

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE FOLK TALE
TRADITIONS OF THE ISLE OF MAN:
RE-IMAGINING SOPHIA MORRISON'S *MANX FAIRY
TALES***

by

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PROJECT SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

In the
Liberal Studies Program

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Spring 2007

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ABSTRACT

The rich history and folklore of the Isle of Man, comprising Celtic, Scandinavian and English cultural influences infused with both pagan and Christian religious beliefs, cannot but inspire creative responses. Until very recent times, the rural populace of the Island, isolated as they were by geography, language and culture, held a predominant and persistent belief in the existence of fairies and other supernatural beings. This work places these folk beliefs in their historical context and creates three new ‘fairy’ stories inspired and informed by Manx folk tradition – particularly as it was collected and preserved by Sophia Morrison in her 1911 collection of Manx Fairy Tales.

Key Words: ‘Isle of Man’, Manx, folklore, fairy, ‘fairy tale’, ‘Sophia Morrison’

DEDICATION

To my Manx parents who helped me become what I am today, and who were able to save me from being ‘took’ as a child; to a beautiful young preemie of my acquaintance who inspires everyone who knows her; and to my own *Lhiannan Shee*, who, though she has been known by many names, allows me to call her ‘Nicole’—I dedicate this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Simon Fraser University and especially to the staff, faculty and my fellow students in Graduate Liberal Studies for their encouragement, support and inspiration. I am especially grateful to Professor June Sturrock who was able to reawaken in me a passion for the fairy tale traditions of my homeland. I must also acknowledge the excellent work being done on the Isle of Man to research, collate, preserve and make available the rich cultural heritage of the Island. In particular, I would like to thank Yvonne Cresswell, the Social History Curator at Manx National Heritage; Dr Breesha Maddrell, Lecturer in Manx Studies at the Centre for Manx Studies; and Ms. Frances Coakley, the editor of *A Manx Note Book*—that extremely valuable electronic compilation of documents ‘past and present connected with the Isle of Man’.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
1: The Manx Fairy Tale Tradition	1
Introduction	2
An Overview of Manx History.....	10
Pre-Historic Era:	10
Fairy Origins:.....	12
Early Christian Period:	15
Age of the Norsemen:.....	17
The Early Modern Period: The Rule of the Stanleys	20
Early Commentators on Manx Folk Beliefs.....	22
Historical and Social Context of the Folklorist	31
The Manx Folklorists	34
Introduction to Tales of a Manx Preemie	42
The Fairy World:	42
A Manx Bestiary:	47
Story Elements Referenced from Sophia Morrison’s <i>Manx Fairy Tales</i> :.....	51
A Comment about Preemies:.....	53
Appendix: A Sample Tale from Sophia Morrison’s <i>Manx Fairy Tales</i>	54
2: Tales of a Manx Preemie	55
The Preemie and the Pixilated Boy	56
The Preemie and the Port Soderick Outing	98
The Preemie and the Peel Hound	159
Works Cited.....	223

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Location of the Isle of Man	3
Figure 2: <i>The Manx Countryside</i>	65
Figure 3: <i>'Lady Isabella' - The Laxey Water Wheel</i>	76
Figure 4: <i>Climbing Snaefell Mountain</i>	80
Figure 5: <i>The Summit of Snaefell Mountain</i>	85
Figure 6: Kayleigh's Map of her First Adventure	97
Figure 7: <i>The Hills Above Port Soderick Bay</i>	108
Figure 8: <i>A Manx Loaghtan Sheep</i>	120
Figure 9: <i>Sugarloaf Rock</i>	141
Figure 10: <i>Ancient Stone Circle Overlooking Stacka Bay</i>	154
Figure 11: Kayleigh's Map of her Second Adventure.....	158
Figure 12: <i>St. German's Cathedral - Peel Castle</i>	167
Figure 13: <i>Countryside South of Knockaloe</i>	173
Figure 14: <i>View from Summit of Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa</i>	189
Figure 15: <i>South Barrule Mountain</i>	199
Figure 16: Kayleigh's Map of her Third Adventure	222

1: THE MANX FAIRY TALE TRADITION

Introduction

In the midst of the Irish Sea, almost equidistant from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and concentrating in itself the psychical and magnetic influences from these three Celtic lands, and from Celto-Saxon England, too, lies the beautiful kingdom of the great Tuatha De Danann god, Manannan Mac Lir.

So begins W.Y. Evans-Wentz's discussion of the Isle of Man in his 1911 study, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*. It is apparent that he, like so many other commentators, can sense the almost mystical forces at work in the place. My aim in this project is to show why this small island can provoke such a reaction. In the first part of this work, I will review the history and folklore traditions of the Isle of Man and describe how Manx folk tales, in particular, have come down to us today. The second part – the 'creative' component – presents three modern fairy tales inspired and informed by the folkloric traditions of the Isle of Man. The fact that such traditions are capable of evoking modern responses speaks to the power and meaning that yet resides within the 'lore of the folk' – those unlettered people who seemed to see so much more than we do in their struggle to survive and provide for their families.

Folklore is a broad topic and folklorists cast a wide net. Their catch includes: sayings, songs, stories and proverbs; herbal medicine, charms and wards against evil; dance and music; planting and harvesting lore; birth and death rituals – in fact, all aspects of the life of the folk. My discussion will be limited to folk tales, and more specifically to those of one place: that small magical isle that Evans-Wentz describes. The Island's size, however, does not dictate the quality or richness of its culture, as we shall see.

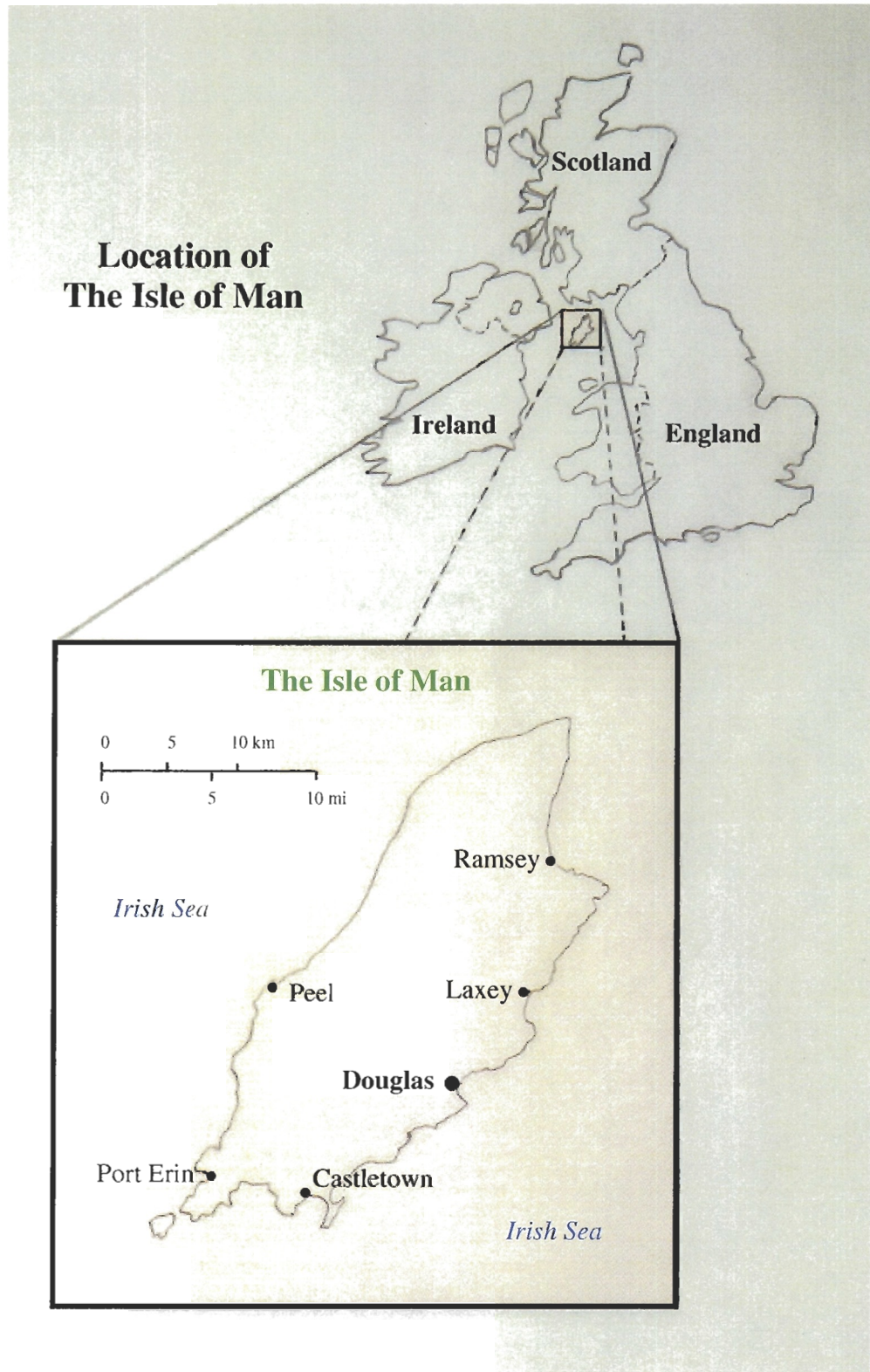


Figure 1: Location of the Isle of Man

The body of literature that today we call ‘fairy tales’ has two progenitors. The more recent is the ‘literary fairy tale,’ which became popular in northern Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many of these literary tales were written in response to, or in reaction against, the social upheavals of the Industrial Revolution. They were written by educated people and often carried socio-political or religious sub-texts – thus, for example, Oscar Wilde’s *The Happy Prince*¹ can be read as an indictment of materialism and the British class system. These types of stories do not figure into the Manx traditions under discussion here and will not be addressed in this paper.

The second, and far older, ancestor of the modern fairy tale is the ‘folk tale.’ Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek, in the introduction to their *Folk and Fairy Tales*, define the term this way:

“Folk tale” means exactly what it says: it’s a tale of the folk. If we resort to our dictionary, we learn that “folk” (when used as an adjective) signifies the common people of a nation; the important point to realize here is that the “common people” were, in the past, generally illiterate. Consequently, their tales were orally transmitted; in other words, they were passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, until they were eventually recorded and published by such famous individuals as Charles Perrault and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (xv-xvi).

Since this introductory essay focuses on the British Isles and not mainland Europe, we can add other famous names to those of Perrault and Grimm – collectors such as J. F. Campbell (Scotland), Thomas Crofton Croker (Ireland), Francis Douce (England) and Sir John Rhys (Wales). These men, along with many others, were indefatigable collectors of the oral folk traditions of their respective countries. On the Isle of Man—when we make the crossing there—we will meet Waldron, Train, Moore, Roeder,

¹ Wilde’s story, first published in 1888, has been widely anthologized and is included in Hallett and Karasek’s *Folk & Fairy Tales*

Morrison and others; less familiar names, perhaps, but nonetheless tireless and dedicated in their passionate pursuit of folk history.

This passion for folklore collecting that emerged in the nineteenth century was, particularly in Britain, part of a more general interest in, and quest for, antiquities of all kinds. Richard Dorson, in *The British Folklorists, A History*, credits William Thoms (whom he describes as the father of British folklore) as popularizing the term ‘folklore’ when he said, “what we in England designate as popular antiquities ... would be most aptly described by a good Saxon compound, Folk-Lore....” (1). Later, Dorson clarifies: “the concept of antiquities, even in its earliest formulation, was not restricted to written and material records of the past; it also covered oral traditions” (5). In places like Ireland and the Isle of Man, collectors also used the unique elements in local folk traditions as a means to define a ‘national’ identity separate from that of England and its spreading Empire.

The tradition of communal storytelling, as Hallett and Karasek say, thrived in ages and areas where writing was unknown or uncommon. Memory became the medium of transmission, not the written word. With the telling and retelling, stories were heard, memorized and passed down from one generation to the next. No two tellings of the same tale were identical – details varied, words changed – but the core of the story, its essence, remained unchanged.

In Europe, throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with the spread of literacy and the availability of printed texts, these oral traditions started to die out. The continuity of the folk-tale tradition was breaking down and stories were being lost. The world was changing: industrialization was altering the landscape in often-

unpleasant ways and forcing large population shifts away from the countryside and into the cities. The drudgery of factory work and life in urban squalor was replacing the agrarian (but not necessarily easier) way of living of earlier generations. Nostalgia for a simpler time began to develop within certain sectors of the middle-class and eventually contributed to the blossoming of the Romantic Movement.

The Romantics, and later critics of the industrial revolution, saw the value in the folk tales and folk lore that was rapidly being lost as the old traditions of work and family life changed. With this realization, the great age of collecting, collating and preserving cultural history took root. In Europe, it had its main flowering in the 19th century and was given great impetus by the work of the Grimm brothers in Germany.

During that century, the British Isles were scoured for stories, superstitions, sayings and songs of the 'folk.' Collectors with varying degrees of skill and often differing motivations produced hundreds of volumes of folklore for the cultural 'nations' that comprise the British Isles. One of these nations—the one that lies at the geographic centre of the British Isles—did not fare as well as the others. Size, location and language conspired against it. Nonetheless, it has a rich and unique cultural heritage, which is reflected in the folklore of its people. The Isle of Man is a Celtic nation located in the middle of the Irish Sea. It is within sight, on a clear day, of Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales (Fig. 1). Today, it is home to over 70,000 people; and nobody-knows-how-many fairies, bugganes, fynoderees, magical water-horses and mermaids. Despite its abundant supernatural population, the Isle of Man has been somewhat neglected by folklorists, in comparison to its larger geographic neighbours.

Towards the end of the great collecting era in the British Isles, Joseph Jacobs published a series of popular Fairy Tale anthologies. Among them were his two volumes, *Celtic Fairy Tales* and *More Celtic Fairy Tales* (published in 1892 and 1894 respectively), in which he included forty-six previously collected stories from Scotland, Ireland and Wales – but none from the Isle of Man.² In the introduction to the first volume, he states that “In making my selection I have chiefly tried to make the stories characteristic ... and I laid down the rule to include only tales that have been taken down from Celtic peasants ignorant of English” (viii). Jacobs dismisses Manx stories by saying that “the Manx folk-tales published ... are mainly fairy anecdotes and legends” (240). He is perhaps to be forgiven, since there was not a wealth of publications dedicated to Manx tales that met his criteria and from which he could draw. A. W. Moore’s *Folklore of The Isle of Man* had just been published in 1891 and Moore and Jacobs shared the same publisher. But Moore’s book contains only brief outlines of stories and not full-blown ‘tales.’ Edward Callow had published four Manx legends in 1882, under the title of *The Phynodderree and Other Legends of The Isle of Man*, but Jacobs was either unaware of it or uninterested in these longer Manx fairy tales. Fortunately, this neglect did not last long and there was an awakening of interest in Manx folklore—especially during the period 1880-1920—when much, but by no means all, of the folk heritage of the Island was eventually preserved. Among the treasures created in this period was Sophia Morrison’s 1911 book of Manx fairy tales, collected personally by her from oral sources all over the

² One tale, *The Sprightly Tailor*, that Jacobs says was collected in Cautyre and first published in 1861, bears a clear resemblance to the Manx “guide-book” story of Timothy Mylrea, the tailor who defied a Buggane by sewing a pair of red cloth breeches in the central aisle in old St. Trinian’s Church.

Island. It is this work that provides much of the inspiration for the three tales that follow this essay.

The folk tales of a given region can tell us much about the people who live there – what their fears are, their beliefs, their values, and even their histories. The dark tales of forests and mountains and wild beasts collected by the Grimm brothers reflected the concerns of the country folk of Germany. The rural population of the Isle of Man shared many of the fears of the Grimm’s German peasants. The long winter nights were times to be safely behind doors; the lonely mountain paths were to be avoided; certain streams, watery pools and the surrounding sea contained mysteries and dangers for the unwary. Supernatural, otherworldly beings inhabited a world just steps off the beaten path – and to stray into that realm was perilous. All these fears, along with much joy and humour too, are given voice in Morrison’s *Manx Fairy Tales*.

As with the German landscape inhabited by the characters in the Grimm’s tales, the folk tales of the Isle of Man are informed by its geography and its history, and it is necessary to appreciate both in order to understand fully the folklore of the place. The following sections will provide some background on the history of the Island and the collection of its folk history. Photographic illustrations have been included in the stories in the second part of this work so as to give some sense of the spectacular and diverse landscapes in which they are set.

Finally, as this paper is focused mainly on examining the Manx belief in the existence of the fairy world, no attempt has been made to undertake detailed textual analysis or to apply heavy doses of critical theory to the Manx fairy tales that have inspired this work. I accept them as the best story-based representation of the pre-literate

Manx people's belief in the fairy world that we are ever to have. Even though Sophia Morrison was meticulous in recording the sources, locations and dates of the stories she collected and translated (as we shall see), because she rescued the last remnants of an oral tradition stretching back hundreds of years, we know nothing of the original authors or their intent, and we have no way of assessing how the tales may have changed over time. Hallett and Karasek speak of the challenges faced by collectors in continental Europe and elsewhere in arriving at a written version of an oral tale. Aside from the inevitable intervention of the collector in shaping the story there is the complication that "the number of separate recorded versions of a single folk tale is sometimes quite amazing, reaching well into the hundreds" (xvi). With respect to the Isle of Man, we have one, and only one, version of the great majority of Manx fairy tales that have survived – and although many are similar in type to Scottish and Irish stories, they remain unique in that they evolved in relative isolation for many hundreds of years because of the geographic, linguistic and political barriers we shall now examine.

An Overview of Manx History

Pre-Historic Era:

The Isle of Man is a small place. It is 53 kilometres long by 18 wide along its major axes and covers an area of just 572 square kilometres. Yet within its compact size it contains a remarkably diverse landscape: high, windblown mountains along its central spine; deep shaded glens through which the many rivers and streams find their way to the sea; rolling hills well-suited for agriculture and livestock rearing; deposits of glacial till, thinly covered with topsoil; majestic cliffs and headlands; and many fine natural harbours. The climate is temperate due to the moderating effects of the Gulf Stream, which sweeps its coasts from the South.

Weather permitting, from the top of Snaefell, the Island's highest point, one can see Scotland, 26 km away to the north; Ireland, 43 km to the west; England, 45 km to the east; and Wales, 73 km to the south. Given its central location, the Island has been a hub for maritime activity for at least 4000 years. R.H. Kinvig, in *The Isle of Man, A Social, Cultural and Political History*, describes its strategic location:

The Irish Sea opens southward through St. George's Channel and beyond Land's End to the shores of western France, Spain, and Portugal; and there is no doubt that in prehistoric times traders from the Mediterranean followed this route and brought ideas from that distant region to the Isle of Man as well as to the other lands surrounding it (1).

Evidence for human settlement dates from Neolithic times and those early inhabitants left behind them monuments that fed into the folk tradition: flint tools, mysterious stone circles, grass-covered burial mounds and isolated wind-blown hill forts.

The presence of pre-Celtic and Celtic people in the Isle of Man has been established from numerous archaeological finds. A.W. Moore, writing in 1900, in his monumental *History of the Isle of Man*, sees, in addition, confirmation of an ancient Druidic influence in the folklore tradition with “the survivals among the Manx of the worship of animals, stones, trees, and wells” (42).

The archaeological record indicates that the Isle of Man—or ‘Man,’ as it is often abbreviated—had close ties to Ireland and Scotland in prehistoric times, and the evidence of early human habitation closely parallels that of both those countries. In *Facing the Ocean, The Atlantic and its Peoples*, Barry Cunliffe states that the region’s earliest megalithic burial structures appear “on present evidence, to belong to the early part of the fourth millennium [B.C.E.]” (173). The culture that produced these magnificent monuments—throughout much of the North Atlantic region, including the Isle of Man—flourished between about 4000 and 2500 B.C.E. Similarities among structures and artefacts found across England, Ireland, Scotland, and Brittany indicate that a vigorous maritime trade culture was in effect by this time. Archaeological findings show that peoples with metal-working skills moved into the British Isles in search of copper and tin around 2500 B.C.E. They would have possessed metal weapons and would easily have overcome the stone-based technologies of the indigenous people.

The main source of copper in the northern part of the Atlantic zone in the third and second millennia was Ireland.... Two major mining complexes have been located in the south of the country [which were in use from] the period from c.2400 to 1500 B.C.E. (Cunliffe, 225).

As we shall see later, these bronze-wielding invaders became the *Tuatha Dé Danann* of Irish mythology—the precursors of the fairy people.

It seems probable that the semi-historic legends, whether Irish or Manx, which depict the struggles between light and darkness, valour and art-magic, men and fairies or demons, really relate to the traditional battles between Aryan Goidelic Celts, with weapons of bronze, and the non-Aryan neolithic peoples, with weapons of stone (Moore, *History*, 37).

One may ask what this has to do with the folk traditions of the Isle of Man. In fact, it is a vital clue to the oldest sources of Manx mythology. The archaeological record of the Island is a microcosm of that of the wider British Isles. Stone artefacts, pottery shards, megalithic stone structures, burial mounds and early examples of fabricated metal have all been found there. The location of the Isle of Man in the centre of the Irish Sea made it an important crossroads in the prehistoric trade network and, consequently, it absorbed traditions, customs, superstitions and stories from a wide variety of sources.

The earliest mythologies of the Isle of Man are linked with those of Ireland – testifying to the close ties that existed in ages past. Mythic characters such as Finn McCool, Conchobar, Culainn and, most importantly, Manannan Mac Lier appear in both the Irish and the Manx folk tradition. More significantly in the context of this paper, so do stories and legends about fairies. The pervasive Celtic belief in fairies is therefore rooted in these Bronze Age cultures.

Fairy Origins:

The inhabitants of the Fairy world—in the Celtic view, at least—have two possible origins. W.B. Yeats, in his *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, gives the two most common theories: Fairies are either “fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved, nor bad enough to be lost” or, they are “the gods of the earth, ... the gods of pagan Ireland, ... the *Tuatha De Danān*, who, when no longer worshiped and fed

with offerings, dwindled away in the popular imagination” (1). The first of these explanations is clearly Christian and shows how the early Church tried to incorporate the widely held belief in fairies into its teachings. Fairies had been cast out of heaven along with Satan (and must therefore be evil). The second explanation offered by Yeats is more widely held—especially in Ireland.

The Tuatha Dé Dannan are the people who spawned Ireland’s greatest mythological heroes and whose exploits comprise a significant portion of the entire Celtic mythological canon. In trying to place these remarkable people in an historical context, Sir William Wilde, in *On the Ancient Races of Ireland*,³ writes that “the earliest historic race of Ireland was a pastoral people called the Firbolgs.” Wilde was of the opinion that the Firbolgs were the mound-builders and megalithic stone monument erectors of ancient Ireland. They were supplanted by:

The Tuatha-de-Dananns, a large, fair-complexioned, and very remarkable race; warlike, energetic, progressive, skilled in metal work, musical, poetical, acquainted with the healing art, skilled in Druidism, and believed to be adepts in necromancy and magic, no doubt the result of the popular idea respecting their superior knowledge, especially in smelting and in the fabrication of tools, weapons, and ornaments. From these two races [i.e. the dark Firbolgs and the fair Tuatha Dé Dannan] sprang the Fairy Mythology of Ireland (Wilde, 337).

Irish legend says that a race called the ‘Milesians’ eventually conquered the Tuatha Dé Dannan. The Milesians are supposed to have come from the south (from

³ Published in Lady Wilde’s *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms & Superstitions of Ireland*, 1887.

Iberia) and they are usually associated with the Gaels—the last of the Celtic tribes to invade Ireland.⁴

By the Milesians and their descendants, [the Tuatha Dé Dannan] were regarded as belonging to the spirit world, and, in the imagination of the people, they became Fairies, who were supposed to lie in splendid palaces in the interior of green hills (Moore, *Folklore*, 2).

Although these newcomers succeeded in their conquest, the defeated Tuatha Dé Dannan did not leave. Instead, they retreated underground and became the fairy people—some of whom migrated to the Isle of Man with Manannan Mac Lier.

Much has been written about Manannan and his association with the Isle of Man. Indeed, it has been posited that the Island was even named after him. However, in *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*, James MacKillop tells us that “informed opinion holds that the sea-god Manannán mac Lir takes his name from the island, rather than the other way around” (321), thus giving an indication of the very ancient connection between the god and the place. A.W. Moore adds that “it was the practice of the earliest Irish to represent their divinities as living in Islands to which under exceptional circumstances, mortals might sail” (*Folklore*, 5). Those exceptional circumstances included the rare occasions when Manannan vouchsafed to raise the magical cloak of mist with which he hid his Island domain from mortal eyes.

In Celtic mythology, ‘The Land of Promise,’ one of several otherworldly paradises, was much associated with Manannan Mac Lier, and Moore tells us that “the

⁴ One way of looking at these invasions is in terms of waves of technology. Thus, the Firbolgs represent the late Stone Age inhabitants; the Tuatha de Danann, the Bronze Age invaders; and the Milesians, the later Iron Age conquerors. In the eyes of the indigenous people, invaders with superior technology may have been viewed as ‘gods’. In support of this view, the fairies (the descendants of the Tuatha Dé Danann) have a strong dislike for iron—and, therefore, it is often used as a ward against them.

Court of Manannan [was] called the Land of Promise, which in many of the ancient tales is identified with Man” (6). He goes on to say that,

[Manannan’s] connection with the Isle of Man was supposed to have begun after he and his *Tuatha dé Dananns* were defeated by the Milesians, when he was chosen by the warriors as their leader, and that he and they were supposed to have taken refuge in the Western Isles and Man, whose inhabitants acknowledged him as their ruler (5).

This belief in Manannan as a real person could be seen, until very recently, in an annual ritual, which Sir John Rhys describes in *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx*, first published in 1901. He explains that on Midsummer Eve, Manx peasants would make a pilgrimage to South Barrule mountain, the site of Manannan’s former palace,

And it is to the top of that mountain that green rushes were carried, according to Manx tradition, as the only rent or tax which the inhabitants paid, namely, to Manannán mac Lir ... whom the same tradition treats as father and founder, as king and chief wizard of the Isle of Man (314).

With this background sketch of the origins of the Manx Fairy tradition and its link to early Irish mythology, we can return to our overview of the more readily verifiable aspects of Manx history.

Early Christian Period:

The Celtic period in the Isle of Man, as in Ireland, lasted longer than it did in Britain. The Romans knew of the Isle of Man, but never settled there, and the later Saxons had little influence. Frank Delaney, in his book *The Celts*, describes how, in the first century C.E., the Scotii tribe from Northern Ireland invaded Scotland (giving it their name) “and the west of Scotland thus became an Irish colony. The ensuing centuries of cross-fertilization between the Irish and the Scots led to a virtual merging of the Scots and Irish Gaelic dialects.... [Further south, the Isle of Man] was subdued and ruled by

Irish invaders” (51). The Island continued under the influence of the Irish Celts until c.800 C.E.

Christianity arrived on Man during the great period of Irish missionary activity. Legend has it that St. Patrick himself came to the Island, and while this is probably untrue, his immediate disciples certainly did. The earliest graves containing Christian crosses on the Island date from the fifth century. In 546 C.E. St. Columba sailed from Ireland and established a monastery on the Scottish Isle of Iona. From there he made numerous missionary expeditions and completed the conversion of the Western Scottish Isles and the Isle of Man to Christianity. His presence and influence was commemorated in parish and church names, “but perhaps an even more significant proof of what his influence was in Man is the fact that his name is still considered an effective charm against the fairies” (Moore, *History*, 74).

St. Columba, St. Maughold, and others established the Christian Church and their disciples built numerous small stone chapels, or *keeills*, all around the Island (to date some 200 keeills have been discovered). At the end of the sixth century, St. Maughold’s monastery was founded and became a centre of Celtic Christianity on the Island.

For over 300 years, Christianity flourished on the Isle of Man, and legends of saints driving out the older Celtic deities entered the folklore tradition: “The eponymous hero of the Island, Manannan Mac Lir ... and his people, according to Manx legend, were routed by St. Patrick, whereupon, being small of stature, they became fairies” (Moore, *History*, 43). During this period, the Isle of Man remained an important member of the wider Celtic community.

Although there is a lack of ordinary historical records for the period between 450 and 800 it is clear that much of importance was then taking place. Trade and cultural relations were maintained with Ireland, Scotland, England—particularly the northern part—and Wales. Christianity spread over the whole Island (Kinvig, 53).

Age of the Norsemen:

One day, around 800 C.E., strange long-prowed ships with large square sails appeared along the Manx coast and the sword of the Norsemen challenged the cross of St. Patrick.

With the coming of the pagan Norsemen the development of Christianity was seriously checked for a time. It was not until toward the middle of the 10th century that there was a marked revival of Christianity and the Norse began to give up their pagan beliefs. Their full conversion appears to have been a slow process, and even after they had adopted some forms of the Christian religion they still loved to think of the stories connected with their old gods and heroes (Kinvig, 77).

Viking raids on the coast of Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Scottish Isles began in 798, continuing for over 100 years. Man, however, although it was attacked several times, was less preyed upon than the other parts of the Irish Sea perimeter for two reasons: it had little in the way of wealth worth plundering;⁵ and “its important strategic position must have made Man a vitally significant base of operations for the Norsemen” (57). Kinvig finds confirmation of this in the Norse *Orkneyinga Saga*, which states that Viking raiding parties would sail from the Isle of Man in the spring to raid the nearby coasts, and then in autumn, before the winter storms began, they would return home to Man. Archaeologist Barry Cunliffe concurs:

The Isle of Man provided a perfect springboard, its location in the centre of the Irish Sea making it equally suitable for raiding to west, east, and

⁵ Churches and wealthy monasteries were favoured targets of Viking raids in Ireland and England.

south. Such cemetery evidence as there is suggests that the Scandinavian element was mainly male, the females being provided by the indigenous population. This would be consistent with the island functioning essentially as a base for maritime raids (502).

Like conquerors elsewhere, many of the Vikings found their new land pleasing and decided to settle permanently on the Island. Their blood mixed with that of the indigenous Celts to create the 'good Manx stock' that was to remain largely unchanged for almost the next 1000 years.

As the Viking raiders eventually became settlers, a kingdom of sorts was established, centred on Dublin – a major seat of Norse power. The Vikings – contrary to popular belief – were not barbarians: “They were fine virile people with a great love of freedom, and they gave life and vigour to the regions in which they settled” (Kinvig, 67). On the Isle of Man, when the pagan Norsemen started families with Christian Celtic women, not only was a new bloodline spawned: in the process, the blending of Norse and Celtic mythology and folklore began. Evidence of these domestic arrangements is found on carved stone crosses from the period, forty-eight of which have been found:

They give actual proof of the mixing of Norse with Celtic people. For example, on one stone a man with a Norse name, Thorleif, refers to his son who had a Celtic name, Fiac, and no doubt the mother was also Celtic. Other people named on the stones had purely Celtic names (e.g. Mael Brigde, and Druian, son of Dugald), yet their memorials were written in Norse ! (Kinvig, 80).

Despite this, it was still a period of turmoil and warfare, much of it between rival Viking factions.

All districts conquered by the Norse were claimed by the king of Norway as being under his control, but in practice powerful Viking chieftains fought each other for supremacy. Thus at one time Man might be ruled by a king who lived in Dublin, at another time by a king who lived in the Island itself. There were other occasions when the [Viking] Earls of Orkney

claimed to rule the Island, especially during the eleventh century.... As time passed Man came to be linked particularly with the other Norse islands of the Hebrides along the west coast of Scotland, and the whole domain was called the Kingdom of Man and the Isles” (Kinvig, 58-59).

The Viking-era history of the Isle of Man becomes less tumultuous with the accession of Godred Crovan to the Manx throne in 1079. By all accounts, Godred was a remarkable man. He spent a part of his childhood on the Isle of Man and may even have been born there. As a young man, in 1066, he fought with the Norwegians against Harold of England at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, fleeing to the Isle of Man when Harold won. Nothing more is known about him until he assembled a large fleet of ships to invade the Isle of Man. After being repulsed twice, beginning in 1074, Godred succeeded in taking possession of the island in 1079 on his third attempt. He and his heirs ruled for the next 200 years.

Godred introduced the institution of the National Assembly to aid in governing his new kingdom. Modelled on the Norse assembly, it was called the Tynwald (from the Norse *thingvöllr*, meaning ‘assembly field’) and its ceremonies and procedures continue, largely unchanged, down to today, making it one of the oldest continuously operating parliamentary institutions in the world. The annual meeting of Tynwald comprises the Monarch or his representative; the two senior members of the judiciary, called Deemsters; and 24 representatives⁶ of the various political subdivisions of the kingdom—then appointed; now democratically elected. At Tynwald, laws are proclaimed to the

⁶ Originally, there were 32 representatives from all the regions making up ‘The Kingdom of Man and The Isles.’ This was reduced when the Northern Hebridean Islands were lost from the Kingdom in 1156. The remaining 24 representatives comprised 16 from Man and 8 from the other Hebridean Islands. When the Isle of Man was finally severed politically from the Scottish Isles, it retained 24 representatives by distributing additional seats across the Island.

people on the old Midsummer Day (July 5th of each year, in the modern calendar) and are only given effect once publicly proclaimed at the annual ceremony.

Godred's kingdom survived for almost 200 years and gave the Isle of Man a long period of relative political stability. Viking rule came to an end when "The Norse settlements in the Western Isles ... were incorporated into feudal Scotland during the 13th century, the last, Lewis and Skye and the Isle of Man, remaining in Norwegian hands until 1266" (Cunliffe, 526).

By this point in the Island's history, much of the cultural heritage was in place to establish the foundations of the Manx folk tale traditions that were eventually recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From Ireland and the Western Scottish Isles, the early myths of Manannan and the Celtic 'heroes' were inherited; and the fairies—said to be descended from the Tuatha Dé Danann—came to inhabit the ancient green burial mounds and the forested glens of Man. From Scandinavia, tales of the exploits of Odin, Thor and Loki—many of which were carved onto stone monuments—were imported. From both mythologies, came stories of witches and wizards, and, in common with most sea-faring cultures, mermaids and mermen early on entered the consciousness of the people and populated their folktales. There was also a hybridization of elements of Norse and Celtic mythology to form something new: thus, the Scandinavian *troll* melded with the Celtic *brownie* to produce the uniquely Manx *fynoderee*, a creature which, as we shall see, shares qualities inherited from both traditions.

The Early Modern Period: The Rule of the Stanleys

After the last Viking king, Magnus, ceded the Isle of Man to the Scots in 1266,

there began more than a century of turmoil in which control of the Island went back and forth between the English and the Scots. Finally, in 1406, Henry IV granted the Island to the Stanley family, who later became the Earls of Derby. They, and later their relatives, the Dukes of Atholl, controlled it for the next 360 years (but for a few intervals), until 1765, when it was “revested” in the British Crown.

Throughout the period of Stanley rule, Man remained largely independent of direct English control, retaining its own constitution and enacting its own laws. During the upheavals of the English Civil War, the seventh Earl of Derby—‘The Great Stanley’, as he is remembered on the Island—remained staunchly Royalist and paid for it with his life in 1651. The details of this period in history are fascinating, but do not introduce many new elements into the Manx folk tale tradition (although certain stories, such as the tale of the Moddey Doo, are situated in this time.). The independence and isolation of the Isle of Man while under the rule of the Stanleys allowed the Island to retain its own traditions and beliefs longer than might otherwise have been the case, for outside influences were few. Also, the largely rural population were further insulated in that they continued to speak their own language – Manx Gaelic. Over time, because it was outside the English legal system, but so close to the English mainland, the Isle of Man became a centre for smuggling activities. The resulting loss of tax revenue to the Crown eventually, in 1765, led to England buying the Isle of Man back from the Derby/Atholl families. Thus, the Isle of Man became, and still is, a Crown dependency that is not a part of the United Kingdom. It is today a thriving centre for international finance (thanks to its favourable tax regulations) as well as a favourite vacation and retirement location for people ‘from away.’

Early Commentators on Manx Folk Beliefs

Diane Purkiss, writing in *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories*, observes that,

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were beginning to treat ‘popular’ beliefs as amusing curiosities, to be recorded and described in minute detail for their quaintness.... The scepticism about the supernatural which resulted was the foundation of Enlightenment sciences. Edward Fairfax⁷ ... observed that ‘many are the strange follies, rooted in the opinion of the vulgar, concerning ... the dancing of fairies on this rock or that mountain, the changing of infants in their cradles, and the like’. [The waning belief in] fairies is a symbol of the coming of ‘truth and knowledge’, while for Fairfax their persistence is a sign of the persistence of folly and superstition (198).

If that is so, then ‘folly and superstition’ made a last stand on the Isle of Man, for its people seem to have stubbornly resisted the forces of ‘truth and knowledge,’ as well as the determined efforts of the Church, and retained their old beliefs well into the nineteenth century, as we shall see.

Aside from occasional references in ecclesiastical documents, the earliest accounts of the Manx folklore traditions were provided by English visitors to the Island in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. These early reporters share a fascination with the Manx people’s beliefs in the supernatural while often relating details in a tone of mild disdain and ridicule. Nonetheless, it is apparent that they are all struck by the sincere conviction of their sources, and some—most notably George

⁷ Author of *A Discourse of Witchcraft as it was Acted in the Family of Edward Fairfax* (1621).

Waldron—seem almost to become believers after a fashion. One important point regarding these early accounts is that none of the writers spoke the Manx language and so they were almost certainly hearing stories second hand or through the filter of a translator.

By far the most important early source of Manx folklore is George Waldron's *A History and Description of the Isle of Man*, first published in 1726. He lived on the Island from about 1710 to 1730. In his introduction to a 19th-century reprint of this work, William Harrison states that throughout Waldron's stay "he was acting as commissioner for the British government, to watch and report on the import and export trade of the country." In other words, he was monitoring smuggling activities, which had become a major source of lost tax revenues for the Crown. According to Harrison, "Waldron is the earliest author who has given any detailed account of the superstitions and traditional tales of the Manx people."

We owe to Waldron the first written records of many Manx superstitions and beliefs. He relates numerous tales about fairies, changelings, water bulls and mermaids. He also gives the first report of the legend of the Moddey Doo—the supernatural black dog that haunted Peel Castle. He reports on clairvoyance, second sight and apparitions. Speaking of the Manx people's belief in such "fictitious absurdities," he says:

As they confidently assert that the first inhabitants of their island were fairies, so do they maintain that these little people have still their residence among them. They call them the good people, and say they live in wilds and forests, and on mountains, and shun great cities because of the wickedness acted therein; all the houses are blessed where they visit, for they fly vice. A person would be thought impudently profane who should suffer his family to go to bed without having first set a tub, or pail full of clean water, for these guests to bathe themselves in, which the natives aver they constantly do, as soon as ever the eyes of the family are closed (11).

