to return to harbor and board on sail back to Dublin, as she walked up the ramp. It was heartbreaking for the both of them, but she had an ailing mother back in Dublin

waiting for her return, as she had come on a short trip to the States, not to stay permanently. They had a hard time, and Father did not speak for weeks on end, avoiding eye contact with me; whenever I would get into some ruckus, he would scream at me and leave in a haste as I felt myself both greatly wronged and a good-for-nothing troublemaker.

While I saw my father with the new Irish lady, I felt happy for him, as I felt like he was better coping with the loss of Mum after she passed away and was making some very happy memories for himself. I felt not only happy for him but glad that he had finally found a friend who could help him deal with his loss. At this point of time, I was like fifteen years old, so I was feeling more mature about the whole matter. This woman went away to Dublin and never returned, as she sent back a letter for Father. As he read the letter, I saw his expression shift from a happy state of mind to be finally hearing back from her, to a sorrowful state. The year was 1918, and it was a very tough time for everyone, as people not only died with shipwrecks increasing by the day, and people breaking their communication altogether, as well as the world wars happening in Europe.

I too started to learn my own ways of survival slowly and gradually as my friends taught me how to hunt, as we had the woods close by. My friends taught me how to shoot at birds as I did well, and ate the flesh off the woodpeckers gladly with a smile across my face. My friends were called Timmity and Samuel; they two were my age and troublemakers just as I was. Of a different background, they both were twins of Swedish background, having had their family in such a troubled state back in Sweden, they fled by ship, full aware of the sea and its dangers. They crossed, sailing in hopes of a better life to build for themselves.

They taught me not only how to hunt but their language, Swedish, though after they told me about Norway, I would gladly point out the flaws of Sweden and state clearly and explicitly my desire to part with them as I was no longer interested in Sweden, but Norway was the news of the day. I could literally imagine it plastered across a sheet of newspaper: "Norway makes the day as Sweden suffers doom!" As I giggled, they grew red as a tomato, stomping their feet off in a rush to avoid this pro-Norwegian supporter that I had become in their eyes.

After seeing my father deteriorate and after suffering from the loss of my brother and mother, I felt heartbroken and would always cry myself to sleep, getting angry at my friends as I blamed them for being the reason to cause anger and frustration that I ended up getting into heated arguments with my father before she died. I even resorted to overdrinking at pubs; at this point of time, I was 21 years old. Being left all alone, I started to fall into a state of depression without Mum around to be there for me; I even remember the Norwegian trolls she brought me when I was a kid with a Norwegian troll book. I missed my mother very dearly and would even have dreams of seeing her in front of a book, reading it and then going up to hug her. My father was also lost in grief and was in a sullen state, so I never bothered him.

As Samuel saw me in such a sullen state, he would be there to take me away from the pubs. Sometimes men would try to attack me, so he beat them up. He never took me there; he found me there as I went there, even when he told me not to go there. He had blonde hair, blue eyes, and pale, rosy cheeks. He was Swedish, and of course, he looked that way. His brother also had blonde hair and blue eyes. I liked him as well because of his kindness, love for the woods and nature, gentleness and politeness—which were actual Swedish traits, not his traits—and loved his Scandinavian accent, though I mocked him, saying he could be Norwegian. He was born in Malmö and moved to the States. I even loved making milkshakes with him through cocoa powder and milk and cookies. He even helped me get over the loss of my brother and mother, so when we talked it out, I would rest my head against his shoulder and cry.

As I got older, I realized how the family breaking over the course of years had affected Father, as he too grew ill and lost his memory. He would often mutter Mother's name, "Agatha, Agatha, are you there?" But Mother was nowhere to be seen. Over the course of time, he too lost his sight and started to eat less as he kept trying to call out to Mother firmly in a state of belief that she was still there with us. He really did take it so hard that it slapped against him like a tornado on a strike; later he too passed on, and I was left alone.

I ended up marrying Samuel as we had children, and I made sure to be the best mother possible and make sure that the family stayed glued

together because I did not want the same fate to be for my children. I worked as a nurse to tend to the wounds of the soldiers who went into battles. It was a war between the Germans and Americans at this point of time; I was sixty years old. Our children were soldiers, and Samuel was a top-ranking general in the army—we were fighting the Nazis.

My boys went to Europe to fight the Nazis in Belgium through a ship voyage. It took days on the ship. The boys took part in D-Day while I stayed in America, so I was super anxious and worried that sometimes I would cry, hoping for their safety as I anxiously bit deep into my thumbnail that I bled as I waited for them to return. They finally came back after winning the war. All of them survived the war. I never had a daughter, though I always wished for one, while God had other plans, which must have been the plan of the old Viking god Oden.

The Coffee Pot Monster



On a particular autumn day in the state of Oregon, when the leaves were gliding gently down, sloping from the high-up ripening trees that were preparing themselves for the upcoming winter season, in a Starbucks cafe with busybodies scurrying hither and thither, a new girl by the name of Amanda had just come to intern at the Starbucks. The Starbucks, being short on staff, was happy for her to be there to help out. She was of the mere age of seventeen and being of first-generation Irish American origin, as her parents were the ones who had arrived not long ago, right before Amanda was born, to settle down from the capital of Ireland, also known as Dublin.