He begins his discussion of changelings – to which he devotes considerable space – by saying that “the old story of infants being changed in their cradles is here in such credit, that mothers are in continual terror at the thought of it” (12). He then cites several cases he had related to him by people with first-hand experience. In one instance, “I was prevailed upon myself to go and see a child, who they told me, was one of these changelings, and indeed must own was not a little surprised, as well as shocked at the sight” (30). The weight of examples he provides and his obvious fascination with the subject leave the reader with a sense that Waldron cannot wholly reject as ridiculous the stories he has heard.

In other of the tales that Waldron relates concerning fairies, he makes a point of stressing the respectability of his informants:

At my first coming into the Island, and hearing these sorts of stories, I imputed the giving credit to them merely to the simplicity of the poor creatures who related them; but was strangely surprised when I heard other narratives of this kind, and altogether as absurd, attested by men who passed for persons of sound judgment.

... Another instance, which might serve to strengthen the credit of the other [story], was told to me by a person who had the reputation of the utmost integrity.

... A clergyman, and the person of more sanctity than the generality of his function in this island ... beheld something in the form of a bull, but infinitely larger.... The eyes, he said, seemed to shoot forth flames, and the running of it was with such a force, that the ground shook under it as in an earthquake.... after most horrible roaring [it] disappeared (14-15).

Waldron later comments that “I cannot forget what was told me by an English gentleman and my particular friend”; and he goes on to relate a story about his friend’s encounter with fairy musicians and concludes by saying that “he, who before laughed at all the stories told of fairies, now became a convert, and believed as ever a Manks man of

them all” (16). By stressing the respectability of the sources in this way, and in several instances by citing his own direct observations, Waldron's narrative, despite its fantastic content, tends to leave the reader believing what he reports: that supernatural beings and occurrences were quite the norm on the Isle of Man.

Waldron's history went through several editions and seems to have been a popular and influential document. Referring to the famous Scottish folklorist J.F. Campbell, Harrison in his introduction to Waldron's work says:

Mr. Campbell, in his “Popular Tales of the West Highlands,” mentions a curious pamphlet which he picked up in Dublin, “The History of the Isle of Man,” &c., with a succinct detail of enchantments that have been exhibited there by sorcerers and other infernal beings, 1780, which, from the specimen of the tales, leaves little doubt that it is Waldron's History (4).

Later, Sir Walter Scott used Waldron's *History*—probably given to him by his brother, who lived on the Island for a time—as an important reference for his novel *Peveril of the Peak*, published in 1822, much of which takes place on the Isle of Man.

George Waldron's long sojourn and his duties as a trade Commissioner allowed him to travel extensively on the Island and to meet a broad cross-section of the population. This Oxford-educated agent of the Crown must therefore be regarded as a credible early source of the ‘superstitious observances of old customs’⁸ among the early eighteenth century Manx people. Margaret Killip in, *The Folklore of the Isle of Man* (1975), places Waldron in his historical context:

There is no doubt that in spite of the criticism levelled at him [mainly in respect of his apparent credulity], he was and is the fountainhead of all our

⁸ From the Preface to Harrison's Introduction

early knowledge of Manx folklore, and the source from which many later writers quote (17).

Sixty years after Waldron, in 1791, a visitor to the Island named David Robertson wrote about getting lost in the mountains and asking shelter at a lonely house. After being made welcome, he began to converse with his Manx host:

From him I learned that, notwithstanding all the holy sprinklings of the priests of former days, the fairies still haunted many places in the Island: that there were playful and benignant spirits, and those who were sullen and vindictive. The former of these he had often seen on a fine summer evening sitting on the margin of the brooks and waterfalls, or dancing on the tops of the neighbouring mountains (Killip, 19).

Nathaniel Jeffreys, a former Member of Parliament for Coventry, visited the Island during the summer of 1808 and published one of the first guide books for visitors: *A Description and Historical Account of the Isle of Man*. Unlike Waldron, Jeffreys has little interest in the folklore of the local people, which he describes as “various chimerical traditions too absurd to be noticed.... These superstitions may be fairly imputed to a native melancholy, cherished by indolence, and heightened by the wild, solitary, and romantic scenes, to which the Manks peasants are habitually accustomed” (Part IV, Sect. 6). Jeffreys recites Waldron's version of the ‘Moddey Doo’ tale to illustrate Manx superstition.

H.A. Bullock, writing a few years later, in 1816, gives a chapter in his *History of the Isle of Man* to ‘Some Characteristic Superstitions of the Manx.’ He observes that “the lower and middle orders of the Manx are, in common with all old uncultivated people, greatly addicted to superstition; they have the fullest belief in fairies and witchcraft” (XIX, 1). Bullock provides a few examples of local superstitions such as “if the fishermen makes one or two unsuccessful trips, he instantly proceeds to exorcise his boat

by burning gorse or straw in the centre, and carrying the flaming material to every crevice where it is supposed the evil spirit may continue to lurk.” He reiterates earlier writers’ comments about the Manx people’s belief in the supernatural:

To this moment, every damsel who rambles beyond the precincts of the farm-yard at night incurs the danger of meeting fairies, and it is seldom they return without circumstantial history of miraculous adventures ... and as to the influence of witchcraft, it is an article of faith standing on much higher ground than the [Church’s] creed (XIX, 9).

With the advent of regular passenger service to the Isle of Man in 1829, the increase in travellers led to more frequent observation of the Island and its people. Joseph Train provides a final example of an early commentary on Manx folk beliefs. His important two-volume *An Historical and Statistical Account of the Isle of Man* was published in 1845. Chapter XVIII of this text is devoted to ‘Popular Superstitions.’ He begins by noticing that “many of the rights, observances, and popular notions, adverted in this chapter, have undoubtedly descended from very remote times” (II, 142).

Train’s account contains ‘new’ observations, which he says were specifically collected for his book,⁹ and references to Waldron and other early commentators. He observes that:

The natives say, that many centuries before the Christian era, the island was inhabited by fairies, and that all business was carried on in the supernatural manner. They affirm, that a blue mist continually hung over the land, and prevented mariners who passed in ships that way, from even suspecting that there was an island so near at hand (II, 143-144).

Among the folk tales collected for Train, are sightings of the ‘taroo-ushtey’, or Manx water bull, and the ‘glashtin’, or water horse, which he sees as related superstitions.

⁹ In a footnote, Train refers to a manuscript entitled, *Account of Manx Superstitions*, which he says was collected for him for this work by a native of the island.

He also describes the “dooinney-oie or nightman [which] seems to have been somewhat akin to the benshee [sic] of the Scots and Irish.” Train proceeds to describe several stories concerning another important character in Manx folklore:

Another cherished phantasm of Manks superstition is the phynnodderie. This creature of the imagination is represented as being a fallen fairy, who was banished from fairy land by the elfin-king for having paid his addresses to a pretty Manks maid ... and for deserting the fairy court during the ... harvest moon [festival] to dance in the merry Glen of Rushen. He is doomed to remain in the Isle of Man till the end of time, transformed, into a wild satyr-like figure, covered with long shaggy hair, like a he-goat, and was thence called the phynnodderie, or hairy one (II, 148).

Train relates many tales involving the Manx fairies and also the Lhiannan-Shee, or ‘peaceful spirit’ – several of which accounts appear in later folklore collections. He begins his discussion of fairies by citing an excerpt from George Woods’ 1811 comprehensive study, *An Account of the Past and Present State of the Isle of Man*:

Doctor Langhorne¹⁰ is of opinion that the Isle of Man is the only place in the world where one would have the chance of meeting with a fairy, for on a fine summer evening they are frequently seen by brooks and waterfalls, and on the tops of the highest mountains, dressed in green (II, 151).

He then observes:

In such veneration were the fairies held by the simplehearted peasantry, that on a stormy night every person went sooner to bed than the “good people,” as they call them, might get in to enjoy the comforts of the house. During the ... “great harvest moonlight,” the fairies are considered to be always abroad, and many stories are related of their excursions throughout the island, and particularly of their merrymakings (II, 152).

In his discussion of predictive dreams, Train tells a story involving the Viking king, Magnus, which demonstrates that some of the Norse tales and legends were still

¹⁰ A Somerset poet, Greek translator and social critic.

remembered among the Manx peasantry 600 years after the end of Norse rule. Later in his narrative, Train quotes other Norse and Celtic legends that had survived in the oral tradition on the Isle of Man.

The clergy, as might be expected, were opposed to the superstitious beliefs of their Manx congregation and tried to suppress such beliefs. Train cites by name “a Wesleyan [i.e. Methodist] preacher [who] affirmed some years ago, that he witnessed the departure of all the fairies on the Island, from the bay of Douglas, in empty rum puncheons, and that he saw them scudding away before the wind as far as the eye could reach in the direction of Jamaica” (II, 159). Given the continuance in fairy-beliefs, it may be assumed that not many of his parishioners believed the preacher’s story.

A subject of great interest to Train was “fairy doctors,” or folk healers and charmers. He describes meeting some of these, including “a very extensive dealer in propitiatory charms and in antidotes to occult infection” (II, 160). The most famous of the fairy doctors alive at the time of Train’s research was a resident of the north of the Island, Charles ‘Seer’ Teare of Ballawhane. Train spent time with him and tells several stories of his prowess. He was called upon to cure human and animal sicknesses; to protect crops from harm; to select the optimal time for planting; and to provide advice and interpret omens. In one instance, there was an early indication of blight in the potato crop that forced most farmers to replant their fields.

It was the opinion of the doctor that the disease of the potatoe [sic] was occasioned by the malevolence of the fairies, and in order to convince me of such being actually the case, he said that all the potatoes, which he had been induced to take under his protection, had vegetated vigorously [i.e. had been immune to blight], and until they cease to do so he was sure every Manksman would affirm that he had combated most successfully all the destructive powers of the elfin race (II, 163).

Train ends this part of his discussion by observing that the Manx “still believe in fairies and familiar spirits [and] stories descriptive of fairy influence constitute the chief part of their traditionary lore.... [From Manx people], I have heard many of the wild legends related by Waldron upwards of a century ago” (II, 163-164).

Train has much to say about witchcraft and its related superstitions. He believes that the practice was a long-standing tradition in the Isle of Man and notes that there are several Manx statutes relating to witchcraft and sorcery. He observes that as early as 1338, “Matholine, governor of the Isle of Man ... wrote a treatise against the practice of witchcraft then prevalent there” (II, 166). Train describes the various modes of testing and punishing witches and gives examples where such trials entered the folk tradition:

There is a hill called Slieu Whallan [sic], said to be haunted by the spirit of the murdered witch.... This woman is said to have ... been put into a barrel with sharp iron spikes inserted round the interior, pointing inwards, and thus, by the weight of herself and the apparatus, allowed to roll from the top of the hill to the bottom. Many other persons suffered here, in a similar manner (II, 167).

The foregoing early excerpts are from accounts written before the great age of the Victorian ‘folklorist’ in the British Isles. That folk beliefs occupied significant space in serious histories and descriptions of the Isle of Man is an indicator of how notable and widespread the superstitions and other beliefs carried by the oral tradition were on the Island.

Historical and Social Context of the Folklorist

With the passage of the Isle of Man Revesting Act by the British Parliament in 1765, the sovereignty of the Island was purchased from the Atholl heirs of Sir John Stanley, who had first been granted lordship over Man in 1405, and was now vested in the King of England. As noted earlier, the main reason behind this was to prevent the large losses in tax revenues associated with Manx smuggling activity. The clamp-down on smuggling was swift and had severe economic consequences for the Island economy. As Kinvig observes, “the smuggling trade had been so extraordinarily profitable that Manxmen had largely lost interest in fishing and farming. They had to rebuild these and other native industries, and in the meantime they suffered great loss” (116). George Woods, writing in 1811, said that,

Many persons being by its [i.e. the smuggling trade] failure thrown out of employment, emigrated to America; some went to sea; some engaged themselves in the fisheries; and others turned attention to the cultivation of the ground. To exchange an irregular and idle life for one of constant activity and industry is no easy achievement: the waste lands and short crops evince how much remains to be done (Ch. V).

Along with the decline in smuggling, there came a “temporary collapse of agriculture and trade just after 1765 ... and, again, in 1791” and, as a result, “numbers of every description were forced to migrate to other countries” (Moore, *History*, 550). The period 1793 to 1816 saw some improvement, but between 1816 and 1825, wages fell, while prices—particularly of bread—rose. “The distress, especially in the towns, was very great, and it became a heavy tax on the resources of the charitable, since there was

no poor law, or organized system of poor relief” (553). Poverty and lack of work again led to large emigration from the Island – mainly to England.

From about 1830 to 1846 (when the great potato famine struck both the Isle of Man and Ireland) the economic situation improved for two reasons: the large exodus of unemployed labour eventually created shortages which led to higher wages; and, in 1829, regular (i.e. thrice weekly) steamship traffic between Douglas, the Island’s main harbour, and Liverpool began. More reliable transport resulted in increases in the number of ‘stranger residents’ and summer vacationers fleeing the industrial northern towns of England, and led to rapid growth in Douglas and, to a lesser degree, in the other towns. Demand for local produce to supply these newcomers helped to improve the lot of the rural populace for a few years. Then in 1846 the potato crops failed: “Between 1847 and 1851 such large numbers of Manxmen went to America and Australia ... that the population in the country districts, especially in the north, rapidly decreased” (555).

As before, these departures produced labour shortages which increased wages. Higher pay, the revenue generated by the growing tourist trade, the repeal of the Corn Laws and reductions to various British government-imposed duties led to a period of relative prosperity.

One aspect of the local economy which did not suffer to the same extent as others during this period was the fishing industry – and this had important significance in the preservation of many old Manx folk traditions.

The rich fishing grounds off the south and west coasts of the Isle of Man had long attracted fishermen from around the perimeter of the Irish Sea. In addition to the Manx fleet, Scottish, Irish, and Cornish boats frequented the area. Kinvig reports that in 1826

the Manx fishing fleet employed 2,500 men, all natives of the island, and consisted of 250 boats. In 1864 the herring fishery employed nearly 300 boats and 2,800 men (145).

Fishermen were important repositories of information for folklorists for two reasons: the fleets were based in the more rural towns of Peel and Port St. Mary where many of the Manx folk traditions were kept alive longer; and the Manx fishermen, as a community, continued to speak the Manx language, thus preserving in their original form many old songs, sayings and superstitions.

It is against this backdrop of social history that the Manx folklorists of the nineteenth century began their work.

The Manx Folklorists

A first major step towards collecting, cataloguing, and preserving Manx history and folk traditions was taken with the formation of the Manx Society in 1858. Its objective, as announced in its prospectus, was “the publication of all the valuable and scarce Books, or Parts of Books, relative to the History and Antiquities ... of the Isle of Man.” Under the Society's auspices, the works of early commentators such as Waldron were edited and reissued. Thirty-three volumes were published between 1859 and 1893, containing the most important extant writings on Manx history, folklore, language and much more. This invaluable body of information became a resource to be mined by later folklorists and, in particular, was an important source for A.W. Moore in preparing his 1891 work, *Folklore of the Isle of Man*.

In the introduction to this seminal work, Moore expressed his views about the situation as he saw it:

The Isle of Man has become unfortunate in not having had competent collectors of its Legendary Lore. But few have taken the slightest interest in it, and those who have did not understand the language in which they could have learned it at first hand (i).

Moore's comments suggest two barriers to the collection of folklore prior to his time: interest and language. To these a third should be added, namely, insularity. It cannot be overlooked that distance, or difficulty of travel, undoubtedly played its part. Until the age of steam, the only way to reach the Island was to cross the notoriously treacherous Irish

Sea by sailing ship.¹¹ Offsetting these disadvantages to an important degree is the reverse of this particular coin. The language barrier and the isolation of the Island also preserved much of its cultural heritage long enough for some of it to survive to be recorded.

The great age of folklore collection in the Isle of Man spanned the period from about 1880 to 1920 and was influenced in part by the Celtic Revival movement of the day. Despite starting their work later than in other parts of Europe, the motivations of collectors were largely the same. They were racing to preserve the remnants of the fast-disappearing oral traditions of a dwindling rural population. With industrialization, migrations to the towns, and waves of emigration from the Island, the links to the land and the tight bonds among close-knit multigenerational families were being severed.

It could be argued that the collection of Manx folklore might have started a generation earlier, in the year 1860, when the Victorian passion for ‘scientific’ folklore collection reached the Isle of Man with the visit by John Francis Campbell of Islay.

Campbell had just published, in that year, the first two volumes of his classic *Popular Tales of the West Highlands, Orally Collected*. Inspired by the work done by Peter Asbjørnsen and Jörgen Moe in collecting Norwegian peasant tales, Campbell spent more than ten years collecting the folklore of his own homeland. As Richard Dorson explains, “[Campbell] employed and trained collectors expert in Gaelic and born in the Highlands and the Western Isles to interview and record the storytellers in their dialects” (394). Importantly, “Campbell broke new ground in focusing attention on the tellers and

¹¹ One anecdote will suffice to highlight the challenge. The Duke of Atholl—the ruler of Man—boarded ship at Liverpool on the evening of June 9th, 1736 and eventually disembarked on the Isle of Man at 4 AM on June 15th. Wind, wave and storm conspired to turn the 80 mile crossing into a six-day event.

the way in which they manipulated their texts, where the conventional book of folktales even today conceals the carriers of tradition” (400).

Sadly, however, his success was limited on the Isle of Man, as he sought to confirm and add to the folktales included in Joseph Train’s 1845 history of the Island (mentioned above). As noted earlier, it is likely that Campbell was also familiar with Waldron's work, and this may have attracted him to the Isle of Man in the first place. Despite speaking Scottish Gaelic, Campbell had difficulty making himself understood by the Manx peasants he met. A.W. Moore, in the introduction to his own book, said of Campbell that he was

a singularly competent observer and might have done much for Manx folklore, even at such a late period, and in spite of his also being a stranger, if he had thought it worth his while.... [However,] being discouraged at his Gaelic not been understood, and at the difficulty of extracting any information from the Manx peasantry, he did not persevere (*Folklore*, i).

With Campbell’s failed attempts, the exploration of the Manx folklore tradition had to wait another generation until Moore’s time.

Arthur Moore was a Cambridge-educated Manxman, a committed historian and antiquarian, and a long-term member of the Manx ‘parliament’ – the House of Keys. He was a central figure in the Manx revival movement that blossomed between about 1880 and 1920. Kinviig observes that,

the definite revival of Manx national consciousness and spirit can be traced above all to the influence of the writings and other activities of Arthur W. Moore (1853-1909), for many years Speaker of the House of Keys, who completed his famous *History of the Isle of Man* in 1900 and who led a Manx delegation to the first Celtic Congress in 1901 (173).

Moore combed the literature and drew together information from the writings of earlier commentators (much of which had been reprinted by the Manx Society) to compile a literary inventory of what had been preserved of Manx folk traditions circa 1890. He published his comprehensive scholarly study in 1891, under the impressive title, *The Folk-Lore of the Isle of Man, Being an Account of its Myths, Legends, Superstitions, Customs, & Proverbs, Collected from many sources; with a General Introduction; and with Explanatory Notes to Each Chapter*. That he could devote almost 200 pages of tiny print to this subject testifies not only to his exhaustive analysis of the available sources but also to the wealth of folkloric material that was still recoverable. While acknowledging that this work is a milestone in Manx studies and an oft-quoted resource for later folklorists, we shall not examine it in detail here. Moore's, *Folklore of the Isle of Man*, although enormously important and influential, is a collation that contains little in the way of original fieldwork. He does include occasional pieces of new material, which he cites as 'oral' reports he has collected, but his work was mainly a compilation from many existing (albeit, almost forgotten) sources. As Breesha Maddrell observes in her paper, "Speaking from the Shadows: Sophia Morrison and the Manx Cultural Revival,"

If Moore's work is examined in the context of the [Manx] revival as a whole, however, he emerges as an onlooker, a collator, rather than an active fieldworker.... He was by no means an integrated member of the community he was studying (220).

Overlapping Moore's work and that of the Manx Society itself was that of a truly dedicated outsider. Charles Roeder was German-born, but was a long-time resident in Manchester, and he was a meticulous and disciplined collector and folklorist. "On discovering that little work had been done on the Island, at least little work he considered

of sufficient depth and scope, Roeder began his own collecting.... He undertook fieldwork trips to the Isle of Man from the early 1880s onwards, and attempted to collaborate with the Island's antiquarians, with limited success" (Maddrell, 221).

Roeder seems to have had the right kind of personality and approach to engage the confidence of the rural Manx people. Unlike Campbell, thirty years earlier, Roeder had great success in recovering folklore still in circulation in oral form: "Roeder met the people on an equal footing as friends, without condescension, [and he] seems to have won them over, where Celtic charm and scholarship failed or only partially succeeded" (Killip, 23).

In 1900, in an attempt to enliven folklore study and collection, Roeder started a regular column on the subject in the local Manx newspaper. It ran from 1901 to 1904 and he compiled the best from it in book-form, and published it, in 1904, as *Manx Notes and Queries*. Unlike Moore, who trawled older writings, Roeder wanted to find the Manx folklore that was still in active circulation in his day. He sought out and recorded first-hand an eclectic mix of proverbs and sayings; curses and cures; myths and history; etymology and philology; fishing and farming lore; poems and songs – in effect, all things related to the then current folklore of the Island. *Manx Notes and Queries* reads like an almanac—it contains information from the 'folk' that is always fascinating, often practical and frequently bizarre (e.g. it was believed that if a child was passed over the back and under the belly of an ass, it would prevent whooping cough).

Coincident with Roeder's work, interest in Manx folklore off-island received a boost in 1901 when the Celtic scholar John Rhys published his *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx*. Rhys collected his original Manx content during visits in the 1890's and he

frequently drew supplementary references from Moore. Although Rhys related numerous independent examples of Manx superstitions and folklore and paid particular attention to those related to the Celtic calendar rituals, his most important contribution may have been to situate Manx culture clearly within the context of the broader Celtic world. That a professor of Celtic Studies at Oxford deemed the Manx to be a Celtic nation worthy of study legitimized the work of other collectors and can only have been a major encouragement to those engaged in field work on the Island.

Despite this growing interest in Manx folklore, Charles Roeder—another ‘outsider’—met with frustration in most of his attempts to work with Manx-based folklorists. However, he did have one major collaborator and supporter, and it is to her that we owe our knowledge of most of the Manx fairy tales that have inspired the second part of this present work. As Margaret Killip observed,

It is remarkable, considering the difficulties that confronted a prospective collector, that the Manx folk and fairy stories ever came to be written down. From time to time however, and almost as if by chance, someone with the right qualities of heart and mind seems to have appeared in our midst, succeeded somehow in penetrating the people's reserve, and was made free of a closely guarded tradition (17).

Sophia Morrison was born in 1859 at Peel on the west coast of the Isle of Man. She was a fluent speaker of the Manx language. Her family were prominent in the Peel fishing industry, which gave her access to the last generation of one of the most significant remaining repositories of the Manx oral tradition.

Morrison and Roeder first met when he was researching the history and traditions of the Manx fishing industry. Recognizing her ability and enthusiasm, Roeder encouraged Morrison and helped shape her folklore collecting methods. Furthermore,

Roeder firmly believed that because Morrison was a Manx speaker and a Manx woman, she was especially qualified to collect folklore – and this proved to be the case. He encouraged her particularly to concentrate on female informants, who, typically, had been ignored by (or had themselves ignored) male collectors. “Roeder insisted that Morrison's collecting should report authority, locality and date” (Maddrell, 226). He was committed to a systematic, scientific approach to folklore collection.

Although this paper relies only on the results of Sophia Morrison's contribution to collecting and preserving Manx fairy tales, she had a wide range of interests and was a major participant in the Manx and Celtic Revival movements at the turn of the twentieth century: “She was a competent linguist who dabbled with comparative philology, a naturalist, a poet and writer, as well as being a collector of a wide range of aspects of folklore, music and song” (224). During the last years of her life, she created and edited an interdisciplinary journal dedicated to the Manx cultural movement, called *Mannin: Journal of Matters Past and Present Relating to Mann*. She was “widely regarded as the Island's authority on fairy lore, having been consulted by W. Y. Evans-Wentz and David Rhys Phillips for the Manx sections of their respective publications”¹² (229).

In 1911, Morrison published the first edition of *Manx Fairy Tales* containing forty-five selections of story and verse, all but four of which had been told to her directly by Manx ‘folk.’ Among Morrison’s papers, Maddrell found the original draft preface to this work. In it, Sophia Morrison wrote: “Many of the stories have never been in print,

¹² *Fairy Faith in the Celtic Countries* (1911) and *The Celtic Countries: Their Literary and Library Activities* (1915), respectively.

having been handed down by word-of-mouth – these I have taken directly from the people.... Nothing has been written that is not *genuinely* traditional” (Maddrell, 230).

Thanks to A.W. Moore, Charles Roeder, Sophia Morrison and others, we have possession of a body of knowledge about the folk traditions of the Isle of Man. It is certainly incomplete – much more has been lost than has been recorded – but it is nonetheless rich, and it is unique. With the passing of Morrison's generation, the living oral traditions of the Manx people effectively ended. The Manx language itself has recovered from the brink of extinction and is making a comeback, but the outside world of mechanization, rapid transportation, new industry and high finance has now reached even into Manannan's magical realm and the doors to the fairy world are closing.

Introduction to Tales of a Manx Preemie

The Fairy World:

If fairies actually exist as invisible beings and intelligences, and our investigations lead us to the tentative hypothesis that they do, they are natural and not supernatural, for nothing which exists can be supernatural (Evans-Wentz, xxiv).

Regardless of whether the fairies are natural or supernatural, by now it should be evident that the Isle of Man is one of the most fairy-haunted places on earth. It was the Island's natural beauty that attracted Manannan Mac Lier and his fairy host in the first place, and it is that beauty that holds them there still.

In no other land of the Celt does Nature show so many moods and contrasts, such perfect repose at one time and at another time the mightiness of its unloosed powers, when the baffled sea throws itself angrily against a high rock-bound coast (Evans-Wentz, 7).

To stand by the deep pool at the base of Spooyt Vane, the great waterfall in the secluded upper reaches of Glen Mooar, is to understand why that solitary fairy beauty, the Lhiannan Shee, chose to live there. At sites like the megalithic chamber tombs on Meayll Hill, one cannot help but feel the presence of an ancient power reverberating down the ages. On a day when Manannan draws back his magical cloak of mist and one stands atop his ancient fastness on the summit of South Barrule mountain, there can be little doubt that there is more to it than meets the eye, that, indeed, 'there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy' – or in your science, for that matter.

With over two hundred years of recorded testimony—from biased and unbiased sources, from educated and illiterate commentators, from Manx people and foreigners—there can be little doubt that fairies are very active on the Isle of Man. But where exactly is the fairy realm? Rhys relates the story of a man from Kirk Andreas, in the north of the Island, who was ‘taken’ for four years by the fairies. When he returned, he couldn’t remember much from his years among them, except that he could, at times, see his brothers and other family members and he was accurately able to describe certain events that had happened to them when they thought they were alone (290). This story offers clues that, in the Manx tradition, the world of the fairies is contained within the ordinary world of mortals (or vice versa) and it suggests that we can cross back and forth over the threshold that separates the two worlds – just as the fairies do.

Diane Purkiss, in her book *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories*, tries to locate the world of the fairies:

Fairies tend to like areas that are distinguished by being nameless, unmapped, uncharted, and above all unowned (151).

The country of the fairies is underground, under mountains and lakes or under hills, or, in Scotland and especially Ireland [and the Isle of Man], under ‘raths’, or Neolithic graves. The association of fairies with wild nature places them ... always just beyond the boundaries of the known (204).

This idea that the world of the fairies is linked to our world through Nature somehow, and that the inhabitants there have a deep respect for, and close connection to the natural environment, is common in the Celtic folklore tradition. We know the fairies shun ‘civilization’ and abhor machine noise, and we can only assume that as we cut down the trees and divert the natural water courses, as we push roads through what had been

inaccessible regions, as we pave over the countryside, we are closing one by one the portals to the fairy realm.

Certainly, the Manx fairies seem less inclined to visit us than they once were. They always had their own agendas and tolerated us as long as we remained respectful of them – and, in return, they could be very helpful and friendly. If we left out fresh water or milk for them and kept a welcoming fire smouldering in the hearth, they would enter our homes if the doors were unbarred and bring us luck. They would cross over to us as long as there were green mounds, deep glens and mist-covered lonely mountain paths to attract them. As such places diminish and we lock ourselves away from the natural world, the fairies and their ilk don't cross into our world much anymore. Indeed, why should they? Their world has changed little compared to ours for theirs is not yet spoiled.

The folklorists of the 19th century, as they witnessed the relentless march of progress and industrialization, saw an urgent need for collecting and preserving the songs, sayings, superstitions and stories of earlier times. They understood that there was a wisdom passed down through the generations by way of the oral tradition that was rapidly being lost. Despite the best intentions of collectors and preservers who rushed to tap the memories of the last generations of the unlettered rural population, there is no doubt that the very process of preserving oral history brings on a kind of death. Once committed to paper or to audiotape—once fixed in place and time and voice—the oral tradition comes to an end. Once stories can be read from a book, what need is there for storytellers to remember a tale, or to keep it fresh and meaningful for a new audience or a new circumstance? Even though the oral tradition is still alive in some parts of the

world—in what we (but not the fairies) would call the underdeveloped world—it is no longer thriving on the Isle of Man or in much of the British Isles. And it is unlikely ever to return.

In order to retain the folk traditions in the collective consciousness and not lose them utterly, we must be content with ‘reinventing’ or ‘reinterpreted’ the extant body of knowledge that was saved before the oral traditions passed away. It may be a poor substitute for the vibrancy, vitality and colour of an old tale told by an elder around the *chiollagh*¹³ on a cold night, but it is something.

When it comes to reinventing some of the Manx tales there has been a tendency to pitch the ‘new takes’ at children. In these versions, fairies become the winged flower sprites of Victorian romanticism; the Moddey Doo—the spectral black dog of Peel Castle—becomes a sort of cuddly shaggy puppy; and the fierce Buggane is transformed into a rough, gruff teddy bear.

In considering this tendency to recast Manx folktales as children's stories, it is important to remember that the original tales were never meant as such. Certainly, children would have heard them, but they were essentially stories told by adults, to adults. In this, I share the view expressed by J.R.R. Tolkien in his famous essay, *On Fairy Stories*, where he acknowledges that,

In recent times fairy-stories have usually been written or “adapted” for children ... [but] the association of children and fairy-stories is an accident of our domestic history.... Children as a class ... neither like fairy-stories more, nor understand them better than adults do” (34-35).

¹³ The traditional Manx open-hearth fireplace.

Later, he observes that, “If a fairy-story as a kind is worth reading at all it is worthy to be written for and read by adults” (45).

Children very seldom figure in Manx tales – with the one important exception of stories concerning changeling babies. The events recounted in the stories collected by Moore, Roeder, Morrison and others almost always happen to adults. Many tales are dark. Few were intended to be funny. Most are cautionary in nature.

The new stories that make up the second part of this work try to strike a middle ground. In them, the fairy realm exists as a sort of parallel world still connected to our own ‘real’ world, but skewed so that it does not quite overlap perfectly – either in time or in space. The heroine is a young girl—someone still open to fairy influence and, so, still able to participate in events in the fairy realm. The supernatural beings she encounters there retain the serious, often menacing aspects of their counterparts in the traditional stories. Thus, the fairies are not ‘cute’, the buggane is malevolent and the witch is at least as sinister as her original namesake was.

In focusing on ‘fairies’ in these stories, I adopt the view expressed by Professor Rhys when he said that, “stories connected with the fairies ... [are] the richest lode to be exploited in the mine of Celtic folklore” (xi).

Finally, if I were presumptuous enough to suggest a literary mentor for these new Manx Tales, it would be Hans Christian Anderson. He did well what I can only attempt.

[In] the tales of Hans Christian Anderson (1805-1875) the link with the folk tale remains strong. We perceive Anderson as a writer of fairy tales rather than as a collector.... Anderson came from a working-class background in which the oral folk tale was common currency ... so it is hardly surprising to discover that several of Anderson’s better-known tales

either allude to, or are re-tellings of, traditional stories (Hallett and Karasek, xx).

A Manx Bestiary:

There is a bewildering array of inhabitants in the Manx fairy realm. They arrived there from all over the Celtic world and from Scandinavia. Often the same creature is called by many names and, equally as often, similarly-named creatures have widely varying attributes. Here are the ones that I have first-hand experience with:

Buggane:

Large, fierce and bad tempered, they are covered in coarse hair and have great tusked mouths and fiery eyes. In some ways they are similar to the Fynoderee, only much larger, darker in temperament and more menacing. A.W. Moore called them “The most notorious of the fiends in Man” (*Folklore*, 60) and added that they were “for the most part of evil and malicious natures” (55). Bugganes are almost always mad with rage. They like to roar and destroy things built by humans. They can materialize from out of the earth and have large clawed hands capable of breaking rock.

Cabbyl Ushtey:

The Cabbyl Ushtey is a mischievous water horse and a friend to the mer-people. It is similar in nature to the Taroo-Ushtey, the water bull. The Scottish equivalent is the Water-Kelpie or the ‘*each uisge*’. In Scandinavia, the water horse is known as a *Vatna-Hestr*. The Glashan or Glashtin is a related creature with horse-like characteristics and is often confused with the Cabbyl Ushtey, but Glashtins are much more malevolent.

Changelings:

Fairy children, for unknown reasons, are frequently sickly babies (perhaps it is genetic and related to excessive inbreeding). In order to ensure their survival, fairies will often exchange their sickly child for a healthy human one. Fairy children seem to thrive on human mother's milk; they grow stronger, and can eventually return to the fairy world. New-born human infants are particularly susceptible to being exchanged between the time of their birth and their baptism. Waldron and others cite some of the many ritualistic

precautions taken by mothers and nurses to prevent a newborn's abduction. Tragically, the only way to tell for sure if a child is a changeling is to employ a trial by fire.

Changelings feature prominently in fairy literature. The belief that new-born babies were special (in various ways) goes back to ancient Mesopotamia. Diane Purkiss observes that,

[In the ancient world,] newborn babies were thought to have a special relationship with the underworld which allowed them to control, or to act as, powerful demons through the performance of magical rituals.... The womb, like the tomb, is the place where a crossing from death to life is made (15-16).

Fairies:

The true origin of the Manx fairies is irrelevant (and possibly unknowable). What is important is that they exist. They are related—distantly—to their cousins who live in Ireland and Scotland. Fairies have the ability to change their size, but seem most comfortable when 2-3 feet tall. They dress in blues and greens, mainly, and almost always sport red peaked caps. They love to hunt and to ride (on their own ponies as well as on our full-sized horses). They are often seen out fishing in their small boats. Music, dance and feasting are, of course, vitally important to them. They live under hills, in wooded valleys and in ancient burial mounds and tumuli. They can choose to be seen in our world or not – as the mood or the need strikes them. Above all things, they demand respect and consideration from humans. In return they bring good luck and perform small services. An odd belief has become entrenched in Manx folklore (and that of other places) that they don't like to be called by the name 'fairy.' Consequently, people allude to them by odd sobriquets such as 'Themselves', 'the Good Folk', and 'the Little People'. In my experience, this is not necessary—as long as one maintains the proper level of respect, they don't seem to mind what one calls them.

Fynoderee/Phynodderree:

He is a large hairy creature, said by some to be a cursed fairy. He seems to be a hybrid, exhibiting aspects of both the Scottish brownie and the Scandinavian troll. "In appearance he is something between a man and beast, being covered with dark shaggy hair and having fiery eyes" (Moore, 53). Fynoderee are solitary creatures, but are

generally helpful to respectful humans – often assisting them with farming and building tasks. In this regard, he resembles the Irish Phouka. While big and strong, the Fynoderee is not renowned for his intelligence.

Glashtin/Glashan:

These are shape-shifting equine creatures. They are the ‘fallen’ counterparts of the Cabbyl Ushtey. Although they can transform (almost completely) into human form, they retain their horses’ ears and a snout-like face, and thus betray their true nature. J.M. Jeffcott says that “the Glashtyn was a water-goblin, whose dwelling was a slimy cave ... or a deep dark basin excavated by the rushing and eroding water in the rocky bed of a river.”¹⁴

Kobolds/Gobolds:

Non-native visitors to the Isle of Man, Kobolds are a Northern European creature and, like the troll, entered Manx mythology via the Norse tradition. A few came over with the Norsemen (as did the trolls) but are now thought to be extinct on the island. In the past they menaced local farmers by stealing sheep and milk. “Gobolds are creatures who choose as their home the caves.... At Spanish Head [at the south of the Island] they deprived an unfortunate man of nearly his whole flock of sheep—they disappeared one by one.... This farmer’s son made a search into the gobold’s cave, where he saw the bones of many of the sheep lying about.”¹⁵ Sir Walter Scott described Kobolds as a species of gnomes, who haunted the dark and solitary places and were often seen in mines.

Lhiannan Shee:

In Ireland, the Leanan-Sidhe was the acknowledged *spirit of life* whereas the Ban-Sidhe (or Banshee) was the *spirit of death*. In the Isle of Man, she is a guardian spirit. Always a solitary creature, she often dwells near deep pools beside waterfalls. The Lhiannan Shee is strikingly beautiful and many a mortal man has lost his heart to one.

¹⁴ J.M. Jeffcott. “Some Ancient Manx Superstitions”, *The Manx Note Book*, Vol. 1, April 1885.

¹⁵ Reported in *Shadowland in Ellan Vannin*, by I.H. Loney, Elliot Stock, London, 1890.

Mermen/Mermaids:

Not surprisingly for an Island nation, the Isle of Man has many tales of encounters with mer-people. They are said to live in fabulous sunken cities off the south and south-east coasts of the Island. In Manx, they are known as ‘Ben-Varrey’—woman of the sea; or ‘Dooiney-Varrey’—man of the sea. The mer-people, in common with descriptions from other lands, are human-appearing above the waist (except that some have webbed fingers) and fish-like below. Their large powerful tails allow them some mobility on land. “[The mermaid] was generally of an affectionate and gentle disposition, though terrible when angered” (Moore, *Folklore*, 55). Mer-people tend to avoid any company except that of their own species but because of the Isle of Man's relative isolation and beauty, they have always been attracted there.

Moddey Doo:

The story of the great black dog with the burning eyes who haunted Peel Castle in the seventeenth century is one of the oldest recorded superstitions on the Isle of Man (Waldron described it in 1726). Quoting J.F. Campbell, Moore observes that “phantom dogs abound in Celtic stories” (*Folklore*, 62).

Pixies:

Pixies (or piskies, as they are sometimes called) are not native to the Isle of Man. They appear most frequently in the folk literature of Cornwall. “In general appearance the fairies were much the same as pixies” (Evans-Wentz, 177) – which can cause confusion for humans. For some reason, pixies and fairies are not on good terms with each other. Pixies tend to favour living underground in old mine workings.

Witches/Charmers:

There is a long history of witchcraft on the Isle of Man. Joseph Train (II, 166) cites that in 1338, a governor of the Island wrote a treatise on the matter. But witches were there long before that. Train also tells us of a famous witch named Ada who was known to have advised the Island's Viking King, Olaf Goddardson, and saved his life once. There were numerous witch trials held on the Isle of Man and several convictions, but only two court-sanctioned executions (a mother and son were burned in the main square at Castletown in 1617). Most of those charged were really “Charmers” and so,

while technically guilty under the law, they were in such great demand by the Manx people that they were sentenced to no more than brief imprisonment and/or public penance. In 1891, Moore asserted that “the belief in witchcraft is very ancient ... indeed it is not altogether extinct either in the Isle of Man, or elsewhere, at the present day” (*Folklore*, 78).

Wizards/Fairy Doctors:

Wizards and enchanters figure in many old tales. Indeed, Manannan Mac Lier himself was said to be a formidable necromancer. Many enchanters come out of the Druidic tradition for, “The Druids of Ireland appear to us above all as magicians and prophets. They foretell the future; they interpret the secret will of the *fées* (fairies)” (Evans-Wentz, 257).

The Fairy Doctor, in contrast, is a human who has acquired seemingly supernatural knowledge of the world. He is a predictor and prognosticator; a healer and an adviser. “[Charmers and Fairy Doctors] used certain formulas and practiced various ceremonies for the purpose of curing diseases ... and they also made use of their powers to counteract the spells of Fairies as well as those of the malevolent Sorcerers or Witches” (Moore, *Folklore*, 78). John Rhys believed that “charming is hereditary, and ... the ‘charming families’ are comparatively few in number, and this looks as if they descended from the family physicians or druids ... in ancient times” (300).

Story Elements Referenced from Sophia Morrison’s *Manx Fairy Tales*:

Sophia Morrison’s collection, *Manx Fairy Tales*, provides the main inspiration for the stories that follow. I have tried to weave a number of the characters and story elements, that appear in many of the tales she collected, into my work. My objective is not to investigate specific themes contained in, or morals suggested by, Morrison’s collection; rather, I am interested in exploring the fairy world that is glimpsed by considering the collection as a whole. The accumulation of detail that builds with each story, proverb and poem gives us some sense of what a Manx peasant’s perception of the

fairy realm might have been. It is a world that seems very real and often threatening; it is near-by, but not obvious; doorways are many, and can open at any time; it is a world seen out of the corner of one's eye.

The stories drawn upon from *Manx Fairy Tales* are listed below.¹⁶ My sins of omission include not taking advantage of Morrison's numerous and marvellous citations of bird and animal lore and not incorporating the several tales relating to Irish Mythology.

Encounters with Fairies

- *Themselves*
- *The Silver Cup*
- *The Fairy Doctor*
- *Billy Beg, Tom Beg, and the Fairies*
- *The Little Footprints*
- *John-y-Chiarn's Journey*

Abductions by fairies:

- *The Lost Wife of Ballaleece*
- *Kebeg*
- *The Fairy Child of Close-ny-Lheiy*

Tales of the Fynoderee:

- *The Fynoderee of Gordon*
- *The Fynoderee (a poem).*

Tales of the Buggane:

- *The Buggane of St. Trinians*
- *The Buggane of Glen Meay Waterfall*
- *Finn MacCooil and the Buggane*

Manx Witches:

- *The Witch of Slieu Whallian*
- *Tehi Tegi*

Manx Wizards

- *Caillagh-ny-Faashagh, or the Prophet Wizard*
- *Manannan Mac-y-Leirr*
- *The Wizard's Palace*

Mermaids

- *The Mermaid of Gob-ny-Ooyl*
- *Teeval, Princess of the Ocean*
- *The City Under the Sea*
- *Yn Dooinney-Marrey*

Legend of the Moddey Doo

- *The Moddey Doo, or the Black Dog of Peel Castle*

Magic Cups

- *King Magnus Barefoot*
- *The Silver Cup*

The main characteristics of the Manx fairy tales collected by Sophia Morrison are:

1. They are very much tied to the geography of the island. Almost all the tales refer to specific actual locations. Often, too, they refer by name to the specific individuals to whom the events happened.

¹⁶ As an example of the tales collected by Morrison, I include *The Lost Wife of Ballaleece* as an appendix.

2. All are brief—reflecting their origins as transcribed translations of oral tales.
3. They are filled with supernatural elements that are taken to be absolutely commonplace. Thus, the existence of fairies and creatures such as the Fynoderee is never questioned. They exist—that is all.
4. Time in the fairy realm moves differently than in our world. The inhabitants there are long-lived and humans who enter the fairy world tend to age slowly and they have no sense of the passage of time.

The following stories draw on three of the above four characteristics. The fourth element, brevity, was compromised for the sake of the tale.

A Comment about Premies:

In bygone days, a Manx parent's great worry was that their beautiful healthy baby would be 'took' by the fairies and some sickly, emaciated and cranky substitute left in its place. Many charms and wards were employed to prevent this occurrence—often enough without success. The fairies were always well prepared and seemed to know exactly when a child was expected to be born. They even knew its sex beforehand. Once the fairies made up their minds, they used all their wiles to obtain the baby of their choice. Against fairy determination and cleverness, parents were at a distinct disadvantage and their child was often swapped away before they knew it. So it was only very exceptional children who could prevent themselves from being taken by the fairies. About the only way for a child to stop its own abduction was for it to arrive well before its appointed time—before the fairies were ready. 'Premies' have the strength of will to arrive before they are expected, and the strength of heart to be able to survive that early entry into the world. The earlier a preemie arrives and survives, the greater is its power. A fairy will never abduct a preemie. They are rare creatures with special, and often unpredictable, attributes and they are held in universal high esteem by all the inhabitants of the fairy realm.

. . . Let's meet one, shall we?

Appendix: A Sample Tale from Sophia Morrison's *Manx Fairy Tales*

THE LOST WIFE OF BALLALEECE

ONE time the Farmer of Ballaleece married a beautiful young wife and they were thinking the world of one another. But before long she disappeared. Some persons said that she was dead and others that she was taken by the Little People.¹⁷ Ballaleece mourned for her with a heavy heart and looked for her from Point of Ayr to the Calf;¹⁸ but in the end, not finding her, he married another wife. This one was not beautiful, but there was some money at her.

Soon after the marriage his first wife appeared to Ballaleece one night, and said to him: 'My man, my man, I was taken away by the Little People, and I live with them near to you. I can be set free if you will but do what I tell you.'

'Tell me quick,' said Ballaleece.

'We'll be riding through Ballaleece barn at midnight on Friday,' said she. 'We'll be going in on one door and out on another. I'll be riding behind one of the men on horseback. You'll sweep the barn clean, and mind there is not one straw left on the floor. Catch hold of my bridle rein, hold it fast, and I shall be free.'

When the night came Ballaleece took a besom¹⁹ and swept the barn floor so clean that not one speck was left on it. Then he waited in the dark.

At midnight the barn doors opened wide, sweet music was heard, and in through the open door came a fine company of Little People, in green jackets and red caps, riding fine horses. On the last horse, sitting behind a Little Fellow, Ballaleece saw his first wife as pretty as a picture, and as young as when she left him. He seized hold of her bridle rein, but he was shaken from side to side like a leaf on a tree, and he was not able to hold her. As she went out through the door she stretched out her right hand and pointed to a bushel in the corner of the barn, and called out in a sad voice:

'There's been a straw put under the bushel -- for that reason you couldn't hold me, and you've done with me for ever!'

The second wife had heard what had passed and had hidden the straw, and turned the bushel upside down so that it would not be seen.

The young wife was never heard of any more.

¹⁷ i.e. the fairies.

¹⁸ i.e. from the northern to the southern tip of the Isle of Man.

¹⁹ A broom

2: TALES OF A MANX PREMIER

The Preemie and the Pixilated Boy

*Do not fear us, earthly maid!
We will lead you hand in hand
By the willows in the glade,
By gorse on the high land.*

W.B. Yeats²⁰

In a drizzle of English rain, a ferry, bound for the Isle of Man, left the Heysham dock and was immediately wrapped in the steel-coloured cloak of a fog bank that lay in wait just outside the harbour. The Irish Sea, renowned for its anger, was today asleep. Engulfed in the fog, the ferry floated calmly through the soft grey peace of the day, rocked by a gentle sea more used to swallowing its young than to cradling them. The rain soon stopped and the damp, half-darkness that enveloped the travellers on the boat made the three hour crossing a surreal dream.

Near the appointed time of arrival, three children stood at the railing and strained their eyes forward, searching for a glimpse of land—trying to squeeze some meagre donation out of the selfish mist. Above and around them, but still invisible, gulls were calling out.

A seven-year-old girl, small for her age, stood between her young brother, Evan, and her older cousin, Liam. Kayleigh was filled with excitement and anticipation. She couldn't wait to get to shore and begin exploring her new home.

Kayleigh's father, who sat inside with her mother and aunt, was returning to the Isle of Man after a long absence. He, like his father before him and both his grandfathers, worked on the boats. He got his start on the docks when he lived 'away' for

²⁰ From W.B. Yeats' poem, "A Lover's Quarrel among the Fairies."

a time in a far distant land called Canada. That was a place to where many had gone and few had returned – but Kayleigh’s Dad was an exception. He had decided, for a time at least, to practice his trade back in his ancestral homeland. This decision was agreeable to Kayleigh’s mother—a healer and a daughter of a wild tribe of the Irish—because it brought her closer to her own family’s homeland, where many of her raucous clan still lived. Kayleigh’s father had arranged to rent a little row house, belonging to one of his cousins, in Ballakermeen on the outskirts of Douglas, the largest town on the island.

“Are we there yet?” moaned Evan. Like all three year-olds, he had little patience for waiting.

“Soon,” replied Liam. “Can’t you feel the waves under the boat? They’re getting bigger which means we must be close to land.”

Liam was already ten years old and knew a lot about science and geography. As if to prove his point, off to the right, amplified by the fog, they began to hear the sound of waves crashing. They were indeed getting close to land.

The first thing Kayleigh saw was a seagull directly overhead. A momentary rent in the silver-hued fabric of mist exposed the white bird against a patch of brilliant blue sky. She sucked in her breath at this shock of colour after the monochrome of the crossing. Before she could speak, the curtain of mist closed over them again, but, after a few minutes more, the grey veil began to unravel. Tatters of it fell away revealing a green headland surmounted by a royal blue sky dotted with small white clouds. The green was that unmistakable shade found only in the British Isles and it was highlighted on the headland by bright yellow splotches of flowering gorse—a usually plain and unattractive bush except, as now, when in its late spring finery. Lower down, the waves that had rolled beneath them struck the rocky foot of the cliff in half-hearted explosions of white spray.

Kayleigh took all this in, like a snapshot, in an instant. The startling effect of being thrust out into the suddenly bright, noisy realm of colour and seagull cries and crashing waves left her momentarily stunned and speechless. It was like being born into a new world.

The ferry had emerged from the fog off the headland of Maughold on the northeast part of the Island—just south of the bay of Ramsay. Perched on a rounded shoulder of land that abruptly fell away 200 feet to the rock-strewn shore below, Kayleigh could clearly see small farms and fields enclosed by dry-stone walls, each with their scattered flocks of sheep.

Above them, a cloud of seagulls wheeled. Kayleigh's grandmother had told her all about the Manx seagulls and how they followed the arriving boats, looking for the fish scraps that generations of herring fishermen had thrown overboard. The squawking of the birds added a noisy accompaniment to the unfolding views of the landscape.

After a few minutes more, the ferry reached Onchan Head: the northernmost of the two great arms of rock that sheltered the broad crescent of Douglas Bay. As they rounded it, the full view of the town came quickly into sight. The white curve of the Edwardian lodging-houses, facing the sea along the promenade, gleamed in the early afternoon sun. The tide was going out and the broad strand that separated land from sea was almost deserted – it being too early in the season for sun bathing or swimming. Kayleigh saw long fronds of gleaming seaweed twisting about at the water's edge like sea snakes basking in the sun.

Just off the Tower of Refuge, a shelter built for the shipwrecked on a notorious outcrop of rock in the middle of the bay, the captain announced over the loudspeaker that all passengers were to prepare for disembarking at Victoria Pier in ten minutes. Kayleigh didn't need a second reminder: she grabbed Evan's hand and dragged him inside to where their parents were packing up their books and lunch snacks.

Understandably, perhaps, in this vignette of a homecoming, we may not have recognized the most significant event that occurred. If we had, we would enquire about that lone seagull that appeared above the children when the first break in the fog cover occurred. Let us back-up a bit to that point in the story.

What did the seagull see through that tear in the magical cloak of mist that Manannan Mac Lier, the sea god, famously devised to protect the Isle of Man from

unwelcome scrutiny? Peering down through the mist, it saw a rare thing; a special thing; a wondrous thing. It was a beautiful Premie—a child especially beloved of the fairy-folk who watched over Manannan’s island home. The aura that surrounded little Kayleigh, standing on the ferry’s deck between her brother and her cousin, was unmistakable, and it was clear to the old seagull—who had been for years a confidant of the Manx fairies—that she was a Premie.

As the gulls wheeled away to carry the message of this special visitor to their fairy allies, they exchanged excited calls amongst themselves—calls that were overheard.

Now, there had been a dispute between the fairies and the pixies that had been going on for over a thousand years, which is not very long at all, all things considered. But far older was the war between the gulls and the crows. It had lasted many millennia—indeed none even remembered when or why it began. Nonetheless, the animosity between them was intense. Two of the crows who always shadowed the flocks of seagulls that met the arriving boats overheard the excited cries and caught, high on the wind, the word ‘Premie’. Without knowing what it meant, they surmised it must be important and they immediately soared west towards the Lady Isabella, the great water wheel at Laxey, which marked the location of a newly established pixie stronghold.

Thus, the news of the Premie’s arrival reached the fairies and the pixies almost simultaneously, causing great excitement in both camps. What did it portend? No one that day realized that the Isle of Man would never be the same, once this particular Premie set foot upon her ancestral soil.

It was a glorious day in late summer. Seven-year-old Kayleigh was watching her younger brother Evan play in the garden. Evan was almost four and he was chasing butterflies. Kayleigh had been trying to draw a butterfly, but her pesky brother wanted her to play with him and wouldn’t leave her in peace. To give him something to do, she’d asked him to catch one for her.

Down at the far end of the garden, in a shady corner behind the hosta plants, some low bushes rustled. As there was no wind that afternoon, Kayleigh thought it must be a

cat or a bird. She continued her drawing, beginning to add colour to the outline of the wings. When she looked up again, she saw that Evan had tired of his chase and was standing at the end of the garden apparently speaking to someone.

“Evan,” Kayleigh called, “what are you doing?”

“Talking to the man,” he shouted back, without turning his head.

“Don’t be silly,” she replied. “Is there a cat in the bushes?”

Evan didn’t answer her, so Kayleigh put her coloured pencil down with a sigh and crept silently down the lawn to where Evan stood. Before she could surprise him, he turned suddenly and walked back toward the house.

“What’s that on your hair and face?” she asked him, seeing sparkles of fine dust all over him. Evan didn’t answer; he just continued on up the garden towards the house. The bushes rustled again, this time further back towards the elder trees that were all that remained of a wood that had been mostly cut down in recent years. Kayleigh saw that something had been walking on the soil of her mother’s carefully tended flower beds.

“Cats, probably,” she said to herself.

She ran back to the house in time to see her mother washing Evan’s hands and face at the kitchen sink.

“What have you been into now, young man?” she was asking him.

That night, Evan was unusually quiet and didn’t eat much of his supper. Their mother wondered if he might not be catching something and, placing a hand on his forehead to check his temperature, decided he should go to bed early. Kayleigh was surprised when her brother agreed—going to bed was something he always resisted.

Because she had planned to continue her drawing after supper anyway, Kayleigh offered to do so in the bedroom she shared with Evan, so he would remain in bed. After he got ready without complaint or delay—which astonished his sister—and had been tucked in by his mother, and kissed good night by his dad, Evan lay in his bed staring at the ceiling.

“What’s the matter with you?” Kayleigh asked.

“Nothing,” he replied dreamily.

“Are you sick?”

“No.”

“You’ve been acting strange since . . . who *were* you talking to in the garden?” she asked.

“The little men,” he answered.

“What little men?” she said, laying aside her coloured pencils and now looking intently over at her brother.

“The little men with the funny pointy hats and big boots,” he replied in a soft voice.

“Oh, I get it now. You’re pretending you’ve seen the fairies,” she said. “You know it’s not good to fib about fairies—if the real ones find out, they’ll be angry and will start playing tricks on you.”

Evan didn’t say any more and it seemed to Kayleigh that he fell asleep. Later, their mother looked in on them, she kissed Kayleigh goodnight and said she hoped that Evan would feel like his old self in the morning.

Had she not been sleeping fitfully, dreaming of little men in large boots chasing butterflies, Kayleigh may not have awakened at the slight sound in the room. She opened her eyes and in the dimness of the nightlight she saw Evan walking out the bedroom door.

“Evan,” she whispered. “Evan. Where are you going?”

No reply. She threw back the covers, jumped into her purple slippers, pulled her purple housecoat over her purple pyjamas and followed her brother downstairs. She hurried to catch up, but he had already opened the back door and was beginning to run down the garden.

“Evan. Come back here. Where are you going?” she called after him.

Then, to her amazement, she saw by the faint light of a half-moon, two small figures run out of the bushes. Each grabbed one of Evan's hands and together the three of them ran into the greenery at the foot of the garden. Kayleigh reached the spot in seconds, losing her slippers in her haste to catch up with her brother, but she could see no sign of them—except for a rapidly diminishing sound of trampling in the undergrowth.

“Evan. Come back,” she shouted forlornly.

She sat down on the damp grass, trying to hold back her tears. She was angry with herself for letting this happen. Perhaps if she'd believed her brother's story. . . . But, just as she had made up her mind to go after him, she heard the sound of running behind her. Turning quickly, she saw a man standing there, struggling to catch his breath. At first she was frightened, but then she saw that, like those who had taken Evan, this man was small—only a little over two feet tall (excluding the pointy hat).

“What have you done with my brother,” she shouted angrily, while charging toward the little man.

Startled, he jumped back and began waving his hands, saying as he did so, “Please, Premie, it wasn't us. We didn't take the boy.”

“They looked just like you,” Kayleigh snorted.

“Please believe me. We want to help you, if you'll let us. We think we know where your brother has been taken.”

Kayleigh stopped in her tracks. She almost smiled at the look of terror on the little man's face. He was dressed in blue breeches, the bottoms of which were tucked into his high leather boots. He wore a woven green jerkin and on his head, a red peaked cap. His face was lined, but appeared to be neither very young, nor very old. Kayleigh could not guess his age. He was breathing deeply, still trying to catch his breath, and it was obvious to Kayleigh that he had been in a great hurry to get there.

“Okay, tell me what is going on here,” she said, sitting down on the grass in front of the little fellow. Once he was sure she had calmed down, he whistled and two companions, similarly attired, ran out from behind her mother's delphiniums to stand with him in front of Kayleigh.

“First of all, we apologize that this has happened. Perhaps, if we had arrived sooner, we could have stopped them, only we had no idea what they were planning. It’s a great puzzle to me why they’d take the boy.” As he spoke, he turned to his two companions but they only frowned and shook their heads in equal puzzlement. He looked back at Kayleigh and asked, “Can you tell us, Premie, if anything unusual happened to the boy recently?”

“Yesterday afternoon,” Kayleigh began, and she told the trio what had happened and how Evan seemed to be covered with sparkling dust after his conversation at the end of the garden.

“Pixie dust,” two of the little men said simultaneously.

“That confirms it, I suppose,” said the one who had first approached Kayleigh and who seemed to be their leader. The others nodded in agreement.

“Pixie dust?” Kayleigh whispered. “Does that mean the fairies have taken Evan?”

“Certainly not, Premie,” said the leader in an offended tone. “Only pixies use Pixie Dust. We would never stoop to that. We wouldn’t need to.”

“You mean *you’re* fairies,” Kayleigh responded, understanding at last.

“Well, of course. That should be obvious.”

“I’m sorry, but I’ve never actually seen a fairy before—although we hear about you and wish you well almost every day. My mother and father taught us never to offend the fairies in case something bad happens.”

“And so they should,” the leader replied. “Too many people these days show a shocking lack of respect for the Little People they share this island with—but to get back to the pixies, they are trespassers. This is not their natural home and they don’t have our leave to be here.”

“What do they want?” Kayleigh asked, “And why have they taken Evan? I must go after him and get him back. He’s my brother and I’m supposed to look after him.”

“We’re not exactly sure why they want the boy—but we have a suspicion, Premie. And we’ll help you get him back.”

“Thank you. I think I’ll need help since I have no idea where to find a band of pixies. And by the way, my name is Kayleigh, not Premie.”

“Yes, we know Preemie Kayleigh. You may call me Ned, it’s not my real name—we don’t disclose our real names for fear of being spell-cast. You may call my companions Nick and Alec. They are brothers. “

“A very great honour to meet you at last, Preemie Kayleigh,” Nick said, as both brothers removed their caps and made deep bows. “We wish you well.”

“Now we must be going if we’re to recover your brother from the grasp of those nefarious pixies,” Ned said, with a note of urgency in his voice.

Kayleigh ran back up the garden to recover her purple slippers which she’d dropped near the steps to the house. Returning to the fairy trio, she said, “Let’s go, we must find Evan before my parents wake up and find us missing.”

At this, the fairies exchanged furtive glances among themselves; then Ned said, “Right, let’s go.”

Out through the garden they ran. Kayleigh was surprised at how quickly the little folk could move. Twice they had to stop and wait for her to catch up.

“I’ll never be able to keep up to them,” she thought.

But, upon entering a small clearing in the wood, she saw three small ponies roped together under an old elder tree, eating the damp grass. They looked like toy ponies to Kayleigh—even she was taller than the tallest of the three.

“Nick and Alec will have to ride together,” Ned said, “and Preemie Kayleigh can ride on old Fury.”

“But I don’t know how to ride a pony,” Kayleigh protested.

“Not to worry, Fury will look after you. Just climb up and hold onto his mane. He likes to have his neck rubbed, so if you feel like it, give him a pat once in a while.”

By the time he had said this, Ned was already mounted and Nick and Alec were sitting together on the third horse. Ned spoke some words in a language which Kayleigh couldn’t understand and the little horse knelt down, allowing her to climb onto his back. She gripped his mane tightly as he stood up and then, as she held on with one hand and

gently rubbed her pony's neck with the other, the little group started off southward down the Ballakermeen hill.

Silently, they crossed the Peel Road and made their way across the river to Pulrose village, then turning north they followed the old Saddle Road towards Braddan church. There, once they were sure the way was clear, they crossed the Braddan Bridge, cut through a hedgerow and traversed the fields that led to Tromode. This was not the most direct route to where they were going, but the fairies wanted to avoid the Quarterbridge river-crossing where they thought there might be pixie look-outs. The little ponies moved quickly but silently through the woods that bordered the River Glass and soon they were out into the open country.



Figure 2: *The Manx Countryside*

The stars were shining above and the night was bright enough for Kayleigh to see the surrounding countryside. In the middle distance, through a faint haze, she saw outlines of farms and buildings and stands of trees. Fury, her pony, trotted along at a quick pace behind Ned's horse and, as she looked around her, Kayleigh wondered where

little Evan might be. It was a strange night; she was neither cold nor warm; the sky seemed too light for proper night time and not quite light enough for day; and all around the air was filled with sweet scents of wildflowers and new mown hay. Past Tromode they turned north and began to follow the Sulby River up into the hills. The river became a small stream as they climbed higher and, just before its headwaters, they turned east, cutting across the hillside to Creg-ny-baa. Then they followed a faint trail over a rise of land, cutting through breaches in broken dry-stone walls that had once separated now-abandoned fields, and eventually they descended, near Ballacarrooin, into the upper reaches of Glen Roy.

“Where are we going?” asked Kayleigh. “Is this the way the pixies brought Evan?”

“They didn’t come this way,” replied Ned, “but we think they’ve taken him to Laxey. We know they have a stronghold there in the old mine workings. We’re taking a different route so they won’t know we’re following them.”

“What are the pixies doing in Laxey?” Kayleigh wanted to know.

“It’s a very long story, but the short of it is that these are pixies from Cornwall. They used to live in the abandoned tin mines there, across the water. Those mines extend below the level of the sea and have been filling up with water for many years. Eventually, they were completely flooded and the pixies had to find a new home. Some of them came to the Isle of Man—without our knowledge or permission—and established outposts in the old mine workings at Laxey and also, we now believe, in those at Foxdale as well.”

“But what do the pixies want with Evan?” she asked.

“Well,” said Ned, “as I mentioned earlier, we’re not completely sure, but we think they are going to trade him in order to get assistance in their fight with us to stay on the island.”

“Trade him! That’s awful,” Kayleigh said, horrified.

“Yes,” mused Ned, “but what we don’t understand is why him. You, Premie Kayleigh, would have been a much better trading counter than your brother. A Premie such as you is a very rare and valuable thing—so they would have been better off taking you.”

Kayleigh was about to ask what he meant by that when Nick, who was riding just behind and listening to this conversation, interjected, “Perhaps they knew that we would never stand for such a thing. Surely they know that we keep a close watch on Preemies.”

A frown passed across Ned’s face and he turned to his two fairy companions. “That must be it,” he said. “My friends, we may have made a terrible mistake this night. The boy was a decoy. It *is* the Preemie they are after—and we have just brought her near to their stronghold.”

Just then there was a terrible shaking of the ground and rocks began to roll down the vale from both sides. The ponies pulled up and whinnied nervously.

“Turn around!” shouted Ned, “We must get away from here.”

They swung their ponies around and started back up the vale when they saw coming down towards them, along the path they had just followed, a Fynoderee carrying a menacing great club. The Fynoderee was a big and shaggy creature with fierce eyes. He was stronger than any man, although a bit dim-witted. And he was blocking their only retreat-route.

“We can’t fight with him and ensure that Preemie Kayleigh is protected,” shouted Ned, “we have no choice but to continue down the glen towards Laxey and hope we’re not seen.” And at that he turned the pony around and began to gallop down the vale, closely followed by his companions.

They had not gone very far when the ground began to shake again and right in the middle of the path ahead an opening appeared and out of it a great head emerged. It was covered with a mane of coarse, black hair; it had eyes like torches, and glittering sharp tusks. And from its big, ugly, red mouth it uttered a dreadful roar.

The little ponies, stout-hearted though they were, reared up in terror. Kayleigh and the three fairies fell to the ground.

“Aiye, a Buggane, a Buggane,” screamed Nick and Alec in one voice.

The ponies ran off, and by the time Ned regained his feet, the Buggane was half-emerged from the ground and his massive clawed hands were reaching out toward the little group of travellers. They backed away quickly, looking for cover. Ned knew too

well that once the beast had fully materialized, he would surely tear them apart. As they ran, they heard from up on the hillside to their left the sounds of shouting and the last thing Kayleigh remembered seeing before she fainted in fright was a band of pixies running down the hill towards her.

When Kayleigh awoke she found herself in a small cave. It was not deep—more of a hollow beneath a rocky overhang, really. She was lying on a pile of twigs and branches, which were covered with heather sprigs and meadow grass. All around were bits of matted dark hair and a terrible smell made Kayleigh screw up her face in disgust. Amid the branches she lay upon, she could see chicken and sheep bones—some with bits of rotting flesh still clinging to them. Revolting as that was, it was still not enough to account fully for the terrible smell. She got to her feet and tried to brush the dirt and hair from her purple housecoat, but it seemed a hopeless task. Outside, her movements were heard by the inhabitant of the cave.

The Fynoderee stuck his big shaggy head into the cave opening. Kayleigh's scream upon seeing him startled herself as much as the Fynoderee and both took a step backward; she bumping her head on a stony outcrop; he falling off the narrow ledge in front of the opening and rolling a short way down the hill. If she hadn't been so scared, Kayleigh might have laughed at the sight of the great hairy beast rubbing his head in the same way she was doing to her own. Nervously, she stepped out onto the ledge to see if there was any way to escape. She saw no way out except down the hill where the Fynoderee was now on his feet again and starting his climb back up to her.

"Please don't hurt me," she begged. "I wouldn't have come into your valley except that I'm searching for my little brother. The pixies have taken him, you see."

The Fynoderee came closer and cocked his great head sideways as she spoke,

"Pixies," he said. "Pixies give me food and good drink. They tell me stop anyone coming down to their camp. For food and good drink, me do."

"Is that why you started chasing us? We weren't going to harm anyone, really. We're just looking for little Evan, my brother. The pixies have kidnapped him."

"Pixies give me food and good drink so me watch for strangers," the Fynoderee repeated. Kayleigh thought he seemed a bit dim.

“Do you know what happened to my three friends? They were fairies who were trying to help me.”

“Me take you; pixies take others. Me see Buggane and decide it time to come home.”

“Oh, yes. That horrible monster that rose out of the ground. I thought I had dreamed him. Are you sure the pixies captured my friends and they weren’t eaten by the monster?” Kayleigh asked, in a concerned tone.

“Not sure. But me think pixies take your fairies before Buggane catch them.”

Kayleigh suddenly felt completely miserable. Her brother was gone, her friends were prisoners, or worse, and she was a captive of a great smelly meat-eating beast. She sat down on the stone ledge and began to cry. Soon she was sobbing uncontrollably. The Fynoderee stared at her in silence for a moment and then reached out his great hairy arm and laid his hand roughly on Kayleigh’s head. She started back, fearfully.

“Please don’t hurt me,” she said again, as she wiped her tears.

“Can you sing and dance?” asked the creature.

“I beg your pardon,” said Kayleigh, with a puzzled frown.

“Me like singing and dancing. When festival time comes, me sneak into village to hear singing and watch dancing.”

“Well, I take classes in Irish dancing and I suppose I know how to sing. I could show you, but I don’t have my dancing shoes with me—only these almost worn-out purple slippers.”

“Please dance for me,” the Fynoderee said. His voice seemed almost gentle just then.

“If I do, will you help me find my brother and my friends?” Kayleigh asked.

“You dance and me help,” he said.

Kayleigh stood and looked up into the sky. It was very strange. Neither full daylight nor full night—a kind of in between twilight that she had never seen before. The stars were still visible and the forward edge of the setting moon was just above the gorse bushes on the opposite hillside. There was a blue tinge to the sky and it was bright enough for her to see a good way up and down the valley. Down below, in the distance

she could just see the lights of Laxey and beyond it there was a silvery sheen rippling on the distant sea.

She bent down and took off her purple slippers and then laid her purple housecoat on top of them. The air was cool but not cold. She began to dance. Her bare feet slapping the smooth rock of the ledge. She kept her upper body still, as she had been taught, but her legs and feet started moving up and down faster and faster. As she got into her routine, she began to hum the tune that she imagined was playing in accompaniment.

The Fynoderee was enchanted. He clapped his hands and his great mouth gaped wide in a grin of delight. He hopped about, jumping from one foot to the other. When Kayleigh had finished her dance, he shouted, "More, more."

She entered into another of her dance routines. This one involved spinning around as well as fancy footwork. The Fynoderee laughed and jumped about and clapped his hands. Although Kayleigh had been in several recitals and shows with her dancing school, she thought she had never had such an appreciative audience as the great shaggy Fynoderee. But she was getting tired and her feet and legs were sore from jumping on the rocky surface. When the call for "more, more" rang out again, she said she couldn't, but she reached out her hands to the Fynoderee and he gently took them in his huge palms. Then she began a little made-up dance holding hands with her very large partner (who, because he stood on the ground beneath the rock ledge, only towered a few feet above her). He was in raptures as he danced clumsily with little Kayleigh, and when they were done they both fell down out of breath and laughing.

For a while, in the joy of the dance, Kayleigh had forgotten her responsibilities and now, suddenly, she remembered and felt very guilty for laughing and dancing in the moonlight. She pulled on her housecoat and slippers and said to her dance-partner, "Now, please honour your promise. You must help me find my brother and my friends. If we save them, and when I have my proper dancing shoes on, I'll dance for you again."

"Me promised, me do," he replied and he scooped up Kayleigh in his arms and started marching down the hill at a great pace. Fortunately, a nice breeze was blowing up the vale and this helped Kayleigh tolerate the powerful smell of her new friend.

“By the way,” said Kayleigh, “what should I call you? What’s your name?”

“Me have no real name, but when me worked for farmers over at Maughold, they call me ‘Finn’.”

“Well, I’m pleased to meet you, Finn. My name’s Kayleigh.”

When Finn and Kayleigh reached a place near where the Buggane had emerged, they stopped and hid behind some bushes. Nothing stirred and after a few minutes they started again cautiously to descend the vale. Both of them were relieved that there was no sign of the monster. Kayleigh thought that it must be a fierce creature indeed if even her large friend was afraid of it. A little further ahead they could see, through a gap in the trees, a fire burning. When they had crept closer, they saw that ten or twelve pixies were sitting on barrels around a small campfire. They were singing some old melancholy song about the deep places of the earth. One of the band poked the fire with a stick and it flared up momentarily. In that brief glow, on the edge of the circle of light, Kayleigh saw her three fairy friends tied up, sitting with their backs to an old crate. She gave a start and was about to rush to them when she remembered herself.

“What am I to do?” she wondered. “There are so many of them.”

She turned to Finn and said, “Is there some way we can get the pixies to leave so I can untie my friends?”

“Me not know,” he replied.

“What would scare the pixies away?” she asked.

“Buggane scare everyone—even pixies.”

Kayleigh tried to remember what the Buggane looked like. He was big and hairy and made a terrible noise. Then she looked at Finn. He wasn’t as large and he didn’t have great tusks and sharp claws, but he was still big and hairy.

“Could you pretend to be the Buggane?” she asked.

“How pretend?” he asked, cocking his head sideways.

Kayleigh could see that he wouldn’t be able to imitate the monster. Then she had another idea.

“Will you chase me and make a great noise so we can frighten the pixies away? I will pretend that the Buggane is after me.”

“Me chase you and shout like Buggane?” he asked.

“Yes, that’s right. Just run after me—not too close, mind you—and make a great noise.”

“Me do,” he said, with a nod of his large head.

“Let’s go back up the glen a little way and then you chase me toward the camp.”

They climbed back up the hill, Kayleigh explained again what she wanted Finn to do and then she started running toward the pixie camp fire.

“Help, help,” she screamed. “The Buggane, the Buggane is after me. Help!”

Behind her Finn came charging through the bushes, making as much noise as he could and bellowing at the top of his voice. As she drew closer to the fire, she saw that the pixies had all jumped to their feet and were staring in her direction.

“Run!” she shouted. “Run, the Buggane is right behind me.” And in the darkness behind the human child the pixies indeed heard the sound of a great creature bellowing and crashing through the trees. The startled pixies were too surprised to think clearly. They knew a Buggane was about—they’d seen him earlier—and they turned and began running towards their outpost down the hillside near Laxey’s great water wheel. Kayleigh knew she would have to act quickly before they realized the deception. She ran to Ned and untied his bonds, and then together they released Nick and Alec. When Ned saw the Fynoderee, he was afraid, but also relieved that Kayleigh had mistaken him for a real Buggane. He felt sure that with his two companions, they could get the better of the dim-witted creature. They grabbed burning brands from the fire and were about to confront Finn when Kayleigh stepped in front of them.

“Don’t hurt him,” she said. “He’s my new friend and he helped me to scare the pixies off. Without him, you’d still be prisoners.”

“Well, I never,” said Ned. “It seems we owe you a debt of gratitude, sir.”

“Me Finn,” the Fynoderee responded.

Kayleigh ran up to him and grabbed his big hand. “Thank you for your help,” she said. “When I have found Evan, I’ll come back with my dancing shoes and I’ll show you some proper Irish dancing. But now you should go before the pixies find out that it was you who tricked them. We don’t want to get you into trouble with them.”

“No,” he said, “Pixies give me food and good drink. Don’t want them angry with me.” He bent down and patted Kayleigh on her head and she threw her arms around his great shaggy neck, in a long hug. Then, with a smile and a wave (and perhaps the hint of a tear in his eye), he said goodbye and started back up the hill.

“Well, I never,” repeated Alec. “You really surprise me, Premie Kayleigh. How did you get a Fynoderee to help you to rescue us?”

“Oh, I just danced for him,” she said with a grin.

While the three fairies had been captives of the pixies, they had overheard much of their conversation. They learned that Evan had indeed been brought to Laxey just as they suspected he would be. They also learned that they had taken the boy, not for their own ends, but to deliver him to someone else. Just who that was, they didn’t hear.

“We have to act quickly,” said Ned. “We think they will be moving him soon.”

Kayleigh looked down at her torn and dirty purple slippers. At first, she had been excited and happy with the success of her rescue of her friends, but now she felt sad and worried. Evan was still in the hands of the pixies and soon he’d be handed over to someone else—someone they didn’t know.

“Why is this happening?” she asked. “Why is poor little Evan so important?”

“Remember, Premie Kayleigh, we think it is you they really want. You did a brave thing in rescuing us, but it was very, very dangerous. If the pixies hadn’t panicked, they would have captured you. Then they wouldn’t need Evan any more and who knows what may have become of him.”

Alec was keeping a lookout down the glen. He shouted, “We’d better get a move on, I think I can hear them coming back. With luck, they’ll think the Buggane took us and that may buy us some time.”

“Not much, though,” said Ned. “They’ll soon see there’s no blood or signs of a struggle and they’ll guess we’ve escaped. Then the first thing they’ll do is sound the alarm.”

Quickly, the four travellers began to scramble up the north slope of Glen Roy. Behind them the noise of the returning pixies began to fade. Passing to the east of Baldhoon, they worked their way down into Laxey Glen above the level of the Lady Isabella, as the great Laxey water wheel was called. While they hurried along, Kayleigh could hear Ned muttering to himself.

“What’s the matter, Ned?” she asked.

“Oh, I’m trying to understand what’s going on here. I’ve made so many wrong guesses up till now that I don’t know what to think. The thing that disturbs me most, though, is the Buggane. They are rare enough these days, but to have him appear as he did, just when he did, is too much of a coincidence.”

“Well, maybe he works for the pixies,” Kayleigh said, trying to be helpful.

“No, I don’t think so. You see, the Buggane is utterly evil. He’s a fiend. The pixies could never control him. No, something, or someone else is at work here. Someone who can control a Buggane. You remember when he started emerging from the ground—by all rights we should have been done for. But as soon as he saw the pixies close in on us, he retreated. It was as if he was under orders to make sure we were captured, but not killed. It’s all very mysterious and troubling.”

Ned marched on ahead, still talking to himself. They slowed their pace as they descended into the Laxey River valley. When they were nearly at the water wheel on the west flank of the glen, the moon was just setting behind the hill and its last beams lit up the top of the great rim. On the wheel’s central platform they could see pixie look-outs.

“They wouldn’t keep the child on the wheel—it’s too exposed,” observed Nick. “They probably have him in one of the old adits.”

“What’s that?” asked Kayleigh.

“It’s one of the mine openings that leads to the old workings under the hill,” Alec replied.

“If I had to guess,” said Nick, “the pixies would likely use the tunnel near the old water penstocks. It is easily defensible and commands a good view of the valley. It’s just below us on the right.”

They crept lower down the hillside, keeping to the trees to avoid being seen or heard. As they approached the tunnel entrance, they heard voices. A group of pixies was scurrying around a little two-wheeled cart that was hitched to two white ponies. They loaded three barrels onto the right hand side of the cart. On the left, in shadow, was a pile of straw with what looked like clothes on top. Two pixies climbed onto the cart and sat with their legs dangling over the back. Another climbed up on the seat next to the driver, and the driver himself, a small, very round little pixie, raised his torch to check that the load was secure before turning and reaching for the reins.

In the moment when the light of the torch swept over the cart, the pile of clothes was revealed to be a small figure, seemingly asleep, on the hay.

“Evan!” blurted Kayleigh. “That’s Evan in the cart.” She jumped up and despite Ned, Alec and Nick’s best efforts to hold her back, she rushed out of the trees and into the open. The startled pixies looked round and saw a purple shape charging down the hill towards them. The driver quickly snapped the reins, shouted a ‘gee-up’ at his ponies and started off down the path toward the great waterwheel.

Kayleigh, in her haste, snagged a slipper on a tree root and went sprawling onto the ground, biting her lip and scraping her palms in the process. Bleeding, she got to her feet in time to see the little wagon turn a bend and disappear from sight.

“Evan!” she cried. “Oh, Evan.”

By now word was spreading through the pixie camp that spies were about. The lookout party from Glen Roy had sent word of their encounter with the fairies and their supposed second sighting of the Buggane. They reported that although it seemed likely the Buggane had taken the fairies, there was no evidence to prove it. As the wagon bearing Evan trundled across the weir below the waterwheel, the two guards sitting in the

back reported their sighting of a great purple demon descending the hillside. They had barely escaped with their lives, the driver shouted, as the wagon continued down the hill towards Laxey. High up on the topmost platform of the Laxey Wheel the pixie lookouts were straining their eyes to find the intruders.



Figure 3: *'Lady Isabella' - The Laxey Water Wheel*

The three fairies ran to where Kayleigh lay crying at the edge of the trees near the entrance to the old mine adit. Nick and Alec helped her to her feet and brushed the dust and twigs from her now torn and dirty housecoat.

“You two stay with Premie Kayleigh and I’ll sneak down to the pixie camp and see if I can learn anything,” said Ned.

“You be careful. We’ll be in a great mess if you’re captured,” a worried Alec replied.

“I’ll be careful.”

Ned told his companions to climb part way back up the hill to find some better cover, then he took off his hat, tucked it into his belt and started off down the hill, keeping to the shadows beside the path.

Nick finally succeeded in drying Kayleigh's tears; then he and Alec each took one of her hands and they started back up the hill that separated the Laxey River from Glen Mooar to the east. When they reached a spot where a small stand of trees provided cover, they sat down on a deadfall and looked out at a spectacular view of The Lady Isabella, Laxey's famous waterwheel.

"Why was Evan just lying in the back of that cart?" Kayleigh wondered out loud in a worried tone. "Why didn't he move? Do you think he's hurt?"

"I doubt it," Nick replied reassuringly. "I suspect he's still under the influence of the pixie dust—although it should be beginning to wear off by now."

"I don't think they'd hurt him, Premie Kayleigh," added Alec, "they want him for something—so they'll keep him safe until he's served his purpose."

"Until he's served his purpose—that sounds horrible. What will they do with him then?" Kayleigh moaned.

Alec stood up, saying, "I'm sure Ned will return with some answers. Why don't you rest for a while? We'll keep a lookout."

Kayleigh had lost all track of time. It seemed forever since she had awakened in her bed to see Evan leaving their house. She had no idea how long she'd been away. In the sky, she saw the same strange twilight. The moon had long since set and off to the East, beyond Laxey Head, Kayleigh thought she could make out a brightening near the horizon that could be the dawn. She worried that her parents might wake up early and see they were gone. She pictured her mother frantically searching the house and garden, while her dad went knocking on neighbours' doors looking for them.

The noise of someone or something coming up the hill disturbed her reverie. Nick whistled, and when a return whistle sounded, he stepped out of the trees to direct Ned to their location.

“What did you find out?” he asked.

Ned was out of breath. It was obvious he had hurried back to their hiding place.

“I overheard the pixie lookouts talking among themselves. Aside from their usual crude humour and disrespectful comments, I learned that the cart carrying the boy had passed by and was on its way to Snaefell Mountain.”

“Snaefell!” Alec and Nick said simultaneously.

“I listened to hear if I could discover the route they were taking, but something else they said was very disturbing and I felt I couldn’t delay any longer trying to find out more.”

“What did you hear?” asked Nick.

“I heard them say that everything would be different once ‘she’ got hold of the child. Then one of them referred to ‘she’ as ‘the witch.’ At first I thought they were just being insulting of someone, but I heard them mention ‘the witch’ again and I concluded that therein lay all the explanations behind this abduction. The pixies have made some kind of bargain with a witch: she wants the child and, in return, I assume she’s willing to help the pixies in their fight to set up a colony on the Isle of Man.”

The two fairy brothers stood slack-jawed and goggle-eyed at this news.

“B-b-b-but, I thought the last of the Manx witches had been killed, out on Slieu Whallian years ago,” stuttered Alec.

“So did I,” said Ned, “But it seems we may have been mistaken. Either one survived or, more likely I think, one has come across the water from Erin to trouble our land.”

“Oh, this is just great!” Kayleigh interrupted, “It wasn’t bad enough that my brother was kidnapped by pixies. Now he’s being taken to a witch! This is all like some horrible dream. It can’t really be happening.”

“I’m afraid it is happening, Preemie Kayleigh. And, even worse, if my earlier suspicions are correct that it was you that the pixies were really interested in, then we must get you far away from here to a place of safety. Some place where we can better watch over you. I think we should take you home. Our people can protect you there. I

promise that we'll go after the boy and try our very best to free him. This has turned into a much more serious problem than we first thought.”

Throughout Ned's speech, Kayleigh stood frowning at him with her arms folded tightly in front of her. Now she stepped forward and glared at him, anger flashing in her blue eyes.

“Oh, no.” she said. “I am not going home without Evan. If I have to climb all the way to the top of Snaefell by myself, that's what I'll do. He's my brother and I'm responsible for him. I can't run away when I know he's in danger.”

Ned shook his head gravely, “But, you don't seem to realize. It's you the witch wants. This whole thing has been staged as a way of capturing you. You have to understand that witches and wizards, and sorceresses and enchanters need special items to make their magic spells work. And a Preemie such as yourself would allow this witch to cast some very powerful and, I'm certain, very evil spell. We can't allow that to happen.”

“I don't think you have a choice,” said Kayleigh. “If you take me home, I'll just come back here anyway. With your help or alone, I'm going to find Evan.”

“But . . .”

“Are you going to help me or not, because if you're not, I'm leaving right now.”

“But . . .”

Needless to say, Kayleigh persuaded her doubt-filled and worried friends that they should all go together in pursuit of Evan.

The three fairies held a brief conference among themselves, during which Kayleigh picked handfuls of blackberries and early hazel nuts that were growing nearby. She suddenly felt very tired and very hungry and she remembered her mother's words—spoken when Kayleigh wouldn't eat her breakfast—about not being able to do her work at school on an empty stomach. She was going to need a lot of energy if she was to climb to the top of Snaefell Mountain. While she was finishing the last of her blackberries, Ned came up to her.

“Right,” he said. “Shall we go?”

“I’m ready.” Kayleigh replied.

“You’d better wipe the blackberry juice off your face first, Premie,” he grinned.



Figure 4: *Climbing Snaefell Mountain*

The fairies had decided that they should go by the quickest route to Snaefell. It would be a steeper climb, but they wanted to arrive there before the pixies. They knew the horse-drawn cart carrying Evan would have to take a longer route. They set off up Glen Mooar, along the road to Agneash. Just south of the village, they followed the hillside north into the upper reaches of the Laxey River vale. There they followed an old track that led to the long-abandoned Snaefell Mine, which had stood at the foot of the mountain. Nick and Alec were in the lead and they marched on at a fast pace. Kayleigh began to tire and Ned, who was bringing up the rear, shouted to them to slow down.

“You are very tired, Premie Kayleigh. It has been a long journey for you.”

“I’m all right,” she replied. “Besides, we have to get there before the pixies, isn’t that what you said?”

“Yes, that’s right. But first we’ll stop to pick up some supplies that we keep hidden near important fairy sites such as Snaefell.”

“What sort of supplies?” asked Kayleigh.

“Oh, things that might help us to defend ourselves against those who would do us harm. You see, places like the summit of Snaefell, or Mount Barrule in the south, are both magical and sacred to all the inhabitants of Mann. They are places of worship and enchantment and also, I’m afraid, of conflict. The rocks of those mountains have witnessed many happenings over the ages—both good and evil. If we truly do have a witch to deal with, then it’s no wonder she chose Snaefell as the place to work her spells. It is a very powerful site indeed.”

Kayleigh had always imagined fairies to be simple, if mischievous, creatures. She had seen them usually depicted in her story books as jolly and carefree little folk. Now, she was starting to see that there was a much darker side to the fairy world. A side she didn’t much like.

She turned to Ned, who was following close behind her on the trail, and said, “So, you have magic weapons hidden somewhere nearby that can frighten away the witch?”

“Not really. We don’t have the power to defeat a witch’s magic—all we can try to do is thwart her plans. We’ll have to try to prevent her casting her spell.”

“And have you figured out yet what the spell is, that she wants to cast?” Kayleigh asked, stopping for a moment and looking down into Ned’s eyes. She saw now that his eyes were a peculiar colour—a deep greenish-blue, with flecks of yellow. They reminded her of the eyes of their neighbour’s cat.

“I have an idea. But while I explain, let’s keep going; we’re not far now from where we keep our gear.”

Kayleigh turned back up the hill and trudged wearily towards Alec and Nick who were waiting a little further ahead.

“First of all,” Ned continued, “we’ve concluded that this witch must be very powerful. We think that she was controlling the Buggane we encountered—and it takes great power to summon and to control a Buggane. We also think that she is in some way restricted or restrained in the use of her full power. That must be why she’s relying on the pixies to help her. Ordinarily, I don’t think a witch would have much interest in pixies.”

“How did you guess all that?” Kayleigh asked, deeply intrigued.

“Because of two things,” Ned went on, “First, we never knew she was on the Island, which in itself is most strange, so she’s obviously been in hiding. Second, almost certainly, she requires a preemie to work her magic, whatever that may be. And as preemies are very special, whatever spell she needs you for, must be powerful indeed.”

Ned and Kayleigh walked silently side-by-side for a while, then Ned continued:

“I have a hunch that we must have encountered this witch before. She knew that we would always be watching out for you, and so it would be difficult for the pixies to steal you away. She also knew enough to guess that, if she stole your brother, we would intervene to help you recover him. It’s almost as though she has placed a spy among us—but that cannot be so. At least I hope not.”

Ahead of them Nick and Alec had stopped. Nick went on alone and knelt behind a rocky outcrop. He let out a low whistle, which he repeated three times. From further up the hillside they heard an answering whistle, and Nick went on to ensure the way was clear.

He returned shortly and motioned to the rest of the group to come up. As they approached, Kayleigh saw that a stone cist had long ago been hollowed into the rock. She had seen one of these before on a school field trip. Two upright stones supported a flat slab of rock that marked the entrance. Nick was standing at the mouth of the cist talking to two other fairies who had been assigned to guard the site. They were deep in discussion when Kayleigh reached the entrance. The two fairy-guards removed their caps and bowed very respectfully.

“We are honoured to meet you, Preemie,” they said in unison.

Ned greeted the two guards and then said, “I’m afraid we have no time for pleasantries just now. Preemie, why don’t you go inside and rest for a few minutes while we get organized. You look exhausted.”

Kayleigh nodded and went in under the low rocky lintel. The space inside was small—no more than four or five feet deep by three wide. It was filled with barrels and sacks. The guards’ camp, consisting of a few blankets and some mugs and plates, lay near

the doorway. Kayleigh sat down on a blanket to rest her feet. Her purple slippers were completely ruined, the soles were torn and full of holes and her feet were starting to bleed from cuts and scrapes. She ate a few hazel nuts she'd kept in her pocket and thought how nice it would be just to lay back and fall asleep. She felt she could sleep for a whole week and that is exactly what she planned to do when she got Evan back home safely. She wondered where he was at that moment, and if he was still under the spell of the pixie dust or whether he'd awakened yet. He'd be frightened to wake up and find himself a prisoner of the pixies. He had never been away from his family before. He wouldn't know what to do. The more she thought about Evan's plight, the more she hoped he was still under the spell of the dust: it was far better for him, just now, not to wake up, she concluded.

Just then Ned came in and, seeing the condition of Kayleigh's feet, said, "We'd better find you something else for your feet otherwise you won't be able to climb the mountain." He rummaged around in one of the sacks and, using one of her slippers as a size indicator, he chose a pair of fairy boots for Kayleigh to wear.

"Here, put these on. And you'd better wear this cloak as well. That purple coat of yours will stand out for miles up on the bare hillside."

"Thanks," she said. "Are we ready to go? If I stay here any longer I'll fall asleep."

"Actually, that would be the best thing for you, Premie Kayleigh. Why don't you do that and we'll go after the boy, and once we've retrieved him, we'll come back here for you."

"No way," she replied, jumping to her feet. "I have to be there when Evan wakes from the spell. He'll be very frightened to find himself in a strange place with no one he knows."

"I knew you'd say that, but it was worth a try. Come on then, we're almost ready."

Alec and Nick came in and started examining some of the barrels at the back of the cist. They chose two and carried them outside. Kayleigh pulled on the fairy boots and drew the brownish-green cloak over her shoulders. Then she walked out of the cave.

Somehow, she expected to see the morning sun climbing up the sky, but it was still a pre-dawn twilight outside.

“This seems to be a very long night,” she said to Alec, who was tying the two barrels onto the back of a brown pony.

“Time seems a lot longer when you’re waiting for something, does it not, Premie Kayleigh? We know how anxious you are about your brother—that must make the time seem to pass more slowly for you,” Alec said as he looked nervously up at Ned.

“That’s right. Time passes at different speeds depending on your situation. Haven’t you noticed how much longer the day before your Birthday is compared to the day after it?” Ned asked Kayleigh.

“I suppose so,” she responded.

“Right, we’re off,” he said with a sigh. “I’ve sent our two friends on their other pony back to our people to tell them the news. If we fail in our attempt, it’s important that the others are warned so they can prepare for the worst. I wish we had time to await reinforcements, but we must get to the top before the pixies arrive.”

Ned led the way north up the gully that climbed to a flat height of land separating Snaefell mountain from its smaller neighbour, Clagh Ouyr. From there they could see Snaefell rise sharply directly to the west. The summit was shrouded in a high mist, which looked to be creeping down the mountainside.

“Manannan’s Mist,” remarked Nick. “Maybe he’s going to spread his great cloak over us to hide us from our foes.”

“It would certainly be a good thing if we remained unseen until we reached the top,” Alec added.

They started the climb. Ned led the way, followed by Alec, then Kayleigh. Nick was last and guided the pony over the rock and heather of the slope. It was a long hard climb and Kayleigh was grateful she was wearing the fairy boots and not her purple slippers. About halfway up the steep slope, the mist had descended enough to engulf them. It brought a dampness with it that began to chill Kayleigh, even though she was perspiring from the effort of the ascent. As they approached the summit, they crossed the wagon path that circled up the mountain. It began its ascent at the southern foot of

Snaefell, followed the east flank northwards as it climbed and then circled around to the west and finally back south as it approached the summit.

“This is the only route by which a wagon could climb this mountain,” Ned remarked, as he looked both ways along the track for signs of the pixie troupe. “I don’t see any marks of recent wagon traffic here, so I’m hopeful that we are ahead of them.”



Figure 5: *The Summit of Snaefell Mountain*

As they continued on, the slope eased and the summit came into view. The mists were retreating under the assault of a brisk wind out of the west. The top of the mountain was bare, with very little in the way of cover. Out to the east, far across the sea, land was visible. Kayleigh remembered that from the top of Snaefell, on a clear day, you were supposed to be able to see the six kingdoms: England; Ireland; Scotland; Wales; Mann; and Heaven. She wondered if those in the six kingdoms could also see her at that moment.

“Where will we find the witch?” she asked.

“If I had to guess, I’d say she’ll be near one of the cairns,” replied Alec.

“I think you had better stay here with Nick while Alec and I go and scout about,” Ned said. He had a worried look on his face. “Would you mind helping Nick unload the pony—we may need our equipment at short notice.”

Without waiting for a reply, Ned and Alec headed south towards the rounded peak of the mountain. They stayed low and darted from rock to bush to grassy tussock as they went. Nick and Kayleigh unloaded the sacks and barrels from the pony and set him loose to graze on the wild grass and heather of the hillside.

“What is all this stuff?” Kayleigh asked.

“Well, we’ve brought lots of things that may be helpful, but the main item is . . . the Witch Barrel,” Nick said, trying to be mysterious.

“What’s that?”

“It’s how we got rid of the Witch of Slieu Whallian,” Nick explained. “It’s a barrel that has spikes on the inside. We put the witch in the barrel, close the top, and roll her down the mountainside. By the time she reaches the bottom, she’s as dead as a doornail.”

“Oh, that’s horrible,” Kayleigh said disgustedly.

“Maybe so, but it is an effective remedy against witches.”

“And how do you get the witch to go into the spiked barrel?” she asked.

“Ah, well, that’s the trick,” replied Nick, tapping his forefinger against the side of his nose.

“Well, you’d better tell me. If the witch shows up, we’ll have to act quickly to get her into the barrel before she casts a spell on us.”

“Er, actually, Premie Kayleigh, I have no idea how we’re going to get the witch into the barrel,” Nick said sheepishly.

“What! Well, that’s just great! I suppose we’ll just ask her nicely if she wouldn’t mind just stepping into this spiked barrel so we can roll her down the mountain . . . and I thought you had a plan!”

“Well,” said Nick, recovering his composure, “it’s hard to make a plan when we don’t really know the situation. We know we’re dealing with a powerful witch and we know she needs a premie, but that’s really all we do know.”

“Great!” Kayleigh sat down on one of the barrels. Then she jumped up. “Is this the one with the spikes?” she asked.

“Yes,” said Nick, “let’s take the top off it so it’ll be ready.”

Together they removed the top from the barrel and when it was open Kayleigh could see the great iron spikes protruding through one half of the barrel down its length. There were no spikes on the opposite side, probably (and here she guessed correctly) so there would be room to fit the witch inside. The second barrel contained bows and arrows, clubs and knives of various lengths all wrapped in cloths. In the sacks were ropes, clothing, food, lanterns and assorted charms and wards against evil. They lay everything neatly on the ground. As they were working, they began to hear noises coming from lower down the hillside over the edge of the summit. They crept to where they could get a view of the path below and, lo and behold, there was the pixie wagon making its way along the trail. The four pixies riding in the cart had been joined by four more who walked along beside it. Kayleigh could see that Evan was awake and moving around. Every time he sat up in the cart, one of the pixies pushed him roughly back down onto the straw. She was about to call out to him, when Nick quickly placed his hand over her mouth.

“Please, Premie Kayleigh,” he implored, “We can’t give ourselves away. Be patient. He’ll be free soon.”

“I wish I could believe you. But you don’t even have a proper plan.”

“Let’s just wait for the others to return and then we’ll know what we’re up against.”

They went back to where their gear was stored and Kayleigh said nothing more. Deep in thought, she looked out over the hillside. Her attention drifted to some sheep that had been roaming lower down on the mountain and that were working their way up to where they were sitting. That sheep were roaming about was not in itself unusual—every hill on the island was dotted with sheep. What was odd was that in the midst of the flock was a goat. Kayleigh, seeing it, turned to Nick and remarked:

“Isn’t that funny. A goat is travelling with the sheep—I’ve never seen that before.”

“It is a bit unusual,” said Nick.

Just then, as the sheep got nearer, the goat turned in Kayleigh’s direction. She was startled to see it come directly at her. She stood up and moved behind a barrel. The goat looked at her with its bright yellow eyes and then it spoke:

“Well, if it isn’t the Preemie. After all the trouble the pixies have gone through to lure you here, you’ve arrived ahead of them.”

Kayleigh was so startled, she couldn’t speak. She just stood there with her mouth open.

Nick moved quickly to place himself between Kayleigh and the goat. As soon as he did so, the goat turned her gaze on him and he stopped in his tracks. He fell over onto the rocky ground and, try as he might, he could not get up. His legs were paralyzed.

“Preemie, get away from here quickly,” he struggled to say, “it’s the witch. The goat is the witch.”

Kayleigh ran to her friend’s side and the goat moved closer.

“Yes, that’s right. I’m the one you’ve been travelling to meet. And I’ve waited a very long time for you.”

“But, you’re a goat—a talking goat, where’s the witch?” Kayleigh remarked, very confused and afraid.

“I see you were expecting some ugly old hag like the make-believe witches in children’s stories. I’m sorry to disappoint you. Once, long ago now, I looked like a woman, though I was never old nor, I think, ugly. In fact, the men of this Island were quite taken with me.”

“Why do you look like a goat, now?” Despite being afraid, Kayleigh had become intrigued. The goat’s low and soothing voice seemed to calm her fears.

“Well, that’s a long tale. All I’ll say is that I had an encounter with a wizard who, for some reason, held a grudge against me. His name was Caillagh-ny-Faashagh and he was a shape-shifter himself, and I suppose he thought it amusing to turn me into a goat. He also stripped me of most of my powers and it has taken me many long years to begin to regain some of them.”

Nick, lying face down on the ground, was wide-eyed with a look of great fear. “It’s Tehi Tegi,” he gasped. “We thought you were dead.”

“No. Not dead. Just biding my time. First I must regain my former shape, and then I have a wizard to deal with.”

Kayleigh, who was already becoming used to the idea of a talking goat, asked:

“What has all this got to do with me and my little brother? We don’t know anything about this wizard you are looking for. Please let us go, there’s been some mistake. We really can’t help you.”

“Oh, yes, you can,” the witch replied. “In order to regain my former shape, I need to cast a very particular spell. And for that, I need a preemie. I knew how closely these irritating fairies watch over your kind, child, so I had to find a way to get you away from their clutches. I offered the pixies some help in return for their assistance in securing you. It was they who told me of your strong attachment to your brother. They assured me that, if he were taken, you would follow. Of course, we expected the fairies to intervene, so we planned for that. I thought my little pet, the Buggane, would have scared them off, but he seems to have failed me. Everything, however, has worked out in the end, for here you are.”

Kayleigh stood up and looked around her. The wagon bearing Evan was coming within sight of the summit to the south of where she stood. There was no sign of Ned or Alec—where could they be, she wondered.

“Look,” Kayleigh said, “now that I’m here, you don’t need Evan any more. Let him go, please, and I’ll do whatever you want.”

The pixies were getting closer. Tehi Tegi looked up at Kayleigh with her yellow eyes for a long moment, as though she were brewing some new idea in her mind.

“Call to the pixies and direct them over here,” she said.

Kayleigh climbed onto the barrel and waved her arms in the air. “Over here,” she shouted. “We’re over here.”

Pixie scouts came running, and when they saw the goat, they signalled to the wagon to join them. In the back little Evan stood up and, seeing his sister, tried to jump

out of the cart. One of the guards grabbed him roughly and forced him back down onto the straw.

“Kaaaaayleigh,” he screamed. “Kayleigh!”

She ran towards the cart, closely followed by the pixie scouts. The guards were about to restrain her when they received a nod from Tehi Tegi. They moved aside and Evan jumped down into his sister’s arms. Both started to cry. The witch cocked her goat’s head and watched two very dirty children tightly embrace each other. They were oblivious to being on the top of a mountain, far from home, surrounded by a band of menacing-looking pixies. Watching them, a new idea came to Tehi Tegi.

Eight pixies surrounded the two children. They were armed with clubs and long staffs and four of them had bows and arrows. Tehi Tegi walked over to them.

“Guard the boy. If this girl tries to run away, you know what to do with him.” She turned to Kayleigh and said, “Now, girl, let us talk.”

They walked a short distance from the others. Tehi Tegi looked up and began speaking in a low voice:

“I can see now why the fairies were so protective of you, Premie. You have a very strong aura about you. I was right in thinking that you would be useful to me. I need a number of things from you and if you cooperate, you have my word that your brother will be released unharmed. Will you agree?”

“I’ll do anything that helps Evan get back home where he belongs,” she replied.

“Good. That’s very good. First, in order to complete the spell which will restore my former shape, I require some items from a preemie—from you. I need three locks of your hair, one thimbleful of nail clippings and seven drops of your blood. Will you give them willingly?”

“I suppose so, if you keep your promise to release Evan.”

The witch signalled the wagon driver and he brought over a box that had been under the seat of his cart. Inside were small glass jars and vials of various shapes and sizes. Tied to the inside of the lid of the box were a small set of silver scissors and a knife.

“Cut three locks of her hair and place them into the largest jar,” she instructed the driver. When he was done, the witch turned to Kayleigh: “You child, use the scissors to clip your nails. I see many are broken from your journey. If there are not enough to fill that small vial, then you’ll have to take your boots off and clip your toes.”

Fortunately, by cutting her fingernails very short, Kayleigh had just enough to fill the thimble-sized vial. The guard stoppered it and placed it back in the box alongside the jar containing her hair.

“Now, prick her finger and collect the seven drops of blood. Be very careful to seal that vial tightly.”

The guard took the small knife from the case and held Kayleigh’s left hand over the vial. She squeezed up her eyes and turned her head away.

“Ow!” she cried, as the knife tip stabbed her finger. After the drops had been collected, the driver released her hand. She looked at the little puncture, and then put her finger into her mouth until the bleeding stopped.

“Okay, I’ve done what you asked—now, please let us go home.”

“Not so fast,” the witch replied. “There is more I require before your brother goes free. When I become my former self, there are a number of ways in which a preemie could be useful to me. I want you to come with me. If, after I have dealt with the wizard, you prove to be as useful as I think you might be, I may even take you as my apprentice. I will need a capable assistant in the future.”

Kayleigh could not believe what she was hearing. “You want me to stay with you? After everything you’ve done to us, what would make you think I would ever agree to that? No way. I want to go home with Evan. Our parents will be worried sick as it is.”

Just then there was a commotion over by the wagon. The pixies were shouting to each other and scurrying about.

“Go and see what’s going on,” Tehi Tegi instructed the driver, who was still standing nearby. He ran to the wagon, took in the situation, then turned and shouted back to the witch:

“A large band of fairies is coming up the south side of the hill. Looks like they’ve been alerted. They are all armed.”

“Ned,” thought Kayleigh, “and Alec. They must have gone for help. That’s why they didn’t return.”

Tehi Tegi ran down towards the wagon to see for herself. Kayleigh followed. There on the slope just below the summit a group of about fifteen fairies was running towards them, waving clubs and knives. Ned was in the lead, with Alec beside him. The pixies were in a panic. Their bowmen fired off a volley, but they could see they were outnumbered.

“I’m so close, so close,” Tehi Tegi muttered, “I can’t let these meddling fairies interfere with my plans now.”

She knelt on the ground behind the wagon and seemed almost to fall asleep. In fact she was concentrating with all her might. She mumbled and muttered strange words. The pixie bowmen fired again and this time, two of the fairies fell to the ground, wounded.

The fairies were attacking uphill and so were at a disadvantage. The pixies held the high ground and were protected by the sides of their wagon. Their bowmen fired another volley. A third fairy went down.

Just then the ground began to quiver and shake. Off to the left, Kayleigh heard a terrible sound of breaking rock and a roar that echoed off the nearby hills. Tehi Tegi, using her last ounce of power had summoned the Buggane. Now she was so exhausted she couldn’t even get to her feet.

The Buggane began to emerge from a crevice that had opened in the rock. His great claws raked the ground and his mouth foamed angrily. He was not pleased at being summoned again so soon.

In the excitement, Kayleigh ran to her brother and pulled him underneath the wagon. The pixies were terrified and ran eastward over the steep crest of Snaefell and down in the direction of Laxey Glen. As luck would have it, the Buggane had emerged closer to the pixies than to the fairy troop. He was angry already and went after the first

things he saw moving. Seeing the retreating pixies, he started off down the hillside after them, bellowing and tearing boulders out of the ground to throw at them. Two pixies were struck and fell down dazed and rolled all the way to the bottom of the slope.

The fairies, meanwhile, had circled round to the west to avoid the creature and had now reached the little wagon. Ned sent two of the group to see where the Buggane had gone and to ensure the pixies were well away and he dispatched others to care for the wounded. Then he knelt down and reached under the wagon. Kayleigh, who was lying huddled beside Evan with her eyes closed, gave a start.

“It’s all right now, Premie Kayleigh. You’re safe with us,” Ned said as he helped the frightened children to their feet.

“Oh, Ned. I’m so glad to see you. Where did you get to?”

“I’m sorry we were so long. When Alec and I were scouting around we saw some of our folk further down the mountain side. They were coming up out of Druidale. We ran to meet them, so we’d have more help in dealing with the pixies. I’m afraid the climb back up took us longer than I hoped.”

The two fairies who had gone to check on the Buggane came back carrying Nick. He was still paralyzed, but was beginning to get some feeling back in his feet.

“I’ll be all right in a few hours,” he said. “But, where’s that goat-witch gone?”

In the panic, Kayleigh had forgotten about Tehi Tegi. She looked around at where the goat had been kneeling—but she was gone. She and Ned walked up to where Kayleigh had been shorn, clipped and bled. There was no sign of the witch. And the box containing the jars and vials was gone as well.

She looked out across the countryside. The sheep had run away north to escape the commotion, but there was no sign of a goat. “She must have escaped in all the excitement,” she said.

Ned frowned, “I think you’d better tell me everything that happened here since I left you.”

So, Kayleigh told Ned all about her encounter with Tehi Tegi. He was amazed by the tale, believing that the witch had been long dead.

“We’ve all been very fortunate today,” he said. “Tehi Tegi was very powerful once, and it seems that she will be again. I don’t think we’ve heard the last of her. Nor does it seem that the pixies will be giving up their quest to invade our Island. There will be interesting times ahead, and no mistake.”

They returned to the wagon where Alec had taken charge of Evan. He had washed his face and brushed the dust off him and was now performing summersaults to entertain the boy. Evan was sitting on the back of the cart laughing, when Kayleigh came up to him.

“Are you ready to go home?”

“Yes. I’m hungry,” he replied and reached out to give his sister a hug.

“We’ve got some food in with the supplies we brought – I’ll go and get you some ... uh, on second thought.” Something had just occurred to Kayleigh. She turned to Alec and asked, “Alec, is that fairy food we brought, or normal food?”

Alec chuckled, “Well, I’m not sure what you mean by normal food, but if you’re worried by that old wives tale about humans becoming enchanted if they eat our food, you needn’t be. All we brought was dried apples, some bread and a few smoked herrings. Nothing ‘enchanted’ there, I’m afraid. Eat your fill and don’t worry. I promise you’ll both be fine.”

So they all ate some food, and, when they were done, Ned ordered six of the fairies to take the wounded, including Nick, down the mountain to Druidale on the wagon. Then he put Kayleigh and Evan on the old brown pony and, with the remainder of the band, started off down the mountainside southward. They circled around the Beinn-y-Phott and Callaghan mountains and descended into to upper reaches of Injebreck.

“We have one last thing to do before we take you home,” Ned said to Kayleigh. He was walking beside her as the little pony trotted down the hill.

“What’s that?” she asked.

“We have to make sure that the boy is truly free of the spell of the pixie dust. We’ll stop by the waterfall near the West Baldwin reservoir—it’s one of our special places and the water will wash away the last traces of the pixies.”

And so they did. Evan and Kayleigh, hand in hand, waded into the pool beneath the falls. The water was cool, but not cold. They dunked their heads under the waterfall and, as best they could, rinsed the dirt out of their hair and off their clothes. There was a warm breeze blowing up the valley and, back on the pony, their hair and clothes soon dried as they continued on their way. Escorted by the fairy troupe, the two children followed the River Glass all the way back to Tromode and then, just past the Quarterbridge, they crossed the Peel Road and climbed the hill that led back to Ballakermeen and their home. As they approached the old stand of elder trees behind the house, the morning sun broke out of a low haze and a thrush began singing high in a hazel tree.

It was time for goodbyes. Ned and Alec each took one of Kayleigh’s hands and bowed deeply before her. Ned spoke for them both:

“It has been our honour to have met you, Premie Kayleigh. We wish you well. But, I don’t think this will be a final parting, we’ll meet again I feel certain.”

“I hope so,” Kayleigh replied, and she reached out and hugged her two friends. They both blushed, bowed again and turned to rejoin the rest of their companions. Kayleigh took her brother’s hand and together they walked through bushes behind their house and into the garden. Butterflies were playing in the sunbeams that shone through the trees. Evan started running up the lawn towards the house and, as Kayleigh hurried to keep up, she wondered what she was going to tell her parents, who surely must be up by now.

Evan opened the back door just as Kayleigh caught up to him. Together, they ran toward the kitchen.

“Mummy. Daddy,” Evan called out. “Where are you?”

As they rounded the corner to the kitchen, their parents jumped to their feet. Kayleigh’s father dropped his teacup on the floor, spilling tea across the tiles. Her mother

let out a small scream and held her hands over her mouth. For what seemed like minutes, but was really only a few seconds, they both just stared at the two children.

“Mummy,” Evan said, running to his mother, “we’re home.”

“I can’t believe it,” she said, bending down to pick up Evan. She hugged him tightly and burst into tears.

“What’s wrong?” asked Kayleigh, looking at her father, who was still standing in stunned silence. “I’m sorry if you were worried. I thought we’d be back before you got up.”

“Where have you been all this time,” her father said, at last. “We’ve been worried sick about you both. Everyone’s been looking for you: all our friends and family; the police. We thought we’d never see you again. Your mother has been absolutely frantic.”

Kayleigh was confused. “We’ve only been gone a little while,” she said.

“Kayleigh,” he said as he lifted her up into his arms, “oh, Kayleigh, we thought we’d lost you both. We’d almost given up hope.”

“What time is it?” she asked, “how long have we been gone.”

“Two whole weeks,” he said.

“What! It seemed like only a few hours to us.”

“Tell us where you’ve been,” her mother said, tears streaming down her face.

“We’ve been to see the fairies,” said Evan.

What may seem remarkable to people not familiar with the customs and beliefs of the Isle of Man is that, after Kayleigh explained what had happened to them, most people just accepted it. They knew, absolutely, that the Little People existed and were to be respected. They understood that they shared their supernatural island with other beings. Most people, Kayleigh and Evan’s parents especially, were just grateful that the fairies had allowed the two children to return home—for that does not often happen.

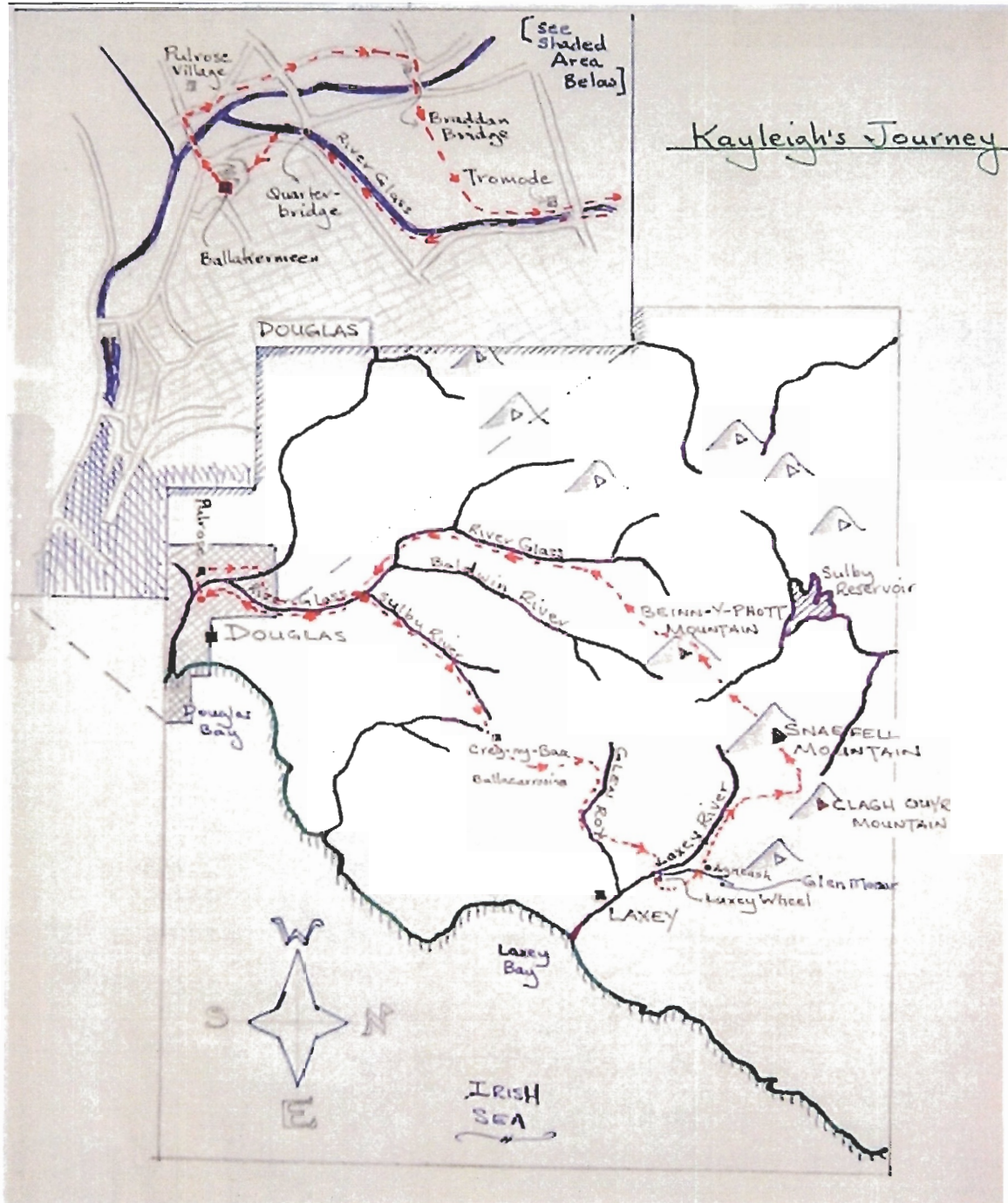


Figure 6: Kayleigh's Map of her First Adventure

The Preemie and the Port Soderick Outing

*Then I hear the wavelets murmur,
As they kiss the fairy shore,
And beneath the emerald waters
Sings the mermaid, as of yore.*

Eliza Craven Green²¹

Kayleigh's mother had taken Evan, to his soccer match. Actually, it was more of a social event than a match, for at Evan's age—four years and a bit—the players often forgot about the ball and chased each other around the pitch; or stood giggling together in small groups. Evan's coach was always reminding them to follow the ball—something Evan, especially, had trouble remembering.

While she had the house to herself for a few minutes before her dad came home for his dinner, Kayleigh was working on a school project; she was writing a story about a cat. Her teacher had encouraged her artistic talents by suggesting that Kayleigh illustrate her story with drawings—and that was what she was doing when she heard a tapping sound at the sliding glass door leading to the garden.

At first she didn't pay any attention and continued to try to recreate the tortoise-shell colouring of Mona, the neighbour's Manx cat, who had acted as the model for the cat in her story. The tapping persisted, however, and Kayleigh looked up from her work to see a small figure peering at her through the glass door. He wasn't very tall—little

²¹ From *Ellan Vannin*, verse III, the 'alternate' National Anthem of the Isle of Man. Words by Mrs. Eliza Craven Green (1854).

more than two feet, excluding the pointy red cap he wore on his head. He was dressed in a blue jacket and his matching blue pants were tucked into tall brown leather boots.

“Ned,” Kayleigh shouted, jumping to her feet and running to the glass door. “Oh, Ned, I’m so glad to see you again,” she said as she slid open the door. It was while she was doing so that she noticed that her old friend was wearing a sling over his shoulder which cradled his left arm. Dust covered his boots and he had a twig stuck in his hat as though he had just completed a long journey.

“What’s happened to you, Ned? You look terrible.”

“It’s a very great pleasure to see you again, Premie Kayleigh,” Ned said, as he looked up at his young friend. “I must speak with you about something important, something urgent. Will you hear me, Premie?”

“You know I will, Ned. Won’t you come in?”

The fairy—for it was indeed a fairy, the very same one who had helped Kayleigh recover her brother when he was taken by the pixies—removed his cap, stepped into the house and followed Kayleigh into the sitting room. Evan's small chair stood beside the fireplace and Ned climbed onto it.

“Tell me what’s the matter, Ned.”

“I will, Premie, but do you think I might have some water. I’ve had a long journey and no rest.”

“Yes, of course,” Kayleigh replied, and went into the kitchen, bringing back a teacup full of water for her friend. He took it with his free hand and drank it all down in one go. Kayleigh seated herself on the carpet in front of Ned, smoothing the creases from her purple pants and straightening her matching purple tee-shirt as she did so.

“Thank you, thank you,” Ned said, handing Kayleigh the cup. “Now, let me begin.”

He cleared his throat, settled himself on the chair and adjusted his arm-sling.

“You remember, Premie, the trouble we’ve been having with the pixies?”

“How could I forget,” Kayleigh replied, with a slight shudder.

“Well, after our little adventure, the pixies were very angry because we’d spoiled their plan to get help from the witch, Tehi Tegi. You see, since she disappeared on Snaefell, no one has seen or heard of her—which is most strange, really.”

“So, their plan to use the witch’s powers to stay on the Isle of Man failed?”

“It was a set-back for them Preemie, true enough, but they haven’t given up. When I reported what they were up to, our people naturally retaliated. We were successful, at least temporarily, in driving the pixies away from their outpost at Laxey. However, they quickly struck back at us from their other base at the old lead mines in Foxdale. I was with my people in Silverdale Glen when they attacked us. They took us completely by surprise—how that happened is another story, though. There were many casualties on both sides, and it was only by good fortune that we got the upper hand and repelled their assault, sending the scattered survivors back to their holes at Foxdale.”

“Goodness, that sounds terrible. I had no idea your argument with the pixies would turn into a battle. It’s awful . . . and very sad,” Kayleigh said in a hushed voice.

“Yes, it is most unfortunate that it had to come to this. Anyway, Preemie Kayleigh, the reason I have come to you in such haste is that after our confrontation with the pixies, in which, as you can see, I was wounded slightly, we captured two of their band. They were both young pixies—little more than children. They were terrified that we would torture them, having had their heads filled with lies about us by their leaders, and very quickly they volunteered what they knew of the pixies’ plans. One of the things we learned was that another attempt was already in progress to capture a preemie. I concluded that it must be you they were after because the two other preemies we know about on the Island are very young and would be of no immediate use to them.”

“What do they want me for this time?” Kayleigh groaned. “I can’t help them, and if the witch has disappeared, then who else can they give me to?”

Suddenly, Kayleigh felt sad. She had been pleased to see her friend again, but his news now made her miserable. Why was she being dragged into arguments in the fairy world? Why couldn’t they just leave her (and Evan) alone?

Ned, seeing the look on her face, got down from the little chair and placed his right arm on Kayleigh’s shoulder to comfort her.

“I’m sorry, Preemie, I know it isn’t fair that you should be troubled like this; but I’m certain, if we do nothing, that you’ll be in grave danger very soon. I almost ran right into a troop of pixies just now, as I was crossing the river to reach you. They may be here at any moment and, although I have already sent for help, most of my people are in the South and won’t get here in time.”

“What can we do then?” she asked, glancing nervously in the direction of the garden.

“We must leave right away. I’ll take you with me until we discover their plans or, at least, until we can arrange for adequate protection for you here.”

“But, the last time I travelled with you, we were gone for a long time. My parents were very worried; they thought Evan and I were lost for good. I can’t just disappear again,” she said firmly.

“I wouldn’t suggest this, Preemie, if I didn’t believe it was for the best. And we must act quickly.” As he spoke, Ned moved to the glass door to look outside.

Kayleigh was torn between the excitement of another adventure with the fairies and her concern for the worry it would cause the rest of her family. After a moment’s thought, she made her decision:

“I’ll go with you, Ned, but I must leave a note for my parents, and you must promise to bring me home again as soon as you possibly can. Do you promise?”

“I agree. But, please hurry, I fear the pixies may soon be here.” The fairy had taken up watch by the door and was peering out into the garden.

Kayleigh tore a sheet of paper from her sketch book and wrote in her best hand:

Dear Mum and Dad and Evan,

*My friend, Ned (the fairy) wants me to go with him for a short wile.
It is in portent. Please don’t worry. I will be home again soon.*

Love.

Kayleigh

Underneath her signature, she drew one of her trademark butterflies so her mother would know it was really her who was writing, then she placed the note on the kitchen table.

“Right,” she said, “if I’m leaving on another adventure, I’m not going to ruin my best slippers this time.” She ran into the hallway and brought back her purple running shoes and a purple nylon jacket, embroidered with a large gold butterfly on the back.

They were about to go into the garden when Ned thought he saw movement to the left in the bushes behind the hosta plants. He told Kayleigh to wait while he went out alone. When he reached the lawn, he shouted in a loud voice, “Nick, Alec and the rest of you, the pixies are here. After them, quick! Don’t let any escape!”

On the left edge of the garden, the bushes rustled with the sound of fleeing pixies. Ned motioned to Kayleigh to come out.

“That was a clever trick,” she said.

“Let’s hope it distracts them long enough for us to get away from here,” he replied.

Together, they ran down the garden, through the flower beds (being careful not to trample on Kayleigh’s mother’s begonias) and into the bushes behind the house. Ned led Kayleigh to the little stand of elder trees further back where he had tethered two small and very tired-looking ponies. They had ridden hard to reach the house at Ballakermeen quickly and the ponies were kneeling down resting and munching grass.

“Fury!” Kayleigh exclaimed, recognizing the old pony she had ridden until their encounter with the Buggane had frightened the poor beast away. Quickly they mounted the two ponies. Kayleigh gripped Fury’s mane as he stood up and, remembering that he liked to have his neck rubbed, she patted him affectionately. With only a little reluctance, the tired ponies started off down the hill.

“Where are we going, Ned?” Kayleigh asked.

“When we encountered the pixies and I decided to come for you,” he replied, “I was about to leave on a mission to gather information about some possible kobold activity that may be related to the pixie incursion. I think I should continue with that assignment while I decide what the best course of action is to protect you.”

“What are kobolds?” Kayleigh asked, as they paused before crossing the Peel Road.

“I’ll explain once we get safely away from here.”

They crossed the River Glass near Pulrose, then followed it east through the nunnery grounds to Douglas’ old inner harbour. There, they proceeded along the south quay until they could make their way uphill to Douglas Head.

From the headland, Kayleigh looked out over the bay and saw the long curve of the Douglas promenade, with its white-fronted buildings and the town rising behind them. There was a haze in the air and the buildings shimmered. On the hill, north towards Onchan, the old Falcon Cliff hotel seemed to float above the promenade. Lights twinkled, even though the sun still shone in the western sky. She could see no people—though, surely, she thought, there must be crowds in Douglas at this time of day. Kayleigh remembered the strange look of the sky during her last adventure with the fairies, and how time seemed to travel so slowly for her, compared with what her parents and friends at home experienced.

Near the top of Douglas Head, where the old Marine Drive road began following the coast south-west, they stopped to give the ponies a brief rest.

“Ned,” Kayleigh asked, “how long will I be gone from the real world, this time, do you think?”

“I don’t know what you mean, Preemie Kayleigh,” Ned replied, “we are in the real world, and time is what time will be. It moves at its own pace.”

“Yes, but I was away from home for weeks last time, yet it seemed like only one long day to me.”

“Oh, I see,” said Ned. “But I don’t know how to answer you, Preemie. It depends on many things. However, I promise you that I will do everything in my power to get you safely home as quickly as I possibly can.”

“Thank you.” Kayleigh turned her gaze away from Douglas Bay and looked southward towards the twin gothic arches that marked the beginning of the old roadway. “Can you tell me what your mission is about, Ned?” she asked.

“Certainly, but let’s keep moving. I was on my way to Port Soderick,” Ned began. “We had received some strange and disturbing reports about a Cabbyl Ushtey who was stealing sheep that grazed on the headlands.”

“A Cabble-what?” interrupted Kayleigh.

“Cabbyl Ushtey—do you not know what that is?”

“I’m afraid not,” she replied.

“Well, I must say, Preemie Kayleigh, your education does seem to have been neglected in some important respects. Although, I shouldn’t be shocked, really, given the lack of regard for traditions I see all about in your world. Well, never mind. The Cabbyl Ushtey is the Manx water horse. They aren’t commonly seen any more, and you might not recognize one even if you saw one. On land, they look like regular horses, usually, white or grey in colour. They come onto the hillsides beside the sea to eat the new shoots or to roll on the grass after the rain. Quite often, they fool weary travellers by allowing them to ride them. Once a person is on their back, though, the water horses dive over the cliffs into the sea taking their riders with them. You see the Cabbyl Ushtey is really a sea creature and it lives beneath the waves with the mer-people. They love stormy weather and the best chance of seeing them is on blustery days when they gallop on top of the waves, all covered with sea-foam.”

“They sound beautiful, but scary. I’d like to see one so I could draw it. I love horses, if they’re gentle ones like Fury here.” She was patting her pony’s neck as she spoke. “But why would water horses be stealing sheep?” she asked.

“Well, that is what I am trying to find out. In the past, the odd mischievous Cabbyl Ushtey has taken sheep now and then and drowned the poor things—but such behaviour is uncommon. The large number of sheep reported missing recently made me suspect that something else may be responsible.”

By now they were passing under the arches that spanned the roadway. They had been built to resemble the entrance to a castle, even though there was nothing behind them but the winding route to Port Soderick. Two towers stood on either side of the road, anchoring the crenellated stone archways. As they passed through and continued their journey south, Kayleigh fell silent. She gazed out at the sea far below and listened to the waves crashing against the rocks. A light breeze was blowing and every now and then a gust would ripple across the surface of the water, creating whitecaps. Kayleigh imagined they were white horses chasing white sheep over the swell of the sea. The light was fading and she saw, low on the eastern horizon, a bright star.

“Probably, Venus, the evening star,” she said to herself, remembering something her dad had told her about the first star. She wondered then if her parents had found her note yet and she tried to imagine their conversation. They would be worried, of course, and Evan, she guessed, would be jealous. After their first experience with fairies, he hadn’t been able to stop talking about them. If the action at one of his soccer matches slowed, it was probably because Evan was telling the other players about the fairies. Kayleigh was smiling to herself, thinking of her brother and his fairy-mania, when Ned turned to her.

“It is good to see you smile, Premie Kayleigh.”

The breeze off the sea was unusually warm as they followed the old road towards Port Soderick. For a long while the two travellers were silent, each absorbed in thought. Kayleigh was looking out to sea and thinking of home. Ned was trying to determine what the pixies’ new plan for a premie might entail. Just off the point of land called Little Ness, Kayleigh, who had been watching for sea horses dancing in the foam of the wind-whipped sea, broke the silence:

“Ned, will you tell me more about these water horses you are looking for.”

“Ah, well, Premie Kayleigh, I would be only too pleased to learn that they were indeed the Cabbyl Ushtey. But, I fear otherwise. You see, we knew of the missing sheep, but it was only when we questioned the captured pixies that some of my people concluded it was the horses of the sea who were responsible. I disagreed and, because I did so, I was sent to investigate.”

“Why did you disagree?” Kayleigh asked.

“Well, as you know, pixies are foreign to our Island. We can mostly understand their speech, but their accents and pronunciation are at times difficult for us. These were young pixies, too, whose heads, as I told you earlier, had been filled with lies about what would happen to them if they were captured. They were terrified—almost hysterical. It was hard to understand what they were going on about. It seemed they had recently arrived from over the water—their home is in Cornwall, you’ll remember, in the abandoned tin mines there. They kept jabbering on about ‘cabbyls’; and how they’d met with the cabbyls; and how they were helping each other. Most of my people thought they

were crazy. A Cabbyl Ushtey has nothing in common with the pixies and has no reason to aid them. The more I listened to them, the more I wondered if they didn't mean 'kobold', instead of 'cabbyl'. Kobolds are related to gnomes. They dwell underground or in caves or, like the pixies, in old mines. It made more sense to me that the pixies would ally themselves with kobolds and bring them across to Mann to help with their invasion. I was even more convinced when I heard of the missing sheep. Kobolds are more likely, much more likely than Cabbyl Ushtey, to steal sheep—for food. I was about to start out with a small party to investigate, when I learned something else from the two prisoners: the news of the pixie plot to abduct you. I came as quickly as I could to find you and the rest of my team went south to investigate the sheep disappearances. Most of the sheep were taken around Spanish Head, but a few were reported missing near here, around Ballacregga and Santon. While I'm in the area, I thought I'd go that way to see if I can learn anything. Crogga Glen and Port Soderick are good places to start."

Kayleigh listened to all this with great interest. She had never heard of kobolds before and she worried about what the arrival of all these new creatures might mean.

"Ned," she began, thoughtfully, "why are you so against the pixies coming here? Even though they treated my little brother very badly and they caused us a lot of trouble, they still seem very like fairies to me—aren't you related in some way?"

Ned turned around so quickly on his pony that he almost fell off.

"Preemie," he said, indignantly, "I am very shocked to hear you say such things. Pixies are not in the least like us. Their speech and mannerisms are coarse and uncouth. Their culture is of the lowest form and they have little respect for nature—or for anything other than their own interests, as far as I can see. They . . . they . . . they are . . . foreign," he ended in exasperation.

"I see," said Kayleigh, "but they do look a lot like your people. If you wore the same clothes, I'm not sure I could tell you apart."

"Ridiculous!" was all Ned could say. Then, muttering to himself, he urged his pony on and moved out ahead of Kayleigh. She feared she had offended her friend and hurried to catch up.

“Wait, Ned. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to upset you. It’s just that I was thinking: didn’t all this trouble begin because the fairies wouldn’t let the pixies come here, after they lost their homes when the mines in Cornwall flooded? Now we have pixies, witches and kobolds to worry about, and your people are getting hurt and my brother and I are in danger. It just seems to me that if you’d allowed the pixies to live in the old mines at Laxey, as they first wanted, none of this might have happened. Besides, I think you told me that the fairies didn’t use the mines anyway.”

“That is not the point,” Ned retorted. “This is our Island and they must obtain our permission before coming here.”

“Do we big people have your permission to be here?”

“That’s different. Humans and Fairies have learned to live together more or less peaceably over hundreds of years. And even though your people continue to grow in numbers and often despoil the sacred landscape, it is too late for us to ask you to leave.”

“Why couldn’t you learn to live peacefully with the pixies, as you have with us?” she asked.

“Because . . . because they are pixies, that’s why!”

They went along in silence until they began the descent into Crogga Glen.

“Premie Kayleigh, I am sorry for losing my temper. I can see that from your point of view we may seem to be unreasonable. But there is a long, long history of animosity between the pixies and my people—it stretches back more than one thousand of your years to the time of the first Viking invasions. If both sides could have forgotten past hurts, perhaps we could have reached some peaceful and reasonable arrangement that would have satisfied everyone. But we both have long memories and we are both stubborn peoples. I’m afraid it is too late for reason.”

“Well, I think that’s very sad,” she said. “In my school, when two of the children get into a fight or argument, they go to the counsellor and she helps them to become friends again. Maybe you and the pixies need to find a counsellor.”

Ned couldn’t help but laugh. “Oh, Premie Kayleigh,” he chuckled, “you really are an amazing and wonderful creature. If anyone could act as counsellor in these difficult matters, I truly believe you could. But, alas, I fear we are past hope on that front.”



Figure 7: *The Hills Above Port Soderick Bay*

Above Port Soderick they left the road and traversed the hillside inland, descending as they went into Glen Crogga. Near a stand of young oak trees, Ned dismounted and whistled three times. He waited, and hearing no reply, he repeated the signal. But again there was no response.

“How very odd,” he said. “Please wait here for a few moments, Preemie, while I go and investigate.”

He crossed the stream and climbed up the opposite side of the glen. Kayleigh could see him looking about and then he seemed to disappear into a large tree. Soon he emerged and returned to where Kayleigh was minding the ponies.

“Well, here’s a mystery,” he said. “The outpost is deserted and it looks as though our lookouts left in a hurry. Most of their gear is still inside the hollow tree we use and it doesn’t look like they left any message behind.”

“Where would they have gone?” Kayleigh asked.

“That I don’t know, but if something’s amiss in this corner of the Island, I know someone who might be able to tell us. An old farmer I know works a few acres up on the hilltop above us. He’s a busybody and a terrible gossip, but he knows this area well and

he's friendly and respectful to my people. His wife's family has been farming this area for six generations—I remember the wife's old granny very well from a while back. She was a kind old woman—a soothsayer and charmer, you know. Anyway, she's long dead now. Let's go up onto the hilltop and see what we can discover."

So Ned led the way inland, climbing up the south side of the glen until they reached the open hillside just to the north of Ballacregga. From there they crossed the fields, circling back toward the sea and when they reached a dry-stone wall that was too high for the ponies, Ned stopped and peered over it.

"I think I should go and see my farmer friend alone, Premie. If he saw that a human child was travelling with me, the whole countryside would know of it by morning. And that's a risk I'd like to avoid. Would you mind waiting for me here? I won't be very long."

"I guess I'll have to wait. You go on and I'll see the ponies get some of this nice grass and have a lie down—they're worn out, poor things."

"Thank you, Premie. I'll be back soon."

With that, Ned vaulted the stone wall and headed off towards an old farm house that Kayleigh could just make out across the next field. She walked about collecting handfuls of sweet grasses and clover which she made into a little pile at the base of the wall. Then she coaxed the ponies to kneel down in front of it so they could eat and rest at the same time. Kayleigh lay down beside them and stared up into the sky. It was an odd indigo colour. The sun had set and a few more stars had come out, but it was not yet evening. Rather, a bright twilight covered all the countryside and made it hard to make things out that weren't close at hand. She was dreaming about the horses of the sea again, when she woke up to Ned shaking her on the shoulder.

"Wake up, Premie Kayleigh; we must get a move on. Something peculiar is happening around here all right."

"Oh," she said, rubbing her eyes, "I must have dozed off. What did you learn, Ned?"

"Well, the old farmer may be a gossip, but he's no fool. He confirmed that four of his sheep have disappeared mysteriously in the last week, including one of his prized

Loaghtan's, and some of his neighbour's flock have gone missing as well. Also, a barrel of his apples and some sacks of potatoes have been taken from his storage shed. He told me that he'd spoken with our sentries earlier today. They were looking into the disappearances and, he said, they seemed worried about something. He says they were talking about going to look in the Smugglers Caves."

"The Smugglers Caves! We visited them on a school outing to Port Soderick last spring. They're interesting, but I don't think there's room in them for a flock of sheep and all that other stuff."

"More than likely, Preemie, you saw only the first cave—the one nearest to the cove. There are other caves in these parts and the bigger ones could easily hold a flock of sheep and more. Let's go down to the shore and see if there are any signs of my people there."

They climbed onto their ponies and returned the way they had come. When they reached the hollow tree in the glen, Ned dismounted and started looking around for something. After clearing a path through some brambles, he found what he was searching for. He pulled on a length of rope and out from under the dense thicket of bushes came a little two-wheeled cart with a small boat tied on top.

"It doesn't look as though our sentries went to the caves after all. They'd need the boat to get around the cove to the larger caves. But I think we'd better bring it down to the water with us just in case."

Ned dragged the cart out onto the path that ran down the glen to the sea. He looped the rope around his pony's neck and then climbed onto his back. Pulling the little cart behind them, they made their way to the Port Soderick waterfront.

The tide was in when they arrived at the rocky shore; even reaching the nearest cave would mean wet feet. Ned looked about for signs of his friends. Kayleigh got down from Fury and walked along the water's edge. The waves were splashing up onto the crumbling old promenade that had seen better days. Down in the foam, under some seaweed she spotted something red among the stones on the beach. When she pulled it out, she saw it was a cap—a pointy red fairy cap.

"Ned," she called. "Look at this."

Ned ran over to where she was standing.

“Oh, dear,” he said. “That is not an encouraging find. Something is definitely amiss here.”

He began to pace up down, thinking. Kayleigh stared at the sea. It seemed to have a strong attraction, as though it called to her. She stood in a daze, staring at the waves.

“Premie, I am in a quandary. I feel I must investigate the Smugglers Caves, but I don’t feel comfortable leaving you alone for so long. Do you think you could endure a short boat ride around the end of the cove with me?”

“Well, I enjoy going on the paddle boats in Mooragh Park and the sea isn’t too rough today, so, yes, I think I’d like to go with you. It would be better than being left alone here in this sad place, that’s for sure.”

“Right, then, let’s unload this boat and we’ll be on our way. The ponies can graze here while we’re gone and by the time we return, they should be rested for our next leg.”

Together, Ned and Kayleigh dragged the small boat to the water’s edge. It was only about five feet long. There were two paddles inside, and a mast and sail were laid along the bottom of the boat underneath the seats. Kayleigh guessed that it could hold no more than four fairies. With Ned and her on board, there wouldn’t be much room left.

Kayleigh sat in the bow and Ned pushed the boat off the stony shore, getting his boots soaked in the process. Then he jumped on board and grabbed the two oars. The tide was full and about to turn, so the sea was fairly calm. Once they cleared the breakers, they rowed through the gentle swells out into the little bay. Ned didn’t bother looking at the nearer caves—as Kayleigh had rightly observed, they were too small and too open to be of any consequence. Instead, he pulled on the oars and headed out around the south side of Port Soderick bay to where the larger caves were located. As they rounded a rocky shoulder of land, the wind picked up and the going was harder. Kayleigh listened to waves lapping the sides of the small boat and she thought she could hear, further out to sea, a sort of music. It was like a song in some foreign language, played on mysterious instruments.

“Am I imagining it, or do you hear music out there too, Ned?”

“Oh, yes, I can hear it. It’s beautiful, isn’t it? We call it mer-song, the music of the mer-people.”

“What? You mean mermaids and mermen?”

“That’s exactly what I mean, Preemie.”

Kayleigh laughed. “First it was sea horses, now it’s mermaids. I think you’re pulling my leg.”

“What would you have said a few months ago if I described a Fynoderee or a Buggane to you? What would you have thought if I told you I believed in witches?”

Ned kept pulling at the oars. Kayleigh was silent for a while, then she muttered under her breath, “What would I have said if someone told me I’d be talking to a fairy, in a boat, while hiding from pixies?”

After a few minutes, Ned looked around to get his bearings.

“Ah, that’s where we’re headed. You see that big opening where the waves are washing in—that’s the mouth of the largest cave. You can see why it’s called a Smugglers Cave—it is isolated and can only be reached easily by boat. It was very popular in bygone years with the less law-abiding of your people.”

Ned turned the boat and rowed into the cave opening. A few feet inside, they struck bottom on a shelf of rock covered with sand and small stones. Ned jumped out and pulled the boat up onto a rocky ledge. The noise of the waves echoing off the roof of the cave made it difficult to hear anything and the dim light obscured most details of their surroundings.

“A little further in, around that big rock outcrop over there, the cave opens up and there are a few cracks in the roof that let some light in. Let’s be very quiet and cautious until we see what’s ahead of us. Please stay close behind me, Preemie.”

They felt their way along the cave wall until they reached the rocky outcrop. As Kayleigh’s eyes became accustomed to the dimness she could make out some of the details in the cave. Across from them near the opposite wall were several wooden barrels, coils of rope and what looked like fishing nets. Further in, a small rowboat stood on its end, leaning against the rock. There was a faint glow coming from around the corner ahead and Kayleigh thought she could make out sounds, a sort of high-pitched cackling,

above the receding noise of the waves. Ned motioned for Kayleigh to stay where she was. He got down on his belly and inched his way along the ground toward the corner ahead. The light Kayleigh had begun to see became more distinct as her eyes got used to the darkness and she saw that it flickered like firelight. Ned had reached a point where he could see around to the wider part of the cave. He lay there motionless for what seemed forever to Kayleigh. She was tense with anxiety. Finally, Ned pulled himself back and sat up beside her.

“Trouble,” he whispered into her ear, “I was right, although I find no satisfaction in it. There are a group of kobolds in there sitting around a campfire feasting on roasted mutton.”

Kayleigh was about to speak, but Ned placed his hand over her mouth and shook his head. Into her ear he whispered, “We must leave immediately, before they discover us. We cannot let you be taken by the kobolds—they would certainly give you over to the pixies. Quickly—and quietly—let us return to the boat and leave this place.”

They had started to make their way to the boat when a terrible scream echoed through the cave. It was a noise such as Kayleigh had never heard before, like a great bird screeching. Without doubt, though, it was a cry of agony.

Before they could move any farther, a scurrying sound of approaching feet made them press themselves against the rock wall. Around the corner, from the direction of the flickering light, a skinny creature dressed in a long brown tunic emerged and headed over towards the barrels and the ropes. Kayleigh thought it was very odd-looking. It stood a little over three feet tall and walked stooped-over so that its long slender hands, dangling at the ends of its skinny arms, almost touched the ground. Its bare flat feet were long, too, and seemed too big for its body. The creature reached the storage area where he bent down to pick up a coil of rope. As soon as he turned back around, he was sure to see them.

“Stay down and do not move a muscle. As soon as it’s clear, leave!” Ned whispered into Kayleigh’s ear.

The kobold turned with the coil of rope over his shoulder and he saw the fairy boat at the entrance to the cave. Just as he was about to shout the alarm, Ned jumped to his feet and charged at him.

“Go, Preemie, go,” Ned yelled over his shoulder as he leapt onto the startled kobold.

Kayleigh saw them tumble to the ground and watched as three more of the creatures ran over to assist their fellow. The four kobolds quickly got the better of Ned and dragged him further into the cave toward the fire. Kayleigh got up and ran to the boat. But rather than push off and row away, she stopped.

“If I take the boat, they’ll know someone else was here with Ned and they’ll come after me,” she said to herself.

Quickly, she looked around her. There was no place she could hide inside. She waded into the water until she reached the mouth of the cave. She was afraid to swim so she did the only thing left to her: she climbed onto the rocks outside the opening and moved around and up the steep cliff face until she was sure she couldn’t be seen from the entrance. The rocks were slippery and more than once she nearly fell. A short way up, she found a little ledge above the high water mark and lay there listening for the kobolds.

Soon she heard sounds of activity within the cave. There was a flickering of torchlight and the echoes of high-pitched chattering as the kobolds searched the cave and the boat for other fairies. After they had made sure that Ned was alone, the sounds became fainter and Kayleigh guessed they must have returned to the campfire deeper in the cave. She waited a while longer to make sure things had quieted down and then, cautiously, she climbed back around to the cave entrance.

She had broken two nails in her climb, which angered her since she had been a long time growing them back after she’d been forced to cut them almost to the quick during her encounter with the witch. She waded back to the boat and then, as silently as she could, she made her way along the far wall towards the barrels she’d seen earlier.

“I should be able to see what’s happening around that corner if I can hide behind one of those barrels,” she thought.

Ever so slowly and cautiously, she inched her way along the cave wall. In places, piles of crushed seashells, which had washed in with the tides, made her wince as they crunched under her feet. Finally, she reached the first barrel and crept into the space between it and the rock wall. She waited to hear if there was any movement by the kobolds. She was very scared, but eventually she worked up the courage to peek over the top of the barrel. What she saw astonished her.

The cave was much larger than she'd imagined. It stretched back into darkness almost the length of a football pitch and it was as high and as wide as a big highway tunnel. A third of the way into the section of the cave she could see, near to the left wall, a fire was burning down. Black smoke came off it and curled up to the roof, swirling about until it escaped through a small opening in the roof. The fire had a roasting spit perched above it, and beside it was a stack of driftwood, for fuel. Fat from the remains of a roasted sheep dripped, hissing, into the flames sending up puffs of black smoke. On the fire itself, Kayleigh saw the discarded bones from the kobold's meal. In the area lit by the sputtering flames, she saw six of the gangly creatures. Four were just laying themselves down on blankets and seemed to be getting ready to sleep. Two others sat together by the fire sharpening their knives.

Just then another screeching cry sounded in the darkness on the left side of the cave. It wasn't as loud as the one she'd heard earlier, but it was pitiful. Kayleigh felt certain that something was suffering over there in the darkness.

As her eyes got more used to the dimness, she tried to locate Ned. But he was nowhere to be seen.

"What have they done with him?" she wondered.

The cry echoed through the cave again and this time one of the guards got up and walked into the shadows. In a high-pitched cackling voice he said:

"Shut your gob, you, or you'll know what for. I'm just about fed up with your squawking."

Then Kayleigh heard the sound of the kobold striking or kicking the thing in the shadows. There was another cry, fainter this time, then silence.

“Those horrid things!” Kayleigh thought, “They seem to be torturing some poor animal. I wonder what it is?”

The kobold returned to the fireside. His companion looked up at him and spoke:

“Ow’s the other one? Still out?”

“Yer, out cold—cold as a mackerel,” and they both laughed at this as though it were a great joke.

“We’d best hear from the little fella soon, otherwise these ones will be goners. Besides, we can’t stay here much longer. Them fairies are sure to be back—more of ‘em, next time, as well.”

“You’re right there, mate,” said the first kobold, as he sat down again.

Kayleigh looked over to the right at the wall opposite the fire. It was in shadow and the kobold guards had their backs turned that way. Swallowing her fear, she resolved to make her way through the shadows along the cave wall to see if she could find Ned. The kobolds returned to sharpening their knives and Kayleigh moved in a crouch along the rock face until she was just opposite the fire. The smoke from the burning mutton fat was thick there and her eyes began to water. She came to a place where there was a jog in the cave wall which she had to get around. In doing so, she’d be visible in the glow of the fire. She sat down and was wondering what she could do, when one of the kobolds spoke:

“Better check the entrance again. Don’t want them fairies creeping up on us unawares.”

He got to his feet and walked around the corner towards the mouth of the cave. The remaining guard had his back to Kayleigh, so she got to her feet and quickly made her way around the exposed spur of rock and into the shadows on the other side. She was terrified of being caught, but somehow she made it without alerting the guard. Perspiring, she sank to the floor in the deep shadow at the far side of the rock outcrop.

“This cave is even bigger than I imagined. It seems to go further back under the hillside. Maybe Ned is being held back there,” she thought, “. . . and maybe there are more kobolds there as well.”

Ahead of her she heard a sound in the darkness. Kayleigh tensed and listened to hear it again. It was a sheep bleating, she was certain. She moved toward the sound and in a small alcove of the cave she found a pen made of driftwood held together with long lengths of seaweed. In the pen were two sheep, one of which was a large, four-horned Manx Loaghtan. Kayleigh's school had visited a farm that raised the brown Loaghtans, so she recognized it immediately.

"I suppose this is the kobold's larder," she thought. "They steal sheep and put them in this pen until they're ready to cook them."

Just then she heard a sound from the back of the pen that was definitely not the bleating of a sheep.

"Ned," she whispered, "is that you?"

Something moaned in the darkness. Kayleigh stepped over the make-shift fence and into the pen. There on the floor lying on a pile of dried seaweed was a small figure. Its mouth was bound and its hands were tied behind its back. But it was not her friend. Kayleigh knelt down and undid the bonds and removed the cloth that covered its mouth. She noticed in the dim light that it had a crop of short bronze-coloured hair on its head. The creature sat up, sobbing.

"Oh, thank you, thank you," it said in a whisper.

Kayleigh sat back in shock. "Why, you're a girl," she said, "I've never met a fairy girl before."

"I am *not* a fairy!" she said, emphatically, as she rubbed her wrists.

"Then what are you, you seem too small to be a human child."

"I'm a pixie, of course."

"A pixie!" Kayleigh was stunned. "But, why are you a prisoner of the kobolds? I thought they were your friends."

The pixie spoke with a strong accent that made her speech hard to follow. She was obviously in pain and Kayleigh noticed that her leg was in a rough splint, held in place by some dirty rags.

“They were never our friends. We made a pact with them, so they’d help us. But they have broken their word. But what are you? You seem to glow. Are you a spirit?”

“I hope I don’t glow—that’s all we need when we’re trying to hide. No, I’m just a girl. I was travelling with my friend, Ned—he’s a fairy, by the way—when we found the kobolds. Ned has been taken by them and is somewhere in this cave.”

Upon hearing that Kayleigh was a friend of the fairies, the little pixie cringed and pulled away from her.

“Then you *are* a fairy. Oh, that’s not so good. I’ll go from one prison to another now,” she said miserably.

“No. I’m not a fairy, I’m a girl. And no one is going to put you in prison, if I can help it. Can you walk?”

“I’m afraid not. My leg was broken in the shipwreck.”

“Shipwreck!” Kayleigh said, “Well, it sounds as though you have been having an adventure, too. Did you see the kobolds bring my friend in here?”

“I saw them bring in two fairies some time ago. They took them far back in the cave. I heard them torturing them, trying to find out something.”

“Torturing them, that’s horrible! But, you said two fairies—why, they must be the two fairy sentries that Ned was looking for. I’d better continue my search to see if I can find Ned.”

“Have you seen the mer-child? Is she still alive?” the pixie asked, wincing in pain as she tried to get into a comfortable sitting position.

“Mer-child?” Kayleigh replied. “Is that like mer-men and mer-maids?”

“Yes, only a very young one. The kobolds caught her and some others and they have been plotting something which involves them.”

“I heard some awful screams from over on the other side of the cave. I wonder if that was the mer-child?”

Kayleigh was by now becoming more and more concerned. The kobold lair was filled with danger and mystery. She was sure that, if caught, she would be treated as badly as all the other captives had been. So far, she had been lucky to avoid being seen or

heard, but she couldn't risk roaming about in the dark any more. She turned to the little pixie.

“What's your name?” she asked

“My real name would probably hurt your tongue, but you may call me Opal.”

“Opal. That's a nice name. I'm very pleased to meet you, Opal. My name's Kayleigh.”

“Kayleigh. That, too, is nice, though I don't know what it means.”

“It doesn't mean anything as far as I know. But, to business – do you have any idea how we can scare off those dratted kobolds?”

“All I know is that they are very cowardly. If they aren't in a group, even a young pixie like me could scare one off. They seem very nervous and high-strung, and they almost never stop talking, except when they're asleep.”

All the time they had been whispering together, the two sheep had been moving about the pen, occasionally letting out a plaintive bleat. The big Loaghtan was rubbing his curved horns against the wood of the pen. From down on the ground, Kayleigh thought he was a fierce looking creature. And that gave her the beginnings of an idea.

“Wait here for a moment while I explore just a little bit more of the cave to see if I can find my friend. With luck, I'll discover another exit or maybe figure out some way to scare the kobolds off.”

“There are no other exits except some cracks high up in the roof which can't be reached,” said Opal, as Kayleigh climbed out of the pen and disappeared into the gloom. For a while, Opal thought she could follow the faint glow of Kayleigh's aura as she moving through the shadows.

A little further on, Kayleigh slipped on something coating the rocks and nearly lost her footing. To her disgust, she found she was in the area of the cave where the kobolds slaughtered the sheep they had roasted. Sheep's blood and offal covered the rocks of the floor. Kayleigh fought to control her impulse to wretch and moved past the sickening spot quickly. Draped over a boulder ahead, she discovered a number of sheep skins that had been skinned off the poor animals before they were roasted. Lying on the

ground beside them were two long knives. She could go no further without leaving the shadows, so she picked up the knives and carried them back to the pen.

She looked over at the dying fire. The first guard had returned to his place and both had stopped sharpening and seemed to be dozing off where they sat. The other four lay sleeping on the ground around the fire.

Kayleigh turned to Opal and said, “You believe these creatures are cowardly. Are they easily frightened?”

“Of their own shadow, if it surprises them.”

“Hmm, then my plan might just work,” she whispered. “Can you ride?”

“Well, yes, if the pony is gentle—I don’t like to go too fast, though.”

“Could you ride a sheep?”

“What do you mean?” Opal asked, with a frown.

“If I help you up on this Loaghtan, could you ride it?”

“I don’t know. I mean . . . I suppose so. As long as he doesn’t jump or anything.”

“Right. Here’s what we’ll do . . . “



Figure 8: *A Manx Loaghtan Sheep*

Kayleigh helped Opal onto the back of the Loaghtan. At first it tried to buck, but the pixie whispered something into its ear in a strange tongue and it seemed to calm down. Then Kayleigh used one of the knives to cut through the seaweed strands that held the pen together. She gave Opal a knife and then made her way back around to the part of the cave where she'd seen the sheepskins. She searched about for a flat stone and instead found something even better: an iron ring off some old sailing boat's rigging. She pulled one of the sheep skins over her head and took a deep breath. Then she started clanging the metal ring against the steel of the long knife and ran toward the fire shouting at the top of her lungs.

“Attack, Fairies, attack. Capture those wicked kobolds.”

Hearing this, Opal charged out of the pen on the back of the Loaghtan sheep, waving the other long knife in the air and shouting, “Pixies, attack. Capture the kobolds. Make them pay for their treachery.”

The startled guards jumped to their feet. The four sleeping kobolds awakened and stood up to see a large white shape with purple legs running towards them from one side and a fierce pixie warrior mounted on a four-horned steed coming from the other. Then, from behind them, screeching cries came from the shadows. For a moment the six kobolds froze in their places, then, as though some collective mind had made a decision, they all turned and ran toward the cave opening. Kayleigh and Opal kept up their shouting and noise-making until they reached the corner of the cavern that led to the entrance. They stopped in time to avoid showing themselves to the fleeing kobolds. Kayleigh threw off her sheep-skin and peered around the corner. Five of the kobolds had jumped into Ned's small boat and the sixth was dangling over the side with his feet in the water. They were frantically pushing off with the oars, trying to get out of the cave. All the while they were jabbering away nervously in their high-pitched voices.

When Kayleigh was sure the kobolds were on their way, she turned to see how her new friend was doing. Poor Opal—she was grimacing in pain from the knocking her broken leg had taken during her charge. Kayleigh helped her down and set her beside the fire. She threw some driftwood into the flames to try to get more light into the cave. Then

she heard again, the screech coming from the shadows. She pulled a flaming brand from the fire and walked in the direction of the sound, terrified of what she might see there.

Nothing could have prepared her for the sight the flaming torch lit up for her. Hanging from the wall, upside down were two men—or what at first looked like men. Their arms hung limply just above the floor. As Kayleigh raised her flame higher, she saw that the two men were hanging, not by their legs, but by their tails. There could be no doubt that these unfortunate creatures were mer-men, captured somehow by the kobolds. One of the two didn't move at all and Kayleigh feared he might be dead. The other had numerous cuts on his face and chest, but was conscious.

“Please,” he croaked in a dry voice, “please, release me.”

Kayleigh put the torch on the ground and ran over to get one of the barrels—making sure, as she did so, that the kobolds were still rowing away from the cave. She rolled the barrel over in front of the mer-man, then she placed her sheep skin on the rocks under him to break his fall. She climbed onto the barrel and started cutting through the rope that looped around his tail and was suspended from an iron ring high up in the rock face. When the rope was cut right through, the mer-man fell onto the sheepskin and his great tail flopped down onto the rock floor. Kayleigh could see that the rope had cut deeply into his tail.

“Thank you. Thank you,” the mer-man said. “Please cut my cousin down. Although I fear it may be too late to help him.”

Kayleigh moved the barrel and the sheepskin over to the other mer-man who hung motionless from another iron ring. When she cut through the rope he fell to ground and did not move. His cousin wriggled over to him and felt the pulse in his neck.

“He's still alive! We must get him some water—he is very dehydrated. But, wait! Where is the child? I lost consciousness for a while and when I recovered my senses, she was gone.”

“What child?” Kayleigh asked. “Do you mean the pixie girl? She's over there by the fire.”

“No, no,” replied the mer-man, “a mer-child, my niece. She was here with us.”

“Why don’t you look after your cousin and I’ll explore this cave some more. I have to find my friend Ned and maybe I’ll come across the mer-child.”

Kayleigh picked up her flaming brand and walked toward the back of the cave. Soon she made two simultaneous discoveries. Here was Ned lying on his side with a large gash across his forehead. His arms were twisted awkwardly behind him and tied together with rope. Lying beside him on a bed of crushed shells was the mer-child. If she were human, Kayleigh guessed she would be five or six years old. She had no marks on her, but her wrists were bound together and tied by rope to a slab of rock that had fallen from the ceiling. Ned was breathing, but he didn’t move when Kayleigh shook him. She used her knife to cut his bonds, then she checked the mer-child. At first, she thought it was dead, but she noticed a faint flicker of the eyelids as it lay on the shells. While she checked the child for injuries, Kayleigh noticed that there were delicate webs of translucent skin between her fingers. Her tail was inky blue with splotches of sea-green colouration, and it sparkled as the firelight of Kayleigh’s torch played over its tiny scales.

Kayleigh ran back to the fire. The first mer-man had found a barrel of rainwater and was pouring some of it over his companion. Opal was sitting up by the fire watching. Soon the second mer-man moved his lips and tried to speak.

“I think he’s going to be all right, thanks to you. Another hour would have been too late for him. You have our gratitude. But, what news of the child, did you find her?”

“Yes,” Kayleigh answered, “she’s alive, but just barely. She needs a doctor, I think—that is if mer-people use doctors. My friend, Ned, is alive, but hurt as well.”

“That is good news—I had feared the worst. I will go to her. But first, what may I call you, my brave rescuer?”

“I’m called Kayleigh,” she said, bowing slightly.

“My name is Sea-Star, in your tongue, and this is my cousin, Periwinkle-Sky. Thank you again, Kay-Lee, for freeing us. However, I suspect the kobolds will return soon, once they see they are not being pursued. We must act quickly to prepare for them.”

“I suppose you’re right. It was just a lucky thing that they’re so skittish and easily frightened. We won’t be much of a match for them once they realize they’ve been fooled.”

“Precisely. I am still too weak to put up much resistance, even against puny creatures such as they. I know you must tend to your friends, but if you can find the kobolds hoard of loot, there is something there that may help us. When I was captured, I carried with me a sea-horn—a type of shell that hung from a golden chain. If you can find it, I may be able to summon some of my people to help us.”

“Right. I’ll keep looking, but can you come and look at the mer-child and at my friend, Ned. I’m worried about the look of them both.”

“Lead the way Kay-Lee,” Sea-Star replied.

The large mer-man glided after Kayleigh, his great tail swishing back and forth, propelling him forward. When he saw the mer-child, he gasped.

“She is very weak,” he said. Then he bent down, picked the child up in his arms, and brought her closer to the fire. Kayleigh lifted Ned, who was still unconscious, under the arms, being careful not to knock his injured arm, and dragged him over to the fire. When Opal saw him, she gasped and tried to stand on her good foot, but failed.

“Oh, a fairy,” she said, “I’ve never seen one so close before.”

Kayleigh noticed that Opal had bright green eyes which in combination with her bronze hair, made her strikingly beautiful.

“He won’t harm you. He’s been a good friend to me and I know he is an honourable fairy.” As she spoke, Kayleigh moistened a rag in the pool of water on the ground beside the water barrel. She wiped the dried blood from Ned’s forehead. He had a nasty gash about two inches long above his right eye. Gently, she placed his injured left arm back into its sling, which still hung about his neck.

“Please keep an eye on him for me, Opal, while I see if I can find Sea-Star’s horn.”

“Well, all right. As long as he’s unconscious, I’m probably in no danger,” she said nervously.

Kayleigh took a firebrand and began searching about for the kobold's loot. It took only a short while to find it, for they kept it close by. There were weapons, pieces of clothing, some small chests containing jewels and coins, and there was the sea-horn just as the mer-man had described it, still with its gold chain attached. Kayleigh picked up the horn and another long knife and carried them over to where Sea-Star was tending to the mer-child.

"How is she?" Kayleigh asked.

"She awoke for a brief time, which is a good sign, but she has drifted off again," he sighed. "She needs more help than I can provide here."

"I've found your sea-horn," Kayleigh said, "And I've brought you this knife."

The mer-man brightened noticeably at this news. "Wonderful," he said. "I'll go immediately and sound it. Come with me to the cave mouth, Kay-Lee."

Together they rounded the corner that led to the entrance and there, a few yards beyond the mouth of the cave, was the little boat with the kobolds. When they saw no one following them, they'd guessed they'd been tricked and had decided to return and reclaim what they thought was theirs.

Sea-Star glided forward to the edge of the water and then into it until he was waist deep; he raised the horn to his lips and blew a mighty blast. The kobolds reacted as if they had been struck by a great gust of wind. They fell backwards in the boat, the two in the rear almost falling overboard. Two of the startled group had enough presence of mind to reach for the oars and start rowing away from the cave mouth. Sea-Star, ignoring them for the moment, slid under the water and Kayleigh watched as he vanished into the watery darkness. Moments later, from far down in the sea a deep resonant boom reverberated in the depths. The mer-man had sounded the horn again underwater; a signal, she hoped, to his fellows to come to their aid. Seeing that the frightened kobolds were retreating again, Kayleigh went back to check on her injured charges.

She went first to the mer-child who was stirring beside the other mer-man. She wiped the child's forehead with a damp rag. It opened its eyes, first in confusion, then with a look of fear. She opened her mouth as if to scream, but Kayleigh smiled at her and spoke in a gentle voice.

“Don’t be afraid, I won’t hurt you. Those horrid kobolds have run away and Sea-Star has gone to bring help. Soon, you’ll be free and swimming in the sea again.”

“Who are you?” the mer-child asked in a weak voice.

“I am Kayleigh. What may I call you?”

“Coral-Moon.”

“Why, that’s a lovely name. I’m very pleased to meet you Coral-Moon,” Kayleigh said, trying to be polite so as not to upset the child. She noticed, when Coral-Moon spoke, that she had unusual but beautiful pointed teeth that caught the light like mother-of-pearl.

The second mer-man moaned and Kayleigh brought some water and dabbed it on his face with her rag. The mer-child moved closer to him so see how he was.

“Oh, what have those creatures done to poor Periwinkle-Sky?”

“He was badly treated, I’m afraid,” said Kayleigh, “he has many cuts, a large bruise on his forehead, and one eye is swollen shut, but Sea-Star thought he would recover, if he could get some help.”

“I do hope so. He is my mother’s youngest brother and our whole family would be heart-broken if we lost him,” Coral-Moon said, in a weak voice.

“Do you think you are strong enough to keep an eye on him, while I look after my friends Ned and Opal?”

“I’ll do my best,” the mer-child replied.

Kayleigh moved over to the little pixie and asked:

“How are you feeling, Opal? Can I bring you anything?”

“My leg hurts me terribly” she replied, “and I haven’t eaten in a long while. Have you seen any food here, besides mutton?”

“No, but I’ll have another look around,” Kayleigh said. She checked that Ned was all right—he was still breathing shallowly, but regularly, and his condition seemed not to have worsened. She stood up and went over to the store of barrels by the opposite wall. Using the kobold knife, she pried the top off one, but it was empty. She had more success with a second one: in it she found apples. She picked four out of the barrel—observing that they all seemed to be bruised—then she returned to Opal.

“Could you eat an apple?” she asked.

“I’m so hungry, I could eat an apple-core,” the pixie replied with a smile.

Kayleigh handed her two apples, then walked around the fire to Coral-Moon.

“I’m afraid I have no idea what mer-maids and mer-men eat, but would you like to try an apple—it’s all the food we have for now?”

Coral-Moon’s eyes widened, “Land Eggs!” she said.

“I beg your pardon?”

“We call these ‘Land Eggs’. It is because of them, or rather, because of our fondness for them that we were captured by those things—what did you call them, Kay-Lee?”

“Kobolds,” she replied. “What do you mean they were the cause of your being captured?”

The mer-child leaned back on one elbow and, accepting an apple in her free hand, she bit into it.

“Our people have no such things as these eggs . . . ‘apples’, you call them? We find them a great delicacy. For many years, our people have befriended humans, sang for them, showed them the best herring grounds; and in return, we have received these Land Eggs. I had never tasted one, but my kin-folk Sea-Star and Periwinkle-Sky here brought my younger brother and me to Mann so that we might taste them. We were searching the coast, trying to find the humans who might have them, when we caught the scent of them coming from this cave. Sea-Star came in alone to make sure it was safe and he found a whole store of them just lying there on the floor of the cave. He signalled to the rest of us to come in and together we feasted on these wonders of the upper world. Alas, though, Sea-Star had been deceived; the cave was not empty. As soon as we were away from the water, eating, the kobolds dropped nets on us from high up in the cave. They had set the Eggs out as a trap to catch us. They must have known we’d be tempted.

“We struggled to free ourselves, but the more we did so, the more entangled we became. Then the kobolds jumped down on us and started beating us with wooden clubs. Fearing for the lives of my brother and me, the two adults stopped resisting. Then the kobolds wrapped great lengths of rope around our tails and hoisted us up into the air. We were completely helpless. Sea-Star offered his own life if they would release my brother and me—oh, he was very brave. But, the kobolds laughed and cackled and beat him some more and kicked him viciously.”

“Those creatures are horrid beasts,” Kayleigh said angrily. “But what did they hope to gain by hurting you like that?”

“Well,” Coral-Moon continued, “what they really wanted was treasure: gold and jewels. They said they would release me if I promised to bring back a ransom for the others. My little brother had been badly frightened by this whole experience and I could see he had a nasty cut on his tail. I suggested they let him go and made an excuse about not knowing the way because I was a girl and had never been away from home before. Well, after some arguing among themselves, they agreed to this and they cut my brother down. They told him that if he didn’t return with three chests of treasure before the moon rose, that we’d all be killed.”

“I believe they’d have done it, too, the fiends,” said Kayleigh.

“Yes, so do I. After my brother had gone, they continued to beat and torture us. I grew weak from hanging upside down, and though I didn’t suffer the same punishment as the others, I fell into a faint—and that’s all I remember until I awoke to see you, Kay-Lee.” All this talking was tiring the mer-child. She was still very weak from her ordeal.

“Why don’t you just lie back and rest,” Kayleigh suggested. “I’m sure Sea-Star will be back soon.”

She heard a groan nearby and went back around to Ned, who was beginning to stir. She wiped his forehead with her rag and he opened his eyes.

“Premie,” he said, “are you all right? What happened?”

“Don’t you remember? Those wicked kobolds captured you when you tried to protect me. You were very brave, Ned. The kobolds beat you and I feared they’d killed you.”

“The kobolds,” he said, trying to sit up. “Yes, I remember now—but where are they, Premie? Did they hurt you?”

“No. Everything’s OK,” she replied. “My friend Opal here helped me to scare them off.”

Ned looked over and for the first time saw Opal sitting near-by. Kayleigh had to prevent him from jumping to his feet.

“A pixie!” he shouted. “Didn’t you realize it was a pixie? It’s they who are responsible for the kobolds being here in the first place.”

“Yes, I know she’s a pixie. Her name is Opal and she’s my new friend.”

“Friend!” he snorted. “How can you possibly call a filthy little pixie your friend?”

“Don’t you call me ‘filthy’, you disgusting fairy,” Opal shouted back at him.

“You all think you’re so superior. My father has told me all about fairies and their arrogance and selfishness.”

“Arrogant! Selfish! That’s fine coming from low and treacherous creatures who invade our country and make allies out of foul kobolds.”

Had they been able to get up, Kayleigh was sure they would have come to blows.

“Whoa, whoa,” she shouted. “Both of you stop this bickering, this minute! Ned, I want you to apologize for the insulting way you spoke to Opal just now. And Opal, even though Ned cast the first stone, I want you to take back your harsh words to him. You are both my friends and I won’t have you fighting around me.”

“But, Kayleigh,” the fairy and the pixie said simultaneously.

“No, ‘buts’. Apologize, both of you, right now.”

For the first time since she’d met him, Ned was speechless and red-faced in anger.

“Preemie, I simply cannot understand what you are thinking. These are the creatures that kidnapped your brother and nearly gave you into the hands of a witch. How can you possibly say they are your friends?”

“I didn’t say all pixies are my friends. I said Opal is my friend. She didn’t kidnap Evan.”

Opal tried to stand, but fell back down from the pain in her leg when she put weight on it. She spoke to Kayleigh, not looking at Ned:

“Kayleigh, you have done me a great service and my people will thank you for it, but to expect me to be on friendly terms with a fairy is too much. You see how fixed in their thinking they are. They cannot change, nor can we. For your sake, because I owe you a debt of gratitude, I will endure the company of this vile creature. But do not expect us to become friends.”

“You two are as stubborn as my little brother!” Kayleigh said. “I can see now why the fairies and the pixies have been at war for a thousand years. You are both pig-headed!”

With that she stamped off toward the mouth of the cave, where the two sheep stood bleating forlornly. Outside, she saw that the wind was picking up and the waves were getting bigger as they crashed against the rocks. The tide was receding and she walked out to see what the sky was like. Stars were visible on a dark blue backdrop that was like a late twilight moving steadily toward night. As she was looking out, thinking about the stubbornness of pixies and fairies, she was startled by the sudden appearance of Sea-Star leaping through the waves toward her. She saw that two other mer-men accompanied him. Sea-Star slid onto the rocky shelf of the cave-mouth in front of Kayleigh.

“How is the mer-child?” he asked anxiously.

“Coral-Moon is awake and seems to be doing fine. She’s still very weak, though.”

“I am much relieved to hear that. I feared it might be too late to save her.”

As they spoke, the other two mer-men entered the cave. Sea-Star did not introduce them, he merely said, “This is the human child who saved us all. There will be time later to show our gratitude, but first let us see to our injured.”

The mer-men touched their foreheads and made slight bows in Kayleigh’s direction. She curtsied in return and led Sea-Star and his friends around the corner to the fire. Ned was lying down leaning on one elbow, with his back to Opal. When Kayleigh appeared with three mer-men, his mouth dropped open and his eyes widened. He hadn’t yet seen the mer-child on the other side of the fire and the sight of these three towering figures gave him a start.

“Preemie Kayleigh,” he gasped, “how long have I been unconscious that you should have made friends with a pixie and with a group of mer-men?”

“Not all that long, Ned,” she replied. “I’ll explain everything later. Meantime, this is Sea-Star. He was a captive of the kobolds and he’s returned with help for us and his two injured companions over there.”

Ned staggered to his feet, unsteadily. He bowed before the mer-men and spoke to them, haltingly, in their strange high-pitched language. The mer-men bowed in return and said some words of their own to Ned. Then they all went around to see Coral-Moon and Periwinkle-Sky. One of the mer-men, who appeared to be a healer, brought with him a

pouch in which he carried sealed bulbs containing a liquid substance. He pierced the bulbs with a bone-knife and gave one each to Coral-Moon and Periwinkle-Sky. They sipped the contents through the hole in the bulb and seemed much revived when they had finished. He then applied an ointment to the cuts Periwinkle-Sky had sustained. When he had finished he turned and said something to Sea-Star in his own tongue.

“Good news, Kay-Lee,” he said, “both will recover from their injuries.”

“I’m very glad,” she replied, “but, do you think he could look at my two friends? They are both injured.”

“Of course,” said Sea-Star and he spoke to the healer who, in response, slid on his long tail over toward Ned. After applying some of the ointment to Ned’s head wound, he bound his forehead with a long strand of sea-weed and gave him a potion to drink from a small vial he had with him.

“You are most kind,” said Ned. “I begin to feel better already.”

The mer-doctor (as Kayleigh had come to think of him) then glided over to Opal. He looked at her broken leg and said:

“I don’t have much experience mending leg injuries, but I shall try to set the bone. This will hurt you, I’m afraid.”

“It can’t be much worse than the pain I feel now,” the little pixie responded.

Kayleigh came around and held Opal’s hand, while the mer-doctor removed the dirty bandage and splint. He grasped the leg with his large webbed fingers and, with a tug and a twist, he set the bone. Opal screamed and fainted and it was all that Kayleigh could do to prevent herself from passing out at the sight. The mer-doctor made a new splint out of whale bone from his kit and bound it in place with the same type of seaweed he had used on Ned.

“When she awakens,” he said to Kayleigh, “make her drink the liquid in the vial. It will strengthen her and help to keep out infection.”

“Thank you very much for all your help,” she said.

“It is but a small thing compared to what we owe you,” he said with a bow.

Ned was over by the cave wall, deep in discussion with Sea-Star. Kayleigh held Opal’s hand until she opened her eyes.

“How do you feel?” she asked.

“Better—I think, though my leg still aches.”

“Here,” Kayleigh said, “drink this. It will make you stronger and stop your wound from getting infected.”

She held the little vial to Opal’s lips until she had finished drinking it. Then she lay her down on her back.

“Rest a while. I’ll go a see what’s happening with the others.”

She walked over to Ned and Sea-Star, who were still talking together.

“Preemie Kayleigh,” Ned said when he saw her, “We have all been ill-treated by these kobolds, even your pixie friend who supposed they were her allies. We all have reason to see them gone from these shores. Do you think your friend over there,” he said pointing to Opal, “would help us?”

“After the way you two argued, I’d be surprised if she’d want anything to do with fairies.” Kayleigh said, then added in a gentler tone, “But, I know she hates the kobolds for what they have done to her, so she may help us, if I ask her—and if you promise to keep your temper.”

Ned’s face went red, but all he said was, “For your sake, Preemie, I will hold my tongue.”

Kayleigh walked over to Opal and asked her if she would help the mer-men and the fairies to drive the kobolds from the island.

“For you, Kayleigh, because I owe you a great debt, I will help. But there must be one condition: that none of my folk are injured in the process.”

Kayleigh called Ned and Sea-Star over and repeated what Opal had told her. She saw that Ned was on the verge of blurting out some objection, but when she looked him in the eye, he held back from speaking and simply nodded his head.

“Good,” said Sea-Star, “then we are united in our desire to rid this island and its waters of these vile creatures. Pixie—er, Opal, is that right?—could you tell us what you know of the kobolds; their numbers and their destination?”

The group gathered around Opal as she began to speak.

“First of all,” she began, “you must understand that the agreement between the pixies and the kobolds was made out of desperation. We had lost our homes in Cornwall and had to find a new place for our people to live. According to my father, the fairies had refused us access to Erin and to Mann—even though we were not many in number, nor would we occupy any of the fairies’ traditional territory.”

“But Mann is our traditional territory,” Ned interrupted. “You had no right . . .”

“Please let her finish, Ned,” Kayleigh jumped in.

The fairy folded his arms and fell silent. Opal looked at him nervously.

“Please continue, Opal,” said Sea-Star.

“Some of my father’s kin were on friendly terms with a band of kobolds, because of some business or other they were engaged in. One of my cousins offered to go to the kobolds at the behest of our king and suggest an alliance. I don’t know any of the details, but a while later a large band of kobolds arrived at our camp. There were long discussions, and then it was decided to send an expedition to Mann in two ships. There were six of my people and fifteen kobolds in each boat. My father captained one ship and my uncle, the other. I asked to go in my uncle’s boat, so I could travel with my favourite cousin. We were going to a place called . . . Spanish, something.”

“Spanish Head?” asked Ned.

“Yes, I think that’s it. Spanish Head. On the trip across, a storm blew up and the two boats were separated. Ours was blown north and hit the rocks near here. We all scrambled ashore, but two of my folk and at least one kobold were drowned. As you see, my leg was smashed against the rocks and broken. My uncle and cousin survived and one of the others said he knew where we were, and that there were sea caves near-by. Eventually, we found this place. Some of the kobolds went out looking for food while the rest discussed with us what next to do. My uncle suggested making our way south to Spanish Head to meet up with the other boat, but since I couldn’t easily be moved, he and my cousin set off on foot with eight kobolds, while the other pixie survivor and six of the kobolds waited here with me. Not long after the others left, the kobolds started arguing among themselves. I think they decided to forget the alliance and to look after their own interests. I am certain they killed the pixie left to protect me, then they tied me up and

placed me in the pen where Kayleigh found me. They wanted me as a hostage, I think. I saw the capture of the mer-folk, but I could do nothing to prevent it. That is all I can tell you.”

“Well, now we know how many kobolds there are and we know where to find them,” said Sea-Star. “Thank you, Opal, for this information.”

“Just remember,” the little pixie reminded them, “You promised not to hurt any of my people.”

“What about the six kobolds that were here?” Kayleigh asked.

“Oh, I don’t think we’ll have to worry about them. Some of my friends have gone after them,” Sea-Star replied.

“But can’t they move faster than mer-men on the land,” Ned inquired.

“It wasn’t mer-men we sent,” he said, with a smile.

The group broke up. Sea-Star returned to see how Coral-Moon and Periwinkle-Sky were doing. Kayleigh stayed with Opal, and Ned took a brand from the fire and went to explore the furthest reaches of the cave. After a while there was a great splashing noise from the mouth of the cave and Kayleigh went round to see what the commotion was about. There in the entryway, beside the mer-man who was standing guard, stood a magnificent white horse. He pranced on the rocks and tossed his thick curly mane. He had a tail so long it brushed the ground. Kayleigh had never seen anything so beautiful before.

Sea-Star joined her and spoke some words in his own high-pitched tongue to the horse. In response, it made a series of choughing noises that Sea-Star understood. Just then, Ned came running up. He stopped in his tracks when he saw the great horse.

“A Cabbyl Ushtey,” he said in awe.

“Yes,” said Sea-Star, “and he tells me that, along with some of his brethren, he has dealt with those vicious kobolds. They caught up to them on the headland towards Santon. When the kobolds saw the horses of the sea, they wanted them for their own. And bowing to their greed, the Cabbyl Ushtey allowed themselves to be mounted by the vile creatures. Then they rode off towards the cliff-face and dived into the sea. We won’t be troubled by that band of wretched kobolds again, it seems.”

“Well, I must say that they got off easier than I would have liked,” said Ned. “You said they were vicious, Sea-Star, and so they were; but they were also murderers. At the far back of the cave I’ve just found the bodies of two fairies—the guards from Port Soderick, Preemie, you remember—as well as a pixie—no doubt the one Opal mentioned as missing.”

“Oh, how awful,” Kayleigh gasped. “Those horrid, horrid creatures.”

“Yes,” Ned nodded, and the rest of them have probably joined forces with those from the other ship at Spanish Head by now. My comrades were on their way there, when I left them to come after you, Preemie Kayleigh. Now I worry that they will be ambushed by the kobolds and their pixie friends. I must hurry to get there and alert my people.”

“But, Ned, you are still very weak and, besides, what will become of me if you leave—aren’t the other pixies still looking for me?”

“Yes, you are right, Preemie. I had forgotten about that for the moment.”

“Perhaps, there is a way we can overcome this difficulty,” interjected Sea-Star. “Please excuse me a moment while I consult my friends”

Sea-Star signalled to the mer-man by the entrance and both glided across the floor to where the mer-doctor was attending to Coral-Moon. They held a brief discussion and then Sea-Star and the second mer-man returned to the cave entrance. In the meantime, Ned and Kayleigh walked back to give Opal the news about the dead pixie.

“Ned; Opal;” Kayleigh said, “I’m so sorry for what the kobolds did to your people. It’s too bad this fight between the fairies and the pixies has come to this.”

“Some of my people would have had it otherwise,” Opal spoke with sadness in her voice. “My father and uncle were against this invasion from the start; they favoured more discussion and negotiation. But, there is a radical group among our folk who were very angry when the fairies rejected our first attempts at discussion. They have been at the forefront of the move to Mann.”

“I suppose they were the ones who kidnapped my brother and tried to give me over to Tehi Tegi, that dreadful witch,” Kayleigh said.

“I’m afraid I know nothing of that, but if you have been dragged into our dispute, I am heartily sorry.”

Throughout this discussion, Ned had not spoken. He listened and seemed to be thinking of something.

“What’s troubling you, Ned,” Kayleigh asked her friend.

“Oh, I was just remembering when the first pixie delegation came to our court. We had agreed to set aside our old animosities and hear what they had to say. What they asked for was not all that unreasonable and may have even been considered by our council; but the way they spoke—all haughty and demanding—was enough to anger many of us. They said they would prefer to come here on peaceful terms, but that they would come in any event. We do not take kindly to being threatened. And so we rejected their proposal. It wasn’t long after that that the first reports of pixie activity near Laxey reached us and now we’re on the brink of an all-out war.”

“We must stop it, Ned, before others are hurt. The fairies, the pixies, the mer-people and humans like me are all being dragged into this fight. It’s awful.”

“Yes, it is, but I fear it may be too late to stop it, now.”

At that point, Sea-Star came over to speak to them. “We must take action against these kobolds quickly for our own sake in view of the atrocities they have inflicted on us. We think that your help may be valuable in achieving our goal of ridding the island and the seas around it from the plague of these creatures. Will the three of you travel with me to what you call Spanish Head so we can assess the situation?”

“I’d be happy to do so, if it gets me there quickly,” said Ned, “but I’m afraid I’m not a very good swimmer.”

“Me, neither.” said Kayleigh.

“Nor, I—especially with a broken leg,” added Opal.

“Not to worry, we have devised a plan. Coral-Moon and Periwinkle-Sky are still too weak to travel quickly, so my two other companions will stay with them, swimming at a slower stroke, and make sure they get back safely to our city. But the rest of you can travel speedily, if your courage holds out.”

“What do you mean?” Kayleigh enquired, nervously.

“Come, Kay-Lee, and I will show you.”

Kayleigh helped Opal to stand and she and Ned supported the pixie as they moved to the cave mouth, to where Sea-Star had slid. When they rounded the rocky outcrop that blocked their view of the sea, they were stunned by what they saw.

Low down on the rocky shelf outside the cave (for the tide had gone down further) was the little boat that Ned and Kayleigh had used to row to the kobold lair. Prancing in front of it in the shallow water were four of the Cabbyl Ushtey. The mer-men had tied two ropes to the gunwales of the boat and two of the water horses, it seemed, had agreed to take a rope between their teeth. They were going to pull the small boat!

Opal was awestruck and said, "I don't think this is such a good idea. These beasts look very fierce to me and didn't you say that they dived under the waves? We'll all be drowned."

"Fear not," Sea-Star reassured them, "I will look after you. Even if the boat tips, I will be swimming beside you and will see that you don't breathe the water."

"Well, I never. Well, I never," was all that Ned could say.

"I'm scared," said Kayleigh, "but if you stay with us, Sea-Star, I'll give it a try."

"I owe you my life, Kay-Lee, I won't let any harm come to you or your friends."

So Kayleigh, Ned and a very nervous Opal climbed into the little boat. The mer-men had fashioned loops of rope and affixed them to the seats so that the passengers had something to hold onto. When they were settled, they waited for Coral-Moon to be carried out of the cave by the mer-doctor. He set her gently in the waves that washed up onto the rocky shelf, and then helped her out into deeper water. Immediately, she began swimming about and diving under the waves. She came back to shore beside the boat to bid the travellers farewell.

"Thank you, Kay-Lee, for saving us. You have the gratitude of all my family. I hope we will meet again, once you have punished the kobolds."

"Goodbye, Coral-Moon," Kayleigh said, reaching out to grasp her mer-friend's hand, "Get well and perhaps one day we will see each other again—on the shore, I hope, as I don't much like boating on rough water."

Sea-Star spoke some words in his high-pitched language and the four Cabbyl Ushtey waded out into deeper water, with two of them towing the little boat behind them. Kayleigh could see the rock of the shingle receding under the water as they moved away from the shore, but the horses didn't seem to notice—the water only reached their lower legs no matter how deep it got. Once the boat was clear of any submerged rocks, the horses began to canter and the boat picked up speed. Beside it, in the water, Kayleigh saw Sea-Star swimming just below the surface. As their speed increased, wind and seaspray buffeted the three passengers and the boat pitched violently each time they hit a wave. Kayleigh was sure she would be sick, if this kept up for long. But once they were well clear of land, the waves became more gentle swells. Now, the Cabbyl Ushtey turned southward and began to gallop. At first the spray from their hooves and from the bow of the boat was so thick that Kayleigh thought they'd drown in it, but as the horses moved faster and faster, the boat lifted off the water and skimmed along with only an occasional bounce onto the water below.

“We're flying,” Kayleigh laughed delightedly. But her words were lost in the wind. She looked at her two companions who were hanging onto their rope loops with all their strength: they didn't seem to be enjoying the trip as much as Kayleigh was. Opal especially because of her leg injury; every time the boat bounced on a wave, she winced at the jolt. Poor Ned, with his left arm in a sling, had to hang on with one hand. In the water on their left, Sea-Star was still keeping up to them, although the only time he was visible to Kayleigh was when he leaped above the waves for a moment to keep an eye on the little boat. The sky above them was a deep indigo colour and Kayleigh could see the Great Bear constellation. She wondered what time it was; but then, remembering that time was different in the fairy realm, she wondered instead what day it might be. No doubt her parents and Evan were worrying about her and asking themselves when she might return—or if she might. She didn't like to think of the concern she was causing in her family.

Many leagues on, the sea horses rounded Langness and turned east past Castletown Bay. The water was rougher here and the horses pulling the boat began to tire. As they approached Scarlett Point, the two horses not holding a rope switched places

with those who were. The two Cabbyl Ushtey who had brought them this far then veered off and dived beneath the waves. The boat picked up speed again and before long they turned south-west near Kallow Point, following the coast towards Black Head.

Ned leaned over to Kayleigh and shouted into her ear: “Just around that headland is Stacka Bay—we’re nearly there, now.”

Kayleigh nodded in reply. She remembered that this rugged part of the Isle of Man was an area of high cliffs split by deep chasms in the rock that stretched back up the hillside. On an outing to the nearby Cregneash folk village, Kayleigh’s family had had a picnic lunch on the hilltop above these Chasms. Her mother had explained that the sea was washing away the base of the headland and causing it to lean toward the sea, opening the great cracks in the rock that became the Chasms.

As the water horses approached the coast near the large standing rock known as the Sugarloaf, they slowed to a halt and the boat fell back onto the swell and bobbed with the waves. The Cabbyl Ushtey released the ropes and dived under the waves to cool down after their efforts. They soon returned and, taking the ropes in their teeth again, they pranced in the wavelets. Sea-Star came alongside them and said:

“I’m afraid that long journey has taken its toll on me in my weakened state. I am quite exhausted.”

“Poor Sea-Star,” Kayleigh said, “I’d forgotten the injuries you received from those awful kobolds. We must let you rest.”

“Yes,” agreed Ned. “Although I for one am very grateful, we have obviously taxed your strength too much, mer-man. Once we make landfall, you must rest and recuperate.”

“I will. But, first let me go ahead into the bay and see what is there, before you enter,” Sea-Star said.

“A good idea,” Ned responded.

“How are you feeling, Opal,” asked Kayleigh, seeing her friend was very pale.

“A little ill, to tell the truth. I’ll be happy to be off this boat and onto dry land.”

“That is one thing I can agree with you on, pixie,” Ned said, “we don’t mind the odd sea-journey, but this flying through the air is too much for me.”

“Oh, I thought it was great fun,” said Kayleigh, with a broad smile.

Not long after, Sea-Star resurfaced beside them.

“I can see a boat pulled up on the shore near a small bay at the base of the cliff. There doesn’t seem to be anyone about, so I assume they must have moved into one of the crevices in the rock face or climbed up onto the headland. I was hoping we’d find them in the open near the shore—my people aren’t very effective on the land.”

“Somewhere nearby,” Ned said to the mer-man, “is a group of my folk. They’ll be up on the hilltop investigating the kobolds’ theft of sheep. If I could only get a message to them, perhaps they could drive the kobolds out onto the shore by coming down into the Chasms from above.”

“Maybe one of these horses could carry a message?” Kayleigh suggested to Ned.

“Hmm. A possibility, Premie Kayleigh, but I doubt my people would allow a Cabbyl Ushtey to get near them. They’d be afraid of being carried off and drowned. However, we must get word to them. Sea-Star, if you can convince one of these magnificent beasts to *safely* bear a rider, and if you will give your promise to take care of Premie Kayleigh while I’m gone, I will ride on the horse to seek my friends.”

Sea-Star agreed and signalled to the two horses to move forward. They trotted through the waves, pulling the boat around the Sugarloaf, until they reached a patch of rocky shoreline in front of a large shallow sea-cave. Here they drew the little boat up out of the water. Kayleigh, Ned and Opal got out and crossed the shingle until they were under the shadow of the high cliffs. Sea-Star spoke to one of the Cabbyl Ushtey and the great horse shook his mane of long curly white hair. He walked to a smooth piece of flat rock beside the water and knelt down.

“He will take you to find your friends and we will await you here,” Sea-Star said to Ned. “Once Coral-Moon and the others reach their destination—which shouldn’t be long now—they will send more of my people to help us. That will enable us to prevent the kobolds from escaping by water.”

“Right, I’ll be off then,” said Ned. “Goodbye, Premie, I will return with help as soon as I can.”

“Goodbye, Ned. And you be careful on that horse—you only have one good arm to hang on with, you know.”

“You don’t have to remind me,” he said with a smile.

As he was about to turn towards the water horse, Opal spoke up:

“You’ll remember the promise you made to me, won’t you, fairy. You said that none of my people would be hurt.”

Ned frowned. “Yes, I remember. It may be a difficult promise for me to keep, depending on what we find, but I’ll pass the word to my people that any pixies are to be captured alive, if at all possible. However, if they attack us as they have done in the past, we will defend ourselves.”

Opal lowered her head. Kayleigh thought the pixie was going to cry.

She said to Ned, “Do your best not to hurt the pixies—many of them are her family, and it sounded as though they didn’t want to get into a fight with the fairies in the first place.”



Figure 9: *Sugarloaf Rock*

Ned nodded his head, turned and walked over to the kneeling Cabbyl Ushtey. He cautiously climbed onto its back—a much higher climb than he was used to with own little pony—and grabbed the horse’s mane tightly with his good right hand. The horse stood and waded into the waves. Once clear of the breakers it began to gallop back around the point of land where the Sugarloaf rock stood up from the sea. Kayleigh watched as the small blue-clad shape of her fairy friend disappeared around the cliff face.

“I suppose they’ll have to find a place where a glen comes down to the sea so they can climb up to the headland,” Kayleigh thought to herself.

Sea-Star came over to where she and Opal were sitting on a rock.

“I think we should move further along the bay and find shelter in one of the openings along this cliff face. I worry that loose rock may fall on you from above. There is a small protected crevice over there that is less exposed.”

Kayleigh and Opal followed the mer-man and climbed a short slope of fallen rock to the opening. He dragged a piece of driftwood up from the water’s edge so they would have something to sit on. Kayleigh could see the exhaustion on Sea-Star’s face. She said to him:

“Why don’t you rest for a while, Sea-Star, you look worn out.”

“You offer good advice, Kay-Lee. If we were surprised by the kobolds now, I wouldn’t have the strength to repel them.”

The mer-man drank from a medicine bulb the mer-doctor must have left with him, then he lay down on a smooth slab of fallen rock beside them and Kayleigh kept watch. It was calm in the bay and the ebb and flow of the tide was hypnotic. A light breeze blew in off the sea. Kayleigh tried to remove the tangles from her hair, but it proved hopeless. She wondered if Ned had found the other fairies and, for Opal’s sake, she hoped her father was still alive. After what seemed a short time—Kayleigh had given up trying to guess how much ‘real’ time was passing—Sea-Star raised himself.

“I feel a bit stronger now,” he said. “If you’ll stay here, I’ll just examine some of these larger openings for signs of the kobolds. We don’t want to be surprised by a group of them coming out suddenly.”

Kayleigh agreed to stay and Sea-Star slid on his tail down to the rocky foreshore where, staying in the shallows to avoid the sharp rocks, he moved along the base of the cliffs. When he reached the first large chasm opening, the entrance to which was partially blocked by a pile of rock fallen from the cliff above, Kayleigh watched as he cautiously entered. The chasm entrance was only a few feet wide, but its height reached half way up the rock face. Soon, the mer-man emerged and moved on to the next opening.

“How are you feeling, Opal,” she asked her friend, who had been napping beside her.

“Oh, I’m all right, I suppose. It’s just that I’m worried about my father and my uncle and cousin. No matter what happens, I think some of them are going to get hurt. They don’t know that the fairies won’t harm them, so they’ll naturally try to defend themselves as soon as they see them. And who knows, perhaps the kobolds have deceived them as they did us. Maybe all my people are prisoners, or worse.”

“Now, now,” Kayleigh said comfortingly, as she placed her arm around Opal’s shoulder, “I’m sure things will work out. Our friends will do their best—they are, all of them, only interested in ridding the island of the kobolds, you know.”

“Some of your friends are. Others, I’m not so sure about,” Opal said, with a sigh.

By now, Sea-Star had reached the middle of the strand that edged the bay. He was about to enter a large opening in the rock face, when Kayleigh saw him turn around quickly and head back toward the water. She watched as what looked like arrows were fired out of the cleft in the rock at the mer-man. One struck him in his upper tail—near where a human’s thigh would be. He made it to the water’s edge and quickly dived beneath the waves. Out of the crevice in the rock a group of five kobolds came running. Kayleigh saw they had small cross-bows in their hands. When they were sure the mer-man was out of range of their bows, they scanned up and down the shore-line and caught sight of the small fairy boat, over near the Sugarloaf.

“Oh, no!” she whispered to Opal, “They’re coming this way—they’ve seen the boat.”

“What shall we do?” Opal moaned, “They’re sure to see us here if they come much closer.”

Kayleigh looked out into the bay. Sea-Star, though wounded, was swimming off-shore just out of cross-bow range. When he saw the kobolds turn in the direction of Kayleigh and Opal, he blew his great horn and started swimming toward the crevice where they were hiding. The sound startled the kobolds and, seeing the mer-man coming toward them, they began to retreat, firing more bolts from their cross-bows as they went. They shouted in their jabbering language into the opening they had come out of, trying to alert their fellows inside.

Millennia of waves had eaten into the base of the headland, causing great rock falls and the cracking of the land that formed the Chasms. Many of these cracks and crevices were interconnected. At the far side of the bay from where Kayleigh and Opal were sitting, near the tied-up pixie vessel, another band of kobolds emerged from an opening in the cliff face and moved down to join their fellows by the shore. Behind them, under guard and with their hands bound, were five pixies.

“Look, Opal,” Kayleigh said, pointing, “Aren’t they pixies over there?”

Opal leaned around the rock to get a view of them. “I think you’re right, from their clothes, they do look like pixies. They’re still too far away for me to make out who they are, though.”

Sea-Star had by then reached their hiding place and was gliding over the rocky strand to reach them.

“Are you badly hurt, Sea-Star,” Kayleigh enquired worriedly, “I saw one of their arrows hit you.”

“It is but a slight wound, from which I will recover; but I am still very weak,” he replied while he took in the goings-on further along the beach. “It seems that my presence here has surprised them and sent them into confusion. It looks as though they were preparing to leave in their boat.”

Kayleigh watched as a third group of eight kobolds ran from another opening at the base of the cliff. She thought something must be chasing them because they kept looking back in the direction from which they had come. They turned and scrambled over the rocks in the direction of the larger group near the boat. She added-up the number of kobolds she could see.

“I count twenty-two of them altogether,” Kayleigh said to Opal. “I think you said there were fifteen in each boat when you started out, which makes thirty altogether. Minus the one that drowned in the shipwreck and the six who were taken by the Cabbyl Ushtey. That makes, let me see, twenty-three.” She was glad, just then, that she had paid attention to her mathematics teacher.

“If that’s correct,” said Sea-Star, “then, I’d say all of them are here on the beach.”

As he spoke, from out of the opening the last group of kobolds had used, a band of fairies emerged. Kayleigh recognized Ned from the sling he was wearing.

“It’s Ned,” she shouted, “He’s found his people and they’ve chased the cowardly kobolds out of the Chasms.”

Unfortunately for the fairies, though, they had come out between the two groups of kobolds and they were now caught in a crossfire. Bolts fired from the crossbows of the five nearest to Kayleigh were joined by those from the group over near the boat and together they pinned down the fairies. Ned, and those of his people nearest him, took cover among the rocks and the rest made their way back into the chasm opening. It looked as though only a few of the fairies had bows and arrows, the others were carrying short swords.

“We can’t let them be shot by the kobolds, we must do something,” Kayleigh said.

“We have to wait for them to run out of projectiles for their weapons,” Sea-Star said. “Otherwise, we won’t be able to get near them.”

“By the time that happens, Ned and his people will be dead,” she retorted.

She took off her purple jacket (with the embroidered butterfly on the back) and laid it on the ground. Then she picked up eight smooth fist-sized stones and placed them on the jacket. She tied the arms around her neck, making a kind of carrier that hung at her hip.

“You stay here with Opal,” she said to Sea-Star, then she stood up, scrambled down the slope and started running towards the nearer group of kobolds.

Sea-Star shouted, “No, Kay-Lee, come back here. You’ll be hurt or they’ll capture you!”

But it was too late; she was half-way towards the kobolds. Sea-Star, tired and wounded though he was, slid down to the water as quickly as he could and swam through the shallows blowing his horn.

“Good old Sea-Star,” Kayleigh said to herself, “he’s creating a diversion.”

The kobolds stopped firing at the fairies and began to shoot at the mer-man as he leapt through the breakers. By then, Kayleigh was within throwing distance and she reached into her jacket, picked out a smooth stone and fired it at the nearest kobold bowman. She missed, but the startled creature turned quickly, lost his balance on the slippery rocks and fell down—firing a bolt into the leg of one of his companions. She threw another rock, this time hitting one of them in the shoulder. By now they had all turned in her direction. Seeing this, Ned and five of his people, who had been pinned down behind a large boulder, ran out behind the kobolds. Just as they were training their crossbows on Kayleigh, Ned gave a great shout, causing the startled kobolds to turn again. Kayleigh had time to fire one more rock, hitting a kobold in the elbow and forcing him to drop his crossbow, before the nearest fairies engaged them in hand-to-hand fighting. Two kobolds went down, mortally wounded, and the other three turned in Kayleigh’s direction and, giving her a wide berth, made a dash for the small fairy boat sitting near-by next to the water. Three fairies chased after them, but they were too late to stop them launching. One of the pursuers drew his bow, and the arrow hit one of the kobolds and he slumped forward in the boat. The other two began to row furiously away from shore and across the bay toward the other ship. Sea-Star made an effort to swim after them, but he was clearly worn-out. He gave up and lay in the shallows near the rocky shore.

The fairies regrouped around Ned and he walked up to Kayleigh who was busy untying her jacket.

“Premie Kayleigh,” he said shaking his head, “you are bravest, the luckiest and the most fool-hardy human I have ever met. Do you realize how much danger you were

in just now? What would your family think if I brought you home with a kobold crossbow bolt in you?”

“I guess we’ll never know,” she replied and reached down to hug her friend. “I was so worried about you, that I didn’t think—I just acted.”

“Well, you may have saved several lives through your actions, including that of someone I think you know.”

One of the fairies who was standing behind Ned came up and bowed deeply.

“I am honoured to meet you again, Preemie Kayleigh. Please accept my sincere gratitude for your brave actions,” he said.

“Alec!” Kayleigh shouted with joy. “Oh, Alec, it’s so good to see you again.” She gave her old friend a hug and he turned bright red in the face with embarrassment.

During the time that this skirmish with the kobolds was going on, the larger group, upon seeing the fairies, the mer-man and their purple companion, made quickly for the other boat. Their pixie prisoners were resisting them and slowing them down and when the kobolds saw the remaining fairies, who had been pinned down in the cave, start running toward them, they abandoned their captives and ran to the boat. Six jumped aboard and got out the oars, while ten more pushed the boat down into the water and then, once it was afloat, clambered on board.

“Quickly,” shouted Ned, “we must catch them before they escape.” He ordered his people to join up with the rest of their group and to intercept the boat.

“I don’t think you need worry about catching them,” shouted Sea-Star, who had made his way back to them along the shore. “They are in my element now, and they have a lot to answer to me for.”

Having some idea of the mer-man’s plan, Ned gave a sharp whistle and signalled to the fairies to break off their pursuit. By now, some of them had reached the pixie captives and they picked them up and led them back to where Ned, Kayleigh and Sea-Star were waiting. Out in the bay, the kobolds in the smaller boat reached the larger one and they were pulled on board.

“Ned, will you help me bring Opal out?” Kayleigh asked, “She’s up there in that cleft in the rock and is probably terrified.”

“Certainly, Preemie.” He replied, “Besides, we should keep all the pixie prisoners together.”

“She is not a prisoner—and don’t you forget the promise you made to her,” she said, as anger momentarily flashed in her blue eyes.

The fairy frowned for moment and then chuckled, “Oh, Preemie, whatever am I to do with you?”

“Well, for one thing, you can start thinking about getting me back home.”

They reached Opal and together they lifted her out onto a large smooth rock where she could sit down.

“Are the kobolds gone,” she asked nervously, “and what about the pixies—were they hurt?” Then she saw, down the strand, the fairies coming toward her with the pixie prisoners.

“The kobolds are all on that boat rowing out of the bay,” Kayleigh explained, “and as far as I know, none of the pixies we saw earlier has been badly hurt in the battle.”

“That is a relief to hear,” said Opal.

As the pixies got nearer, Opal jumped down on her good leg excitedly, “Father, Father,” she shouted. “It’s my father, Kayleigh. He’s alive!”

One of the pixies, his hands still bound, broke free and began running towards them. A fairy raised his bow and was about to shoot, when Ned waved him off. Soon father and daughter stood face-to-face.

“My child! I thought you’d been lost in a shipwreck. Then a group of kobolds from your boat made their way here with your uncle and cousin. When I heard you were alive, I was greatly relieved. But soon after, we were all taken prisoners and tied up. After that, I feared they’d done harm to you.”

Kayleigh had some trouble understanding the older pixie—his speech, like Opal’s, was strongly accented.

“Aside from a broken leg, I’m fine, Father—thanks to this human girl, here. She saved my life.” She turned to her friend and said, “Kayleigh, I’d like you to meet my father.”

Kayleigh smiled at the bedraggled pixie, gave a little curtsy and said, “How d’you do.”

Then she turned to Ned and said, “I don’t think these two are a great threat, won’t you cut his bonds so he can hold his child?”

Ned looked at Alec and said, “Do it.”

The other Fairies all stared at him in disbelief.

Alec frowned, “But, Ned . . .”

“Just do it, Alec. Release him. I’ll explain later.”

Alec cut the ropes that bound the pixie and he took his daughter into his arms and hugged her tightly.

At that moment a great noise arose out at sea as though a summer squall had suddenly blown in. The boat containing the kobolds was almost clear of the bay and they were trying to hoist a sail when their attention was diverted by the sound, which seemed to be coming from around Black Head to the west. Suddenly pandemonium erupted in the boat and the kobolds could be seen tripping over themselves trying to pull on the oars and turn the boat eastward. Coming around the headland, Kayleigh saw what looked like a great wave. Spray was flying and the waters churned to foam. Then she made out the heads and galloping front legs of four great white horses charging across the bay toward the kobold’s boat.

“The Cabbyl Ushtey!” she shouted. “The Cabbyl Ushtey have come for those wicked, wicked creatures.”

Sea-Star turned and started back to the water. “I’d asked the water horses to stay near until my people arrived, in case the kobolds tried to escape. I think I’d better get out there to make sure none of those creatures abandons ship and tries to swim for shore. Farewell for now my friends. I’ll be back once this business is concluded.”

With that he dove into the sea and swam slowly out toward the boat. By now the horses of the sea had reached it and were racing around it in a circle, sending up spray and splashing water over the sides. As the sea swirled about it, the boat too began to turn in a circle. When Sea-Star reached them, he must have given the water horses a signal, for Kayleigh saw that they grabbed the sides of the boat with their teeth and began galloping out of the bay towards the open sea. The boat picked up speed and was skimming across the waves. Then, when they were far from land the Cabbyl Ushtey all jumped in unison into the air. They lifted the boat high out of the water; it tipped forward towards its bow; and then boat, horses and kobolds disappeared beneath the waves in a great splash of water . . . and nothing more was ever heard of those kobolds.

On the beach, Kayleigh, the fairies and the pixies looked out to sea, their eyes wide with wonder. For a long time, no one spoke or even breathed. Finally, Kayleigh said:

“Well, that was a sight I will never forget!”

“I think you speak for all of us in that, Premie,” said Ned.

The other fairies escorted the rest of the pixies over and Opal was delighted to see her uncle and her cousin in the group. Ned looked at Kayleigh, knowing she had been watching him to see what he was going to do with the pixies.

“What is your name?” he asked Opal’s father.

To Ned’s surprise the pixie answered by giving what sounded like his real name.

“Is that your true name?” Ned asked.

“It is,” answered the pixie.

Kayleigh hadn’t been able to catch the name—it was long and complicated and contained only a few vowels.

“And your name, fairy, what may I call you?”

To the astonishment of his fairy colleagues, Ned spoke his own real name. It, too, was long and difficult for Kayleigh to understand, but she distinctly heard “ned” as a middle syllable.

“Well, this is a good start,” she thought to herself. “The fairies told me they never reveal their true names for fear of someone casting a spell on them. I guess this is a sign that they are prepared to trust each other.”

“For the sake of this human girl,” said Ned, “and because I made a promise to your daughter, I will not harm you this day. I cannot speak for all my people, but today you are safe from our vengeance. I have heard some things from Opal that make me think you are not like most of your fellows who invaded our Island. I will give you the chance to tell us your side of this sad story.”

The pixie looked at Ned, then at Opal and then, for a long while, at Kayleigh. Finally, he spoke:

“What you call an invasion was, to us, a question of survival. Our homes were gone; enemies hounded us; and humans have overrun all the countryside. We had nowhere to go. I suggested we send an envoy to Mann to speak with you fairies. We weren’t many and all we asked for was a small corner of your island—a part you don’t care to use. Our king agreed to my proposal but, unfortunately, he gave the assignment to one of his sons—a proud and foolishly ambitious young pixie. I believe his meeting with you ended badly.”

“It did,” said Ned.

“Yes, well, after he returned to Cornwall, he convinced the king, his father, that we could easily take some territory by force. I think he deliberately misled his father in some of the things he told him. In any event, the king gave him command of a contingent of our people and told him to establish a colony on Mann. I cautioned against using force, but I was overruled. When it became obvious that things were going badly here, the king instructed me to contact a kobold trader with whom my family had had some dealings. Our king preferred to use kobold mercenaries rather than risk any more of our own people. I spoke to them, as ordered, but I counselled against using them and, because I did so, I lost favour with the king and he ordered me, and some of my kin, to travel across with the first group of kobolds. As I suspected they would, and as you know, they deceived us and caused us all much grief in the process.”

Alec, who had been listening to all this intently, interjected: “Many of our people have been hurt or killed because of your actions. Not only that, you have endangered this

human child and her family. You have enabled a powerful witch to regain her power, in all likelihood. And you brought an invasion force of kobolds to our peaceful Island. I don't care what your reasons were; your actions deserve the highest form of punishment."

"Maybe so," Ned said, "But let us take a moment to think before we act. My friend the Preemie here has a way about her of making one think differently about things. Pixie: will you give me your word that you and your friends will not try to escape while my people and I hold a conference amongst ourselves?"

Opal's father gave his word and the fairies moved off along the base of the cliff and began a heated discussion. Kayleigh stayed with Opal, her father and the other pixies.

"I don't know all the history of your argument with the fairies, but I think that they might have listened to you if you had asked them in a nicer way about staying on the island. Ned told me that your envoy was insulting to his people and that caused great anger. Do you think it might be possible to forget some of what has happened and start over again?"

"It would be easier for us to do so than for the fairies," Opal's father said, "I fear we have gone too far for them to forgive and forget."

"Well I hope you're wrong," Kayleigh said.

"As do I. Look, they are returning."

Ned and the others came back over to where Kayleigh and the pixies were waiting. He called to Sea-Star who had made his way back to shore and was lying in the shallows resting on a rock ledge. The big mer-man glided up to the edge of the water and he and Ned had a brief conversation. Then Ned came back to the others.

"Pixie," he said, "I have made a decision against the wishes of most of my fellows here and one that is likely to get me in trouble back at the fairy court. However, for the prospect of peace, I am prepared to take a risk. I propose to set you and your people free, on condition that you pledge to do everything within your power to convince your king to end this violence between us. If you agree to withdraw all your folk from Mann, I will try my best at the fairy court to have your case for establishing a colony at Laxey or Foxdale heard. I make no promises except to try. Will you accept these terms?"

“How could I not?” Opal’s father replied. “But I tell you truly that I will do what you ask, for it is my preferred way as well.”

“Good. I have asked Sea-Star if some of his people will take you back across the water. They won’t go all the way to Cornwall, but they’ll take you over to Wales and you can make your way home from there.”

“That is most satisfactory. Thank you.”

Kayleigh couldn’t have been more delighted. Everything had worked out better than she had hoped. All her friends were safe and free and there was a possibility of peace between the fairies and the pixies. She reached over and took Ned’s hand and placed it in the pixie’s.

“Shake on it,” she said. And, with only a little hesitation, they did.

“Premie Kayleigh,” Ned said, “you are a wise counsellor and you now have friends in both the fairy and the pixie camps. It may yet fall to you to see a peaceful settlement of this dispute.”

The pixies were led down to Ned’s small boat, which Sea-Star had retrieved from out in the bay, and they all climbed in. Kayleigh hugged Opal and wished her well and the little pixie started to cry.

“I shall miss you, Kayleigh. I hope we meet again.”

“I’m sure we will. Take care of that leg, you hear. Goodbye, Opal.”

The fairies pushed the boat into the water. Sea-Star was about to join them when he turned and glided back to where Kayleigh was standing.

“Please accept this as a very small repayment of what I owe you, Kay-Lee,” and he hung his sea horn around her neck.

She gave him a hug and shook his large hand. “Goodbye, Sea-Star, and thank you for all you’ve done. Get well and say hello to Coral-Moon for me.”

“I shall,” he replied. Then he bowed to them all and, returning to the water, he got behind the little boat and, pushing it ahead of him, he began swimming slowly out into the bay. Just off the headland, three other mer-men met Sea-Star. They exchanged some words and two of the newcomers took hold of the tow-lines on either side of the boat and

began swimming out to sea. Soon the little vessel was a receding dot disappearing into the gloom of the horizon.

“Now, Premie,” said Ned, “I think it is high time we got you back home.”

“Yes, please,” she agreed.

The first part of the journey was by far the hardest and most exciting. They had to climb up through the Chasms from the shore to the headland. The fairies had employed ropes to come down and they used these to hoist Kayleigh and the wounded up the steepest parts. Finally, and without mishap, the group stood on the headland, beside an ancient stone circle, looking out to sea.



Figure 10: *Ancient Stone Circle Overlooking Stacka Bay*

“I hope Coral-Moon and Periwinkle-Sky are recovering from their ordeal,” Kayleigh said to Ned.

“I’m sure they are. I know that some of the mer-people live in a sunken city off the coast of Langness and I suspect that’s where your friends are now, resting and getting well again. If you look out there in the distance, past Castletown Bay you can just see Dreswick Point—that’s near where they are.”

Kayleigh squinted her eyes eastward to where Ned was pointing, but she couldn't see that far. A haze seemed to obscure her view, although she felt the sky was brighter, somehow, than it had been earlier. Only the brightest stars were visible and she could no longer make out the Great Bear.

Ned suggested that they stop at Silverdale on the way back so he could introduce Kayleigh to more of his people, but she was worried about the length of time she had been away and told Ned that she really preferred to return home as quickly as possible.

Alec had informed them earlier that, before he left Silverdale, a small band of fairies had been dispatched to watch Kayleigh's home at Ballakermeen, and this reminded her that the threat of the pixies was still real. They may have made friends with Opal and her family, but the group who had taken refuge at Foxdale were still searching for a premie. She shivered at the thought of it.

While they had been talking, Alec and another fairy had gone to get their ponies, which they had left inside an old abandoned farm building. Soon the whole group was mounted and they started north towards The Howe.

"I hope old Fury is all right. We left him behind at Port Soderick," Kayleigh said to Alec.

"Don't you worry about him," he replied with a smile, "Fury is very wise and he always finds his way back to his stable eventually. I bet when I get to Silverdale, I'll find him waiting there."

"I hope so," she sighed.

They cut across the lowlands between Port Erin and Port St. Mary and then proceeded east until they reached Colby Glen. From here they followed the glen north and climbed the hillside to Ballaquinney and over to Grenaby. This was where Alec and the other fairies were to turn southeast and follow the Silver Burn River back to Silverdale.

"Goodbye, Premie Kayleigh," he said, "you have provided a great service to us by helping us rid our Island of the kobolds. It has been a great pleasure to see you once again."

He bowed deeply and the other fairies all touched their caps and nodded respectfully. Kayleigh said her goodbyes and waved them on their way.

“Well, it’s just you and me again, Ned,” she said to her friend.

“Yes. And we’d better get a move on—we’ve still a long journey ahead of us.”

From Grenaby they turned north, following the headwaters of the Silver Burn upstream until they could cut east near Ballamodha to reach St. Marks. They rested the ponies here for a while and ate some food that Ned had taken from the fairies’ supply pony.

“You seem deep in thought, Preemie Kayleigh. What troubles you?”

“Oh, I was just wondering what will happen with the pixies now and will you get into trouble with your people for letting Opal’s family return home.”

“We still have the Foxdale pixies to deal with, but I’ve learned, thanks to you, that not all pixies are evil. I hope to convince the fairy court that by releasing some, who seem to have more moderate views, we may find a more peaceable way to end this conflict.”

“I hope you do convince them, Ned—for your people’s sake and for my own. I’m tired of been chased by pixies. I just want to have a normal life with my friends and family.”

The fairy laughed and said, “Preemie, I don’t think you’re destined to have a normal life—whatever that might mean. And I wouldn’t wish it on you even if I could. I think you’re far too remarkable to ever be ordinary.”

With that, he helped Kayleigh back onto her pony and they set off again north-eastward. When they reached the hill of Slieu Chiarn, they circled north, then east until, near Corvalley, they followed a stream that led down to the River Dhoo. The Dhoo brought them past Union Mills and, further downstream, they crossed the Braddan Bridge and made their way to the Quarterbridge crossing. From there it was only a short ride until they were climbing the hill that led to Ballakermeen and Kayleigh’s home. There was a fresh, morning smell to the air as though it had rained overnight—even though Kayleigh hadn’t seen a single cloud. Birds were singing in the hazel trees. She wondered what time it was and whether her family was out of bed yet.

They tethered the ponies in the stand of trees behind the house and walked to the low shrubs at the back of the garden.

It was time for another farewell.

“Please take care of yourself, Ned, and make sure that arm heals properly.”

“I will do my best, Preemie, for, if I don’t, I won’t have the pleasure of seeing you again. And that is something I wouldn’t want to miss.”

He pulled off his red cap and made a deep bow. Kayleigh gave him a hug, being careful not to hurt his arm, and the smiling fairy blushed.

“Although you may not see them, there will always be some of my folk nearby looking out for you, so, please don’t be too worried about the pixies. And now, I must say goodbye, Preemie Kayleigh. Until we meet again.” Then he turned and ran back toward the ponies.

“Goodbye, Ned,” she shouted.

She cut through her mother’s flower bed, being careful not to tread on any of the plants, and walked up the lawn toward the house. At the glass door that led to the sitting room, she saw Evan banging on the glass and waving at her. She could see he was shouting for her parents to come. Kayleigh thought he looked bigger than she remembered, but having spent so much time with two-foot tall fairies and pixies, that didn’t really surprise her.

As she walked, she brushed the dust from her purple jacket and pants and tried again unsuccessfully to untangle her hair.

“Well, I wonder how long I’ve been away this time,” she asked herself.

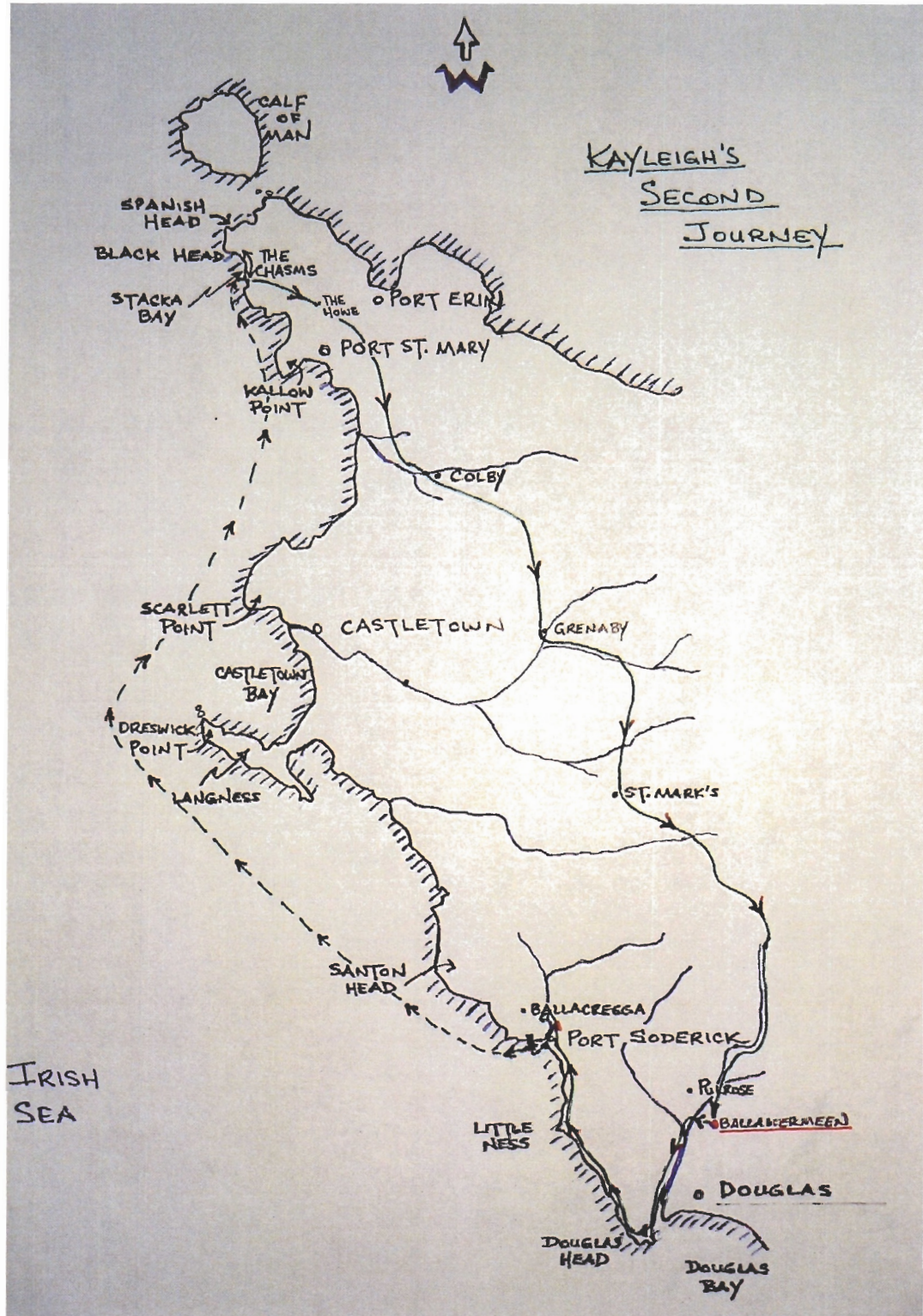


Figure 11: Kayleigh's Map of her Second Adventure

The Preemie and the Peel Hound

*Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

W.B. Yeats²²

The horses were restless and Finvarra and his two companions were eager to go. He was sitting astride a fine Irish thoroughbred mare. It was a high-strung and nervous beast and it pranced and reared and would not stand still.

Finvarra was the youngest son of the king of the Manx fairies and even though he bore a noble name—for he was called after one of his father's ancestors who had ruled in the far west of Erin—he and his two friends had a reputation for mischief. They especially enjoyed playing tricks on the farmers around Colby and Ballabeg in the southern part of the Isle of Man. The three had just returned to Silverdale after 'borrowing' three fine horses from old Mr. Kissick's paddock. Finvarra, being a prince, naturally claimed the Irish thoroughbred, but the two animals his friends rode were both large, fine and lively horses – one black and one grey.

The three young fairies – young, that is, in their terms; not in ours – were under strict orders not to stray too far without an escort, for there was trouble brewing in the land.

"How much longer are we going to have to wait?" asked one of the prince's companions.

²² From W.B. Yeats' poem, "The Stolen Child."

“Any longer and this horse will bolt,” Finvarra replied, as he tried to calm his horse down. The chestnut-coloured mare reared up and rolled her eyes wildly. Then the black horse standing beside it stretched out its long neck and nipped the thoroughbred on its right flank. The horse whinnied loudly and took off at a run up the glen. The horses of Finvarra's two companions needed no further encouragement; they galloped after the Irish mare.

Once they were away, the three friends quickly forgot about their escort. Laughing loudly, Finvarra dug his heels into the sides of the great horse and turned it onto a track that led uphill towards the foot of South Barrule Mountain. His two friends, determined not to be left behind, spurred their horses on and eventually closed the gap between themselves and their leader.

As they climbed, the horses started to tire and the chestnut mare lost the wild look of fear in her eyes. She slowed and the other two soon caught up to her.

“My horse seems to have a mind of its own,” said the fairy on the grey horse. “He keeps leading us left along this rill.”

“Mine is pulling that way also,” said the rider on the black horse.

“Well, it doesn't really matter which way we go as long as we have space in which to gallop these fine beasts,” Finvarra said from behind, for his horse was now following the other two.

They came to a stand of young fir trees – a recent plantation – and were about to turn west when a cloaked figure stepped out of the trees ahead of them. It looked to Finvarra to be some old crone, judging from its stooped form. His horse, which had calmed down, now became agitated again and started to prance nervously and to whinny.

“Good morning to you, Prince Finvarra,” said the crone in a calm and seductive voice.

“How do you know who I am, Caillagh?” he asked.

“You are well known in these parts,” the crone replied. As she spoke, she nodded at the black and the gray horses and they simultaneously reared up, throwing their riders to the ground. Then the two animals, still balancing on their hind legs, began to change their shape; they got shorter and their long snouts receded into their faces. They quickly

transformed into two man-like creatures – though they retained their horse’s ears, hind legs and large flared nostrils.

“Glashtyn!” Finvarra exclaimed and, unable to restrain his own horse any longer, he jumped down to help his friends. The two horse-men, Glashtyn indeed, grabbed hold of Finvarra's two companions before they could recover their senses.

“Who are you and what do you want?” Finvarra demanded, as he reached for his short sword.

“My name is Tehi Tegi and I want you, my young friend.”

Then she raised her two arms in the air and, closing her eyes, she began to mutter an incantation.

The Irish mare had had enough. Once free of her fairy rider, she swung around and, leaping an old dry-stone wall, she raced south-westward across the fields. She didn't stop until she reached the grassy slopes that led down to Fleshwick Bay. There she met with a group of beautiful white horses who had just climbed up from the shore below and who were rolling on the grass and, feeling safe at last, she stayed with them for a while.

Kayleigh was sitting behind her Dad in the car and, as they travelled on the road out from Douglas, she was looking through a guidebook she had taken out of the school library. She read that,

Construction of the present castle at Peel was starting in 1392. But for hundreds of years before that it was a stronghold of the Celts and later of the Vikings. It has witnessed much in its long wardship of Mann and many say it is haunted. The rock upon which the castle sits is, in fact, an island reachable, before the causeway was built, only at low tide. And before it was a castle, it was a special place of magic and power.

She was working on a project for her history class and they were on their way to visit the castle. Usually, it was closed to the public during the winter months, but this weekend it was open to allow school groups from all across the island to visit.

“Dad. It says here that Peel Castle is haunted. Did you know that?”

“No, I didn't. But it doesn't really surprise me. I don't think there's any corner of this island, that isn't touched by the supernatural.” As he spoke, Kayleigh's father kept his eye on the road. It was a Saturday in December, and Christmas shopping season was in full swing, so there was a lot of traffic coming towards them, heading into Douglas.

“How's Evan doing? Is he still asleep?” he asked.

“Yes. Asleep . . . and drooling. Yuck!” Kayleigh replied, glancing over at her little brother in his car seat. He was starting to get too big for it, she thought.

“Dad, do you know the name of the little island that the castle is built on?”

“St. Patrick's Isle, I believe—is that right?”

“Yep. I wonder why it's called that?” she mused.

“Well, St. Patrick was supposed to have come here on his way over to Ireland, so maybe they named it to commemorate his visit.”

They were just passing through St. John's, and the Tynwald Hill—the site where, for more than a thousand years, the Manx parliament has annually proclaimed new laws—rushed by on their right.

“Nearly there,” Kayleigh's father said, “how's the drool?”

“Disgusting!”

They drove down the hill into Peel, then around to the inner harbour, past the Viking Museum and stopped at the parking area next to the castle. Kayleigh helped Evan out of his car seat and wiped his chin and sweater with a tissue.

“Leave me alone,” he protested. He was always grumpy when he first woke up.

“I'm not going to walk around with you looking like a slobbering baby.”

“Now, now, you two,” their father intervened. “Let's get organized and get going. We have a lot to see and it gets dark early at this time of year.”

He picked up a knapsack containing his camera and some snacks, took Evan by one hand and Kayleigh by the other and, together, they climbed the stone steps that led to the entrance of Peel Castle. Inside, past the old portcullis, they paid their entry fee and Kayleigh's dad rented an audio set and headphones for her, so she could hear all about the history of the castle as they walked about.

Within the walls, the castle grounds were mainly grass-covered, with several ruined buildings spread about. Kayleigh began to listen to the tape recordings as she moved from one numbered listening station to another. Her dad was letting Evan burn-off energy by running around on the grass. It was a fine clear day, but a stiff breeze blew in off a choppy sea.

Kayleigh was most interested in the famous Round Tower and when she arrived there she pulled out her sketchbook and made a quick drawing of it. As she continued over to the castle wall facing west to the sea, the strong, bitter wind began to gust around her. She pulled off her headphones and paused the tape. Looking over the battlements she could see the white-capped waves and imagined the Cabbyl Ushtey—the horses of the sea—racing across the foam. The wind howled around her, mussing her hair. She was glad her mother had insisted that she wear her purple turtleneck sweater, under her purple jacket.

In a moment of calm between the strong gusts, Kayleigh said to herself, “Funny, I can still hear the wind howling, even when it dies down. Sounds just like a big dog or a wolf baying at the moon.” She turned to climb down the stone steps from the wall and saw her dad chasing Evan around one of the stone foundations. Her brother was laughing hysterically: “Hmm, guess he's not grumpy any more.”

She turned on the tape and listened to the sections about the Half-Moon Battery and the Armoury. She made a few notes and then started walking towards the ruins of St. German's Cathedral. As she went, she looked about her and saw a few clusters of school children walking about with their teachers and a group of four men standing over against the East wall, looking in her direction. She caught up with Evan and her father near the old church. Their dad had opened his pack and taken out some fruit and biscuits.

“Keep an eye on Evan, while I go back to the gatehouse and buy some tea,” he said.

“Okay,” Kayleigh replied, pausing the tape and removing her headset.

They were out of the wind in the shelter of an old stone wall. Kayleigh gave Evan some raisins to eat and looked up to see the four men she had seen earlier coming

towards her. As the men approached, they seemed to be moving oddly; shuffling along, not speaking and staring vacantly ahead in her direction.

“Kayleigh,” Evan said through a mouthful of raisins.

She turned her attention back to her brother: “What is it?”

“Why don't these houses have tops?” he asked, pointing to a nearby building.

“Roofs. Not ‘tops’,” she corrected. “They are hundreds of years old, and no one lives here any more.”

“Maybe if they fixed the roofs, the people would move back,” he mused. Then he reached for another handful of raisins and said, “I'm cold.”

“Don't worry, Dad will be back soon with hot tea to warm us up.”

Kayleigh turned her gaze back to the four strange men. They stared at her as they slowly approached. With their queer walk and their arms hanging limply at their sides, they began to seem menacing. When they were within fifty feet of where the children were sitting, Kayleigh heard, quite close by, a low growl. It was no wind blowing in off the sea this time, but a real dog. The children looked around simultaneously to see an enormous black dog staring at them through eyes that seemed to glow like hot coals.

“K-K-Kay...leigh,” Evan stuttered, “a dog.”

“I see it,” she replied, “don't move and it will leave us alone.”

“I'm scared,” her brother whispered, as the dog began to approach them.

Kayleigh looked around to see if their father was returning, but she could see no one else about. “Maybe he's hungry,” she said to Evan.

She broke off a piece of her biscuit and threw it towards the big animal. He ignored it and as he came closer, Kayleigh grew more afraid. This dog was huge—bigger than a St. Bernard, or even the Irish Wolfhound she had seen once in Ramsey. When the dog was about fifteen feet away, Kayleigh stood up in front of Evan. As she did so, the great beast stopped and narrowed its bright eyes. He went into a crouch.

“Evan, go behind me and find Dad. Walk slowly until you're out of sight, around this wall, then run as fast as you can.” But as she spoke, she suddenly felt hands grab her by both arms from behind. She turned her head to see two of the men she had been

watching earlier standing over her. They pulled her off her feet, while a third picked up Evan. "Let go of me," she screamed, and she twisted her body to try to free herself.

One of the men, put his hand over her mouth, but she bit his finger and kicked at him. Out of the corner of her eye, Kayleigh saw Evan struggling with the man who held him. The fourth man was trying to grab his legs. Frantic and afraid that Evan would be hurt, Kayleigh knew she was not strong enough to fight off four men. Where was Dad?

Then, nearby, she heard a deep bark. One of the men holding her let go his grip and fell to the ground. Kayleigh turned her head and saw the black dog dragging on the trouser leg of one of her attackers. Once the man had fallen to the ground, the dog leapt onto the back of the second man, knocking both the man and Kayleigh onto the grass.

As soon as she was free, Kayleigh jumped up and turned to the two men now carrying Evan. One had an arm around his chest and a hand over his mouth, while the second man held the boy's legs. Kayleigh jumped on the nearer of the two men, forcing him to release his hold on her brother's legs. The remaining attacker continued to try to escape with Evan, but a large black shape flew through the air, knocking him over. The dog tore at the man's clothes and held him down until Evan could roll free of his grip.

Kayleigh grabbed her brother, pulling him away from the strange men until they had their backs to the stone wall. The dog was holding down one man, but the other three had recovered and, though tattered, seemed unhurt. They began to close in on the two frightened children. The dog turned and bounded over to stand in front of Kayleigh and Evan. He bared his teeth and growled as the men moved closer.

Behind the stone wall they stood against, Kayleigh heard the sounds of school children laughing and shouting. Couldn't they tell what was happening? Why didn't someone come to their aid?

"Help us," she shouted. "Dad . . . someone, please help us." Despite being terrified, Kayleigh couldn't help again noticing the vacant looks on the faces of the four men. None of them had spoken a word, which seemed very odd. The fourth man now got to his feet and joined the others who were moving closer.

The black dog, still positioned between the approaching men and the two children, suddenly sat down on the grass. He stopped growling. Kayleigh thought she heard him making low sounds that seemed almost like words—but they were no words she could understand. The beast barked out a loud command and the four men stopped and, as if they were rag dolls, fell to the ground unconscious. Kayleigh and Evan gaped in wonder.

The dog rose to his feet and turned towards the children. Kayleigh saw again how large he was. His back was the same height as the top of Evan's head. His pink tongue hung from the side of his open mouth and he was panting heavily.

“Poor thing,” Kayleigh said, “he's exhausted from saving us.”

She approached the beast slowly—still a bit nervous of it—thinking she would pat him on the head. The dog's eyes met hers.

“Are you hurt, Premie?” he asked in a deep voice.

Kayleigh froze in her steps, she was so surprised. “N-N-No, I think I'm OK, thanks to you.”

She and Evan, hand in hand, approached the dog. Evan, who was often afraid of big dogs, let go his sister's hand and threw his arms around the great beast's neck and hugged him.

“Now, boy, everything is all right. You needn't be afraid. These men won't hurt you. Though it has weakened me greatly, I have broken the spell that held them. When they awake, they'll be confused, but unharmed. Then they'll return to their families without remembering what happened to them.”

Kayleigh was still getting over the shock of the attack and the idea of a talking dog to think too clearly. “What do you mean ‘spell’?” she asked. “What's going on here?”

“It's complicated, I'm afraid,” said the black dog, “but I think you have met the one who entranced these poor men.”

Kayleigh's mind clicked. “Tehi Tegi!” she whispered.

“Yes, she's the one. She wants you very badly, Premie.”

“But, I thought she'd gotten everything she needed from me, when we were up on Snafell Mountain. She said some wizard had turned her into a goat, and she needed some things from me so that she could return to human form. I gave her what she wanted, why is she still chasing me?”

“I see you do not fully understand how valuable you are, Premie.”



Figure 12: *St. German's Cathedral - Peel Castle*

Now, it seemed to Kayleigh as though ages of time had passed since her dad had gone to buy them tea. In fact, he had been gone less than ten minutes. Everything had happened very quickly. Although filled with curiosity (and not a little fear), Kayleigh wanted to make sure Evan was all right.

“I'd like to talk to you some more, but can we please find my dad first, so he can take care of Evan.”

The dog cocked his head and looked at her for a moment. Then he said, “I had heard some things about you, which I dismissed, but now that I've met you and seen you, I think we *should* talk some more. When your brother is safely back with your father, will you come with me for a while, so we can continue our conversation?”

Kayleigh thought for a moment. She didn't really want to get involved in the affairs of witches and fairies again, but she was very curious about why Tehi Tegi continued to pursue her. "Wait here until I find my father. I'll explain what happened and make sure Evan is okay, then I'll come back."

"I'll wake these four and confirm that they are no longer a threat, then I'll send them on their way and wait for you down in the cathedral crypt," said the black dog.

Kayleigh took Evan by the hand, and walked around the ruined wall in the direction of the Gatehouse, to where their father had gone. As they came around the south wall of St. German's, they saw him approaching, juggling three styrofoam cups. Evan ran to him at once.

"Daddy, Daddy," he shouted.

"Whoa there, son. You'll make me spill, the tea."

"Daddy. A big dog saved us from some bad men."

"What are you talking about? Kayleigh, what have you two been doing while I was gone?"

Kayleigh tried to explain what had happened, but as soon as she mentioned that four men had grabbed them, their dad dropped the cups of tea, ran around the old church and across the grass to the stone wall looking for the men. When the two children caught up to him, he was standing with his hands on his hips looking back at them.

"I hope you're not making this up. Grown men chasing children is very serious. If it's true, we'll have to call the police."

"Dad," Kayleigh interrupted, "*if it's true*—how can you say that, the four men are lying right over ..." But, they weren't lying right over there—they were gone.

"Kayleigh. Come here." He knelt down and looked at the two children. He could see that both had tear streaks on their faces. He knew something had happened. "Start over, and tell me everything," he said in a gentle voice.

So, Kayleigh—supported by outbursts from Evan—told the whole story from the beginning. “Do you believe us, Dad?” she asked when she was finished.

“Well, strange as it may seem, I do believe you. You've had enough unusual encounters in the last six months that being rescued from zombies by a talking dog seems quite reasonable.”

“What's zombies?” asked Evan.

“Oh, your men-in-a-trance sounded like something I've seen in scary movies, that's all.”

“But, it was scary,” Evan insisted.

“I know, I know,” their dad said comfortingly, hugging the boy.

“Dad,” Kayleigh spoke after a moment. “I promised to go and meet with the black dog and talk with him. He's waiting for me down in the cathedral crypt.”

It seemed her father was about to object, but then he said, “Why don't we all go?”

“Well. I don't see why not – let's go,” Kayleigh replied, jumping to her feet.

It was just a few steps to Peel Castle's ruined church. The crypt was down a narrow flight of stone stairs. In the damp gloom, they could hear breathing—or rather panting.

“I'm here,” Kayleigh spoke into the shadows.

There was a sound of something heavy moving in the darkness and the large black form of the dog moved out of the shadows from a corner to stand before them. He was over four feet tall at the shoulders and his tightly curled black fur was even curlier than Kayleigh's father's hair—which was exceedingly curly indeed.

“The Moddey Doo!” their father gasped.

“What?” Kayleigh looked at him.

“He fits the descriptions I've read of the Moddey Doo—the legendary black dog of Peel Castle. He's supposed to be a myth.”

“So are fairies,” Kayleigh chuckled.

“Point taken,” Dad replied.

Kayleigh walked over to the corner with the dog. Evan and his father heard no sound from the great beast, only Kayleigh's whispered voice echoed in the stone room. It

was cold and damp in the underground crypt—a great empty room with an arched stone roof under St. German’s Cathedral. Evan fidgeted in his father’s arms and after a while, once he was sure the dog wasn’t vicious, he told Kayleigh they’d wait for her upstairs.

Ten minutes later, Kayleigh climbed the stairs into the late afternoon’s dimming light, the dog silently following.

“Dad,” Kayleigh said, “I have to go with him.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Unless I go with him and help sort out what’s happening, both Evan and I will continue to be in danger. We’ll never have any peace, Dad.”

“Kayleigh, you are not disappearing again. And certainly not with a big dog. At least before, you had your fairy friends to look after you. No. I’m sorry, sweetheart, but you’re coming home with Evan and me.”

The great beast, who had been sitting quietly beside Kayleigh, stirred. He let out a short growl. Kayleigh turned to him, and saw his large dark eyes flash yellow. A low, deep voice spoke: “Your child will be safe with me.”

The children’s father had been talking excitedly and waving his hands about. Now, suddenly, he became very still. “Whaa . . . ?”

“Your child will be safe with me,” the dog repeated.

“Kayleigh . . . will be safe with you,” Dad said, very slowly.

“She must come with me now.”

“. . . must go with you,” Dad intoned.

Kayleigh, who had been preparing for an argument with her father, knowing that he was sure to oppose her going off with the dog, could tell something odd was happening. “Dad? Are you all right?” she asked.

“You must go now,” he said, without looking at her.

She turned to the black dog: “What have you done to my Dad?” she demanded angrily.

“Nothing permanent. He’s not harmed. We just don’t have time for a long debate right now. We must get away from the Castle grounds quickly. It’s not safe to linger.”

Kayleigh looked at her father and her brother, then back at the dog. She knew what she had to do. “Is it okay if I give my brother a message for the fairies? They keep an eye on our house and I know they’ll worry when I don’t return.”

“That’s a good idea. We may need their help. But please hurry, child.”

She scribbled a note on a piece of paper from her sketch pad and pushed it into Evan's coat pocket. She instructed him on what to do. “Now, you won't forget will you?” she asked him.

“No, I'll talk to the fairies,” he said happily. The thought of seeing fairies again pushed everything else out of his mind.

“I'm depending on you,” Kayleigh said as she gave her little brother a big hug. Her dad, who still didn't seem quite himself, bent down and hugged his daughter. “Be careful, sweetheart,” he said, “and come home to us soon.”

“I will,” she replied and then, turning to the dog, she asked, “Can my dad drive the car safely?”

“He is completely normal in every respect, except for the one suggestion I placed in his mind. They’ll be fine, I promise you.”

“They better be,” said Kayleigh in a threatening tone.

“Come, now. Climb onto my back,” said the dog, “we need to make haste.”

Kayleigh used an old piece of castle stone as a stool and swung her leg over the beast’s broad back. She grabbed the fur at the back of his neck and had only a moment to wave goodbye to her brother and father before they started on their way. As they rounded a wall and came into the open, the grounds seemed strangely deserted. The black dog ran towards the north wall of Peel Castle, went down some old steps that Kayleigh hadn't noticed before during her walking tour. At the foot of the stairs a damp passage turned south and, before long, they emerged into the late afternoon sun through a crevice in the rock beyond the outer wall. Kayleigh clung tightly to the neck of the Moddey Doo—or so she had begun to think of her new friend—as he moved across a narrow sandy shoreline that followed the west side of the causeway separating St. Patrick's Isle from the main island.

The sun hung low in the sky, far to the south. It entered a narrow band of clouds just above the horizon and turned them orange and pink. They climbed a hillside and

began following the course of the River Neb southward. Once outside of Peel, they came down the hill closer to the river. The dog stopped in a stand of hawthorn trees beside the water. Kayleigh could tell he was tired. She climbed down from his back.

“I've used more energy today, than I have in a hundred years,” the dog panted.

“I don't think I really thanked you for helping Evan and me earlier. Also, we haven't been properly introduced. My name is Kayleigh,” she said with a little curtsy.

“I'm sorry, Preemie, for the haste,” he replied, trying to catch his breath. “I worried lest more trouble arrive when I was so weak. I don't have the strength I once had. Old age, you see. But it is good to meet you in person at last. You may call me Fash.”

“Fash. That's an unusual name. I suppose it's short for your secret true name. My friend Ned—he's a fairy by the way—Ned says they don't tell people their real names in case someone casts a spell on them. Hey! You said before that that's what happened to those four men—that Tehi Tegi placed them under some sort of spell. I guess she must have found out their names.”

The dog, who was lying in the long grass resting, let out a growl that sounded to Kayleigh distinctly like a chuckle. “You are very quick for such a youngster, Preemie Kayleigh. And, yes, as I told you, those poor fools were under an enchantment. One of Tehi Tegi's favourites. She used to enjoy bewitching the men of this island and getting them to do her bidding. The fact that she has resorted to her old tricks tells me she's regained much of her power.”

“When I saw her, she was trapped in the shape of a goat. Do you think she has been able to change back into a person? She said that was her plan.”

“Yes, I'm fairly certain she has returned to her former beautiful self,” said the Moddey Doo. He seemed to Kayleigh to be trying to picture what the witch might look like.

“Then, it's all my fault,” Kayleigh said forlornly, kicking a broken branch with her purple sneaker. “I helped her get the ingredients to cast the spell that changed her back.” She was thinking again of that terrifying summer day on the summit of Snaefell, when the witch and her pixie allies had captured her and Evan.

“Yes, I know all about that and I know you had no choice in the matter. You acted bravely. I also know you turned down Tehi Tegi’s offer to become her apprentice. When I first heard that she wanted more from you, I couldn’t understand it, but now that I’ve met you myself, I begin to realize what she saw in you. There is something about you, something powerful. I can sense it and feel it.”

“Not that again,” said Kayleigh, in an irritated tone. “My friend Opal—she’s a pixie—said that I glowed. Tehi Tegi said I had an ‘aura’—whatever that means. Why can’t everyone understand that I’m just a normal kid who wants to live a normal life with her family?”

“You’re still very young, Premie Kayleigh, you may feel differently as time passes. Now, we must continue our journey.”

“But you haven’t said where we are going,” Kayleigh remarked as she got to her feet.

“We’re going to Knockaloe. It’s not very far. I have a safe shelter there, where we can rest, have some food and talk some more. Come, climb aboard.”



Figure 13: *Countryside South of Knockaloe*

Kayleigh pulled herself onto the dog's wide back. He was taller than old Fury, the fairy pony she had become used to riding. They followed the River Neb for a short distance, then, turning west, they climbed Correns Hill and turned south in the direction of Creag Vullan. Up on the windy headland, Kayleigh could see foam lifting off white capped waves as it was caught by the wind. To the south, the sun had gone fully behind the clouds and was setting rapidly. Twilight descended over the green countryside. A little past Contrary Point, they turned inland towards Knockaloe Moar. Ahead was a green mound of earth with two standing stones near one end. As they got closer, Kayleigh thought the mound began to shimmer and lose focus. She was having trouble seeing anything clearly in the fading light. When they passed the standing stones, Kayleigh saw an opening in the grassy bank of the mound that she was sure hadn't been visible when they were further away. Light streamed from the opening as Fash bounded inside.

As Kayleigh's eyes began to adjust to the bright warm glow inside the grassy mound, she noticed a large fire burning in an open hearth at the centre of the room. "Another mystery," she said to herself. "There was definitely no smoke in the air when we were outside." Directly above the circular fire pit, there was an opening in the ceiling for the smoke to escape. Through the hole, Kayleigh thought she could see the first stars twinkling.

"Please sit down by the fire and warm yourself, Premie. I'll prepare some food for us."

"Can I help you, Fash?" Kayleigh offered, thinking it would be difficult for a dog to prepare a meal for a human guest. She was about to put out some plates, which she saw on a nearby sideboard, when an astonishing thing happened.

The dog got up on its hind legs and seemed to stretch himself. Then his long tail and floppy ears began to shrink. His black curly coat started to change colour, turning a dark crimson. As Kayleigh stared wide-eyed in disbelief, the Moddey Doo transformed before her eyes into the figure of a very old man. He wore a long red coat that extended below his knees; tall black leather boots; grey breeches; and under his coat, a dark blue

doublet. He had a long grey beard and white bushy eyebrows, and on his head he wore a flat crimson cap with fancy embroidering.

“There now. That feels better,” he said, with a shrug of his shoulders.

“Goodness gracious!” was all Kayleigh could think to say. “Goodness gracious me.”

“Allow me to reintroduce myself, Premie Kayleigh. I am known as Caillagh-ny-Faashagh and I am at your service—but, please continue to call me Fash, it’s so much easier.” As he spoke, he bowed so deeply that the tip of his beard touched the floor.

“Oh my gosh,” Kayleigh gasped. “You’re the wizard. The one who changed Tehi Tegi into a goat in the first place.”

“Yes indeed. It is I,” the old man said with a broad smile. He seemed pleased that Kayleigh had heard of him. “Perhaps you should sit down. It is really not very polite to stare at someone with your mouth open.”

“Oh my gosh . . . I mean, I’m sorry. I mean, you surprised me—I wasn’t expecting . . .”

“No. I daresay you weren’t expecting any of the things that have happened to you today.”

“That’s for sure,” said Kayleigh, flopping onto a big cushion beside the fire.

While trying to regain her composure, Kayleigh looked about at the large low room. Around the walls, there were book cases stuffed with old leather-bound texts and manuscripts, several large chests with complicated-looking locks and two big wardrobes. Over in a far corner, opposite the central fire pit, she could just make out a curtained bed. Faded tapestries decorated some walls and others were hung with many pictures—mostly of people, but some of landscapes. One picture, in particular caught her eye. She got up off the cushion and walked over to it. It was of a young woman with striking bright blue eyes. Her hair was dark—almost black—and she wore an old-fashioned dress clasped at the neck with a jewelled brooch. She was looking slightly to the right and smiling. Kayleigh thought she was very beautiful.

“Who is she?” she asked Fash, who was busy preparing their meal. He turned to see what she was referring to.

“Oh,” he said with an audible sigh, “she was one of my best pupils. Many years ago, now. She was beautiful and talented. Some days I still miss her very much.”

“Did something happen to her?” Kayleigh asked.

“Yes, she was lost to me a long time ago,” he said sadly. Then, brightening, he added, “But let's not think of the past just now. Come and have some food. I'm afraid I have very simple tastes, so I hope you aren't expecting a feast.”

“I'm so hungry, I could eat a horse,” she said, moving over to the wooden table near the kitchen.

“Oh, dear,” Fash replied, “I hope you do not really like to eat horses. That would be most unkind.”

“It's just an expression,” Kayleigh reassured him. “I love horses and ponies, and I'd never dream of hurting one—never mind eating them.”

“I am much relieved,” the old man said with a kindly smile. “Here is some fresh cheese and milk, some bonnag²³, smoked herring and a little dried fruit. I hope there is something here you will enjoy.”

Kayleigh tried a little of everything and declared that, except for the bonnag, which she found very hard to chew, it was a delicious meal. While they were eating, Kayleigh looked up at Fash and said in a shy voice, “Do you mind if I ask you a question?”

“Not at all. Feel free to do so.”

“Well, at my school we've started to study the Manx language—just a few words and sayings so far.”

“I am very pleased to hear it, for Manx is a very noble tongue and it was almost lost.”

“Yes . . . well . . . my question is . . . um . . .”

“Out with it, child,” the old man said with a smile.

“Well. One of the words we learned is ‘caillagh’—, which sounds very much like the first part of your name. Only, our language book says it means ‘old woman’. So, I was wondering . . .”

²³ Bonnag is traditional Manx bread, leavened with soda instead of yeast.

In a serious tone, Fash said, “I can see that I mustn’t underestimate you, young Preemie.” Then he grinned and added, “You are absolutely correct—you get full marks—‘caillagh’ does indeed mean old woman (among other things).”

“But, I don’t get it,” Kayleigh said with a frown.

“Let me explain. What do you think I am?”

“W-W-Well . . . I’m not really sure. But I think you must be a wizard . . . mainly,” she replied.

“Over the years, I’ve been called many things, including ‘the prophet wizard’ by some, but really I am a shape-shifter. Or, at least, I was. I’m getting too old and too tired to be much good at it any more.”

“A shape-shifter,” Kayleigh repeated.

“Yes. As you saw, I sometimes take the form of a dog—the Moddey Doo, in the Manx tongue—particularly, when I am travelling. For many years, I tried to be useful to the Manx people by offering them healing and fortune-telling services. Simple things really, like explaining how to cure aches and pains; or when to plant a crop; or when the herring would be running. For many a hundred year, I did this in the form of an old woman—so they would accept my advice more readily. It was your friends the fairies who gave me the name as a sort of joke, but it stuck and now I’m quite used to it.”

“I see,” Kayleigh said solemnly. She was trying to visualize what Fash might look like as an old woman.

By now they had finished their meal and, after they had cleaned up the plates, Fash, who was looking very tired, said to Kayleigh, “I’m afraid I have to be impolite to you for a little while. I fear I have overtaxed myself today, and I must rest for a while. Perhaps it would be a good idea for you to get some sleep as well.”

But Kayleigh, although tired, was wide-awake with the excitement of the day. She was afflicted with too much curiosity and plagued by too many unanswered questions to want to sleep. In a corner of the room near the entranceway, she had seen an easel and some small pots of paint. “Would you mind if I drew or painted while you lay down for your rest? I promise not to make any noise.”

“Of course not. I have some paper and charcoal on the easel, and if you like, you can mix some watercolours. They’re on a shelf over there, as are some brushes.” He

moved the easel nearer to the fire and, bidding Kayleigh goodnight, he walked over to the curtained bed in the far corner of the room.

Kayleigh stood before the easel and began a sketch, but soon took the paper down and continued working on the floor where she was more comfortable. After a while, she started to feel drowsy.

Some time later, when the fire was burning low, Fash got up and found Kayleigh fast asleep on a cushion by the fire. Next to her was a charcoal drawing of a large black dog. He was jumping over a low wall. Seated on the dog's back was a little girl. The old man smiled as he looked at the picture and then at the sleeping child. He picked up the drawing and hung it from two nails that protruded from the wall by his kitchen. After he had stoked the fire and prepared some toasted bread with jam for breakfast, he shook Kayleigh gently by the shoulder. "Time to get up, young Preemie. We have much to do."

Kayleigh opened her eyes, looked around in momentary bewilderment. Then, with a yawn, she said, "Oh, I must've fallen asleep. Is it morning already, Fash?"

"Morning or not, it is time. Come and have some food."

Kayleigh ate four large slices of toast and jam and drank a mug of creamy milk. While Fash was putting away the food and clearing the dishes, Kayleigh poured water from a pitcher into a large porcelain bowl and washed her hands and face.

"Now, Preemie," said Fash when he, Kayleigh and the kitchen were all cleaned and settled, "there are some things we should discuss. First of all . . ."

But before he could continue, a small bird, a wren, came swooping in through the chimney opening and, after getting its bearings, settled on the arm of the chair next to the old man. Immediately, it began singing and chirping in, what was obvious to Kayleigh, a very excited matter. The old man cocked his head and appeared to be listening intently.

"What's going on?" Kayleigh asked.

"A moment, child, if you please. I'm trying to understand the message."

"Message!" whispered Kayleigh to herself. "Probably more bad news."

She sat down and watched the ‘conversation’. When the bird had finished, Fash held out his arm and the wren jumped to it. He brought it over to the kitchen, and gave it water and some bread crumbs, then he walked quickly over to a small writing desk and scribbled a short note on the corner of a sheet of paper. He tore off the corner, folded the paper and walked back to where the bird was pecking hungrily at the crumbs. Fash spoke to the bird in a strange language and placed the folded paper in its beak. The bird jumped into the air, flew once around the fire pit, and then disappeared up the chimney opening carrying Fash's message.

Kayleigh had watched all this with silent fascination; but now she got to her feet and, coming over to Fash, asked, “What was that all about? Does it have anything to do with me?”

“I'm afraid so,” said the old man. “It was a communication from the fairies at Rushen. They received the message that you left with your brother—that's how they knew where to find us.”

“That was fast! But what's happened?” asked Kayleigh anxiously.

“I promise to answer all your questions, but we must prepare to leave at once. Will you please gather up some food from the larder—there is a small knapsack on a peg by the sideboard. I'll get a few things that I may need. But we must move quickly.”

“What is the hurry—at least tell me that.”

With a sigh of impatience, Fash turned and said, “Word has reached Tehi Tegi that you are with me. The fairies think she has instructed some of her pixie allies at Foxdale to come here and retrieve you. Foxdale is quite near—and so must be the pixies. Now, no more questions until we are well away.” He turned and ran over to one of the large chests and started rummaging through it.

“Great. Just great!” said Kayleigh to herself as she gathered up bread, cheese, dried fruit and—with some reluctance—bonnag and wrapped them up. “More pixie trouble,” she muttered as she tied up the food bundle. “I'm getting really tired of being hassled by pixies—even though one of them *is* a good friend of mine.” She turned to see Fash looking at her with a faint smile on his face.

“Poor child,” he said, shaking his head. “It must all seem so confusing to you.” Then, more urgently, he added, “But we must be off. Quickly get the knapsack.”

Kayleigh picked up the package of food. She stuffed it into the knapsack, slung it over her shoulder and turned back towards . . . a large black dog. He had a small bundle tied around his neck, which hung below his chin like one of those St. Bernard rescue dogs in the Alps that Kayleigh had read about. “Oh!” was all she could think to say.

“Quickly, child, climb on my back and let us be away—oh, and there's a short grey cloak on a peg by the door that you had better wear to conceal that highly noticeable purple jacket.”

Kayleigh took down the cape and tied it round her shoulders. Then she jumped from a stool onto Fash's back and grabbed the thick hair behind his neck. The dog turned and bounded quickly out the opening of the mound.

After the cozy warmth of Fash's home, the cool air and light breeze blowing in off the sea was a shock to Kayleigh. She pulled the collar of her purple turtleneck sweater up under her chin and made sure her purple jacket was zippered to the top. Without letting go of the dog's fur, she used one hand to pull up the hood of the grey cape she wore over her jacket. Kayleigh had expected it to be morning outside. However, although it was light enough to see a fair distance, there were still stars shining in the sky. She thought it must be just before dawn and, turning her head towards the east, she looked for a glow on the horizon that would mean daybreak was approaching; but there was no such glow.

As the dog turned south and ran across Knockaloe Moar, Kayleigh asked him how long they had been inside the grassy mound.

“Not very long at all, by my reckoning,” he replied. He was about to say something more when he suddenly stopped and crouched in the grass.

“Quickly, Premie, get off and hide in the heather as best you can. I think we have company.”

Coming towards them from the direction of the village of Gordon to the south, they could see a troop of about twenty small figures travelling fast on small ponies. Following close behind them, matching their speed, was a tall dark lumbering shape.

“Are they fairies or pixies?” Kayleigh whispered.

“Without a doubt, they are pixies,” the black dog replied. “They must have climbed the hills behind Foxdale and then followed Glen Rushen down this way. It looks as though we got away just in time.”

“What’s that behind them?” asked Kayleigh, straining her eyes to see. “It looks familiar.”

“It’s a Fynoderee,” Fash observed. “He must be in league with the pixies. How very strange!”

“I’ll bet it’s Finn!” Kayleigh exclaimed. “He’s a friend of mine—even though he does work for the pixies.”

“My word, Premie,” Fash said with surprise, “you do make the most unusual friends. However, I think it best not to renew the acquaintance just now.”

“I suppose you’re right,” she agreed.

They crouched behind a small hillock and waited for the pixies and their large companion to pass, then they continued their journey southward. A little farther on, Kayleigh leaned forward and spoke into the dog’s ear: “Please tell me what you learned from that little bird—it was a message from the fairies you said.”

“Yes,” replied Fash. “It was a bit confused, as if sent in haste, but the essence was that there had been some serious trouble between a ‘witch’ and the fairies. Something or someone was taken—I’m not sure which. The message said that she was also looking for you (which we already knew) and that if I could, I should bring you down to Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa Mountain, where the fairies will meet us.”

“That sounds bad,” said Kayleigh. “That witch is a real pain. I wish she would just go away and leave us all alone.”

The dog made no reply, except for a low growl. They increased their pace to put as much distance between themselves and the pixies as possible. Fash observed that, when the pixies found his home abandoned, they would probably be able to figure out his direction, since he hadn’t bothered to cover his tracks. A half mile past Gordon, they came to Glen Maye and, turning west, they followed its fast-moving stream down toward the sea. Just before the shoreline, they turned south again and traversed the sloping headland towards Ballaquane and Dalby Point.

They were travelling at a fast run and Kayleigh could tell that Fash was getting tired. She said to him, “Why don't you stop and rest for a while and have a bite of food?”

“That's a sensible idea, Premie, there's a ruin of an old hill fort overlooking the sea up ahead. We'll rest there for a bit.”

As Kayleigh sat on a smooth stone unpacking their food, she looked up into the indigo sky. A light breeze blew in off the sea, and though it was late in the year and cool, there was no sign of the usual winter storms which plagued that coastline. She wasn't really cold—except for her hands, which were numb from holding onto Fash's back.

Kayleigh ate some bread and cheese and Fash finished off the rest of the bonnag while he stretched out on the coarse grass behind the shelter of a standing stone. As he chewed the bonnag, he was staring at Kayleigh.

“What's the matter?” she finally asked. “Why are you looking at me like that?”

“I'm sorry,” the dog replied, “but you remind me very much of a pupil I once had.”

“A pupil? You mentioned that before—back at your house. Are you a teacher, then?”

“Not really, I used to dabble in many things. As I told you before, most of the good people of this island know me as soothsayer or fortune teller; some might remember me as a sort of healer. I've been here a long time, you see.”

“But you're also a wizard, aren't you? Isn't that how you can change into a dog? And how you were able to turn Tehi Tegi into a goat?”

The dog growled a laughing sort of growl and nodded his head.

“And you are also a teacher?”

“Well, I have had several apprentices over the years, to whom I have tried to pass on some of my knowledge. You remind me of one of them—you saw her picture hanging on my wall.”

“You mean the dark-haired girl with those strange blue eyes.”

“Yes. That is her.”

“What happened to her?” Kayleigh asked.

For a long time, the dog was silent, and then he said, “We had a falling out. A disagreement. We haven't spoken in many, many years.”

“That's so sad. Can anything be done to make you friends again?”

“I'm afraid not,” said Fash. “Too much has happened between us for that.”

“Funny,” remarked Kayleigh, “that's exactly what the fairies and the pixies said about their relationship. But now, I think there may be hope that they can become friends.”

“That would be extraordinary,” said the dog. “But I hope it may be so.”

He closed his eyes and Kayleigh let him rest while she stared out to sea, looking in the direction of Ireland. She wondered what her parents and Evan were doing and if they were worrying about her—a question to which she already knew the answer. She wished she could be in her own bed in their house in Ballakermeen. All her friends would be getting excited about the approaching holiday season. She was probably missing some of the rehearsals for the annual school concert. She was part of the Irish dancing club and they had planned a special performance for the finale of the Christmas concert. As she was thinking about this, a depressing thought dawned on her: what if she was away so long that she missed the concert? She might even miss the whole of the Christmas season. She tried to estimate how long she had been away and what the date was. It seemed no more than a few hours—depending on how long she had been asleep earlier—but she knew that was deceptive, as time seemed to pass differently in the fairy world. Finally, she said, “Fash, can we get going. I want to get back home as soon as possible. I don't want to miss my school concert, or the rest of the Christmas events that are coming up.”

The dog got to his feet and shook himself. “School concert?” he said.

“Yes, I must get home so I can rehearse my dance routine.”

The dog tilted his head sideways, looked at Kayleigh for a moment and said, “I have no idea what you're talking about, child, but I think we both want to see this unfortunate business resolved quickly, so let us continue our journey.”

Just then, over to the east, out of sight, a horse whinnied. Fash raised his head, pricked his ears and sniffed the air. “Let's be off,” he said.

They packed up their food, Kayleigh climbed on Fash's back, and they resumed their southward trek at a brisk pace. A mile past Niarbyl Bay, the headland became much steeper and Fash began climbing to higher ground.

"You see that great hill in front of us, Preemie – that is Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa. Let us hope your fairy friends are there to meet us."

Soon the path was so steep that Fash was panting heavily. Kayleigh climbed down and began to walk along beside him. As they were passing below Eary Cushlin, they heard the sound of a horse galloping along the hillside above them. Turning their heads, Kayleigh and Fash could just make out a dark shape moving quickly past them in the same direction in which they were travelling. When it reached a height of land, the shape of the horse was silhouetted against the lighter sky. It reared up on its hind legs and then seemed to melt into the landscape. The two travellers hurried on to the rendezvous point.

They had just reached the base of the mountain after crossing Glion Mooar when two things happened at once: fifty yards ahead of them several fairies jumped out from behind a gorse bush and began waving and shouting at them; and much nearer and directly above them on the hillside, a group of dark shapes rose up out of the grass and started running down towards them. Fash looked up the hill at the rapidly approaching tall figures.

"Glashtyn!" he exclaimed. "Quick, Preemie, run downhill and try to make your way across to the fairies."

Kayleigh was too startled to speak or to move. She froze in her tracks. Coming down upon them were what at first looked like four large men. However, their legs seemed to bend the wrong way at the knee and they had long pointed ears and flattened noses with enormous nostrils. Fash took a few steps up the hill to place himself between Kayleigh and the approaching Glashtyn. Their leader threw something at the dog which Fash was only just able to dodge. Before he could recover, two of the Glashtyn were upon him. They swung clubs, striking him on the back and side. Kayleigh heard him whimper in pain. She started up the hill toward her friend, but after only a few steps the leader of the Glashtyn had passed Fash and was coming directly at her. He was very

large—Kayleigh was terrified—and he was charging downhill at a furious pace. Behind him, she caught a brief glimpse of the other three swinging their clubs at poor Fash, but there was no time to do anything: the nearer Glashtyn was reaching for her. Without thinking, Kayleigh ducked and dropped to the ground. The creature was moving so quickly downhill that, as he reached for her sprawling beneath him, he lost his balance and tumbled over her further down the slope. She jumped up and tried to make her way up to where Fash, though fighting back bravely and snapping at his assailants, was being pummelled by the club-wielding Glashtyn.

By now, the fairies, who had started running towards them as soon as the Glashtyn had shown themselves, were getting nearer. Five of them carried bows and arrows and they fired at the attackers, while another five charged at them swinging their short swords.

Kayleigh had almost reached Fash and was about to hit out at one of the Glashtyn with her fists when she was knocked to the ground by a blow that had been aimed at the dog, but which had missed its mark. She went down on her knees, winded, but not badly hurt. The fairies were now worrying the attackers with their blades and several of their arrows had struck home. Fash, quite exhausted, moved over by Kayleigh and let the fairies take over the fight.

“Are you hurt, Premie?” he asked, breathing hard.

“I don't think so. I had the wind knocked out . . .”—but she was interrupted by the first Glashtyn who had recovered from his tumble down the slope and was now reaching for her.

Fash turned and caught the assailant's arm in his jaws, yanking it away from Kayleigh. With his free hand, the Glashtyn picked up a fallen club and swung at the dog, striking a cruel blow to his ribs. Fash yelped and fell to the ground. By then Kayleigh had grabbed their attacker's arm and was kicking out with her feet. Two of the fairies ran to her aid and began swinging at the Glashtyn's legs with their swords. The big creature whinnied in pain, turned and began to retreat up the hill after his fellows. Kayleigh went immediately to Fash, who was lying on his side in a patch of heather. The fairy bowmen

continued to fire volleys of arrows at the retreating Glashtyn—with many striking their targets—until they were out of range.

“Fash! Oh, poor Fash,” cried Kayleigh, “are you all right?”

“Not entirely, Preemie, but I do not believe it is my time to leave you just yet. Thanks to the timely appearance of our friends here, I think I will recover.”

Kayleigh had been so concerned about the Moddey Doo that she hadn't yet paid much attention to their fairy rescuers. The two who had come to her aid now stood beside them.

“We were glad to be of help,” said the first.

“We are honoured to meet with you again, Preemie Kayleigh,” said the second.

Both fairies removed their caps and bowed deeply.

“Alec! Nick!” Kayleigh exclaimed, jumping to her feet. “Oh, I'm so happy to see you both! Thank you, thank you all for helping us.”

“It was our very great pleasure to be of assistance to you both,” said Nick, with a smile.

Fortunately, none of the fairies had been injured and Alec dispatched the eight others to climb up the hill to ensure the Glashtyn were well away, then he and Nick turned their attention to Fash.

“Caillagh-ny-Faashagh, it is an honour to see you again,” said Nick, in a tone of great respect. “Are you badly injured?”

“Bruises, mainly, but I think I have some broken ribs,” answered the dog—obviously in pain.

“And you have a nasty gash on your head,” added Kayleigh. She took a water bottle out of the knapsack and, wetting her handkerchief, she dabbed her friend's head wound.

“Thank you, Preemie, you are most kind.”

As she continued to attend to her injured friend, Kayleigh asked, “Can someone please explain to me what just happened here?”

“Ah, well, Preemie Kayleigh, that is rather a long story,” said Nick.

“Why did I know, that would be the answer,” she replied, a little testily. “Why is everything I want to know, always a long story? I'm caught up in something—again—which I don't understand. I deserve to know.”

“You are quite right, Preemie Kayleigh, you must know it all,” said Nick. “I do apologize. It was never my intent not to tell you everything, I just felt that now might not be the best time or place.”

Four of the fairies came back down the hill and confirmed that the Glashtyn were long gone. Alec turned to Kayleigh