Amanda grew up there in Oregon and never really got to visit her home back in Dublin, as her parents had no desire to return; though Amanda was taught Irish from a very young age, and so Irish became her first language while English her second. Amanda was born with the most stunning blue eyes and orange hair, almost auburn in shade. Amanda had gone to the same exact school from a young age; the school went by the name of “Summers High,” where she learned a lot, performing well academically, topping all her classes. She never did have to worry when parent-teacher conferences rolled near, as her teachers always had the most remarkable comments to make of her.

Amanda had many different courses she took at her school, like English, higher-level maths, physics, biology, chemistry, music, and history. Amanda was so good academically that many in her class often asked her for extra academic help, which she did offer, but in group lessons, often staying back late at school till 5:30 PM. Soon she would return home and finish off her assignments.

Amanda was soon to enroll for college and had got into the top universities that America had to offer, but her parents were not so well off in terms of money, and so Amanda had to take up a job to pay off her fee for college. Once she got into Princeton University, she then started to work at the local Starbucks there, day in and day out, shift after shift.

On a late Halloween evening, Amanda was the only one on the shift as the others had decided to take the day off with the ongoing trick-or-treats and the packed, busy streets full of honking cars and scurrying kids eager to get a hold of their candy. Amanda had worked so diligently and had put on a smile every single day, but that day she felt quite unusual and had an ache in her stomach, feeling tense as she sweated. Negative thoughts overwhelmed her as she had a bad feeling for some odd reason being at that Starbucks that day; unlike the other days, she had never experienced such a terrible feeling, but she felt like something bad was going to happen, unable to come to terms as to what exactly it was.

Amanda was about to set off as the last customer had thanked her before leaving the store. Amanda unwrapped the green Starbucks apron from around her waist and had taken off her Starbucks hat. But just as she was about to leave to go home, as she went to grab her rucksack, little did Amanda know that the machine that was meant for coffee had started to leak through. She then discovered it and tried to stop it, unplugging the switch and trying everything, but the coffee did not stop leaking until finally it lay on the ground in a huge puddle. She tried to clean up, fearing that the manager and the store owner would be enraged if they saw the mess on the floor, but the coffee spilt then started to move and pushed her forcefully to the side as she went flying and hit the wall. She then lay unconscious, and the coffee then transformed into the size of a human and opened the door of the coffee shop, leaving its coffee handprint as it left the coffee shop.

Amanda awoke the next day to the manager trying to shake her, asking her what had happened and why she was laying in a pool of coffee and had fallen asleep without cleaning up the mess, saying all this in a haste and with much anger engraved into her tone. Amanda then apologized and tried to reason with her manager, but her manager, not having any

of it, left the coffee shop. Amanda then got up and saw that there were already customers, so she got to her daily routine, going home at long last. When she turned on the television, she saw to her surprise a news report of a coffee monster roaming the streets devouring civilians as many civilians ran screaming and crying.

The coffee monster had two eyes, no nose, a mouth with a tongue inside that was milk extract that could be found in coffee after it is made, and the rest of its entire body was completely made up of just coffee. The coffee monster had no ears, no fingers or toenails, just two feet and hands wholly of coffee. Looking much like a huge statue moving around made up of coffee, mostly brownish with some spots of white, which was milk extract. It was the same size as a human would be, but stronger than a human; it had the strength of an elephant.

She then received a call from her manager who, with much tense and fright in her tone, asked Amanda if she knew what was going on, to which Amanda responded that she really had no clue, wishing not to reveal the actual unraveling with the fear that her manager would think of her as delusional after she realized that her manager was not believing the coffee monster story on the news, as her manager tried to inform Amanda how she thought the news reporters had taken out all the good news that now they were coming up with fake news to entertain people.

After days on end, finally, the coffee monster showed up at the Starbucks one late Friday evening when all the customers and much of the staff had gone home. The only people there at the Starbucks were Amanda and her manager, Helena. Helena was grabbing her belongings from below the counter, not looking up, when suddenly the coffee monster grabbed her by the throat and tried to crush her windpipe and throat to kill her. When Amanda saw this, she tried to hit the coffee monster with a frying pan, but that did not work; she was pushed flying again and landed, hitting herself against the wall again, after which she woke with her blood on her head since she was thrown quite strongly. She then tried to run to check up on her manager but found her manager had passed. She then called the police and reported about the coffee monster, and the ambulance took Helena's dead body to the morgue.

After that, the police chased the coffee monster with the FBI also following suit and with a dozen bullets, with the help of scientists creating lethal pistols dipped in poison that was strong enough to kill eighty elephants single-handedly, with tea extracts in the pistol as well, that the police and FBI shot at the coffee monster. The coffee monster soon came apart at the end. The coffee monster just turned into a puddle of coffee on the street, soon flooding into the drainage after firemen arrived and doused the coffee with water. Nobody dared to drink the coffee monster, fearing that the coffee monster would come alive in them and that with the poison still there, they would die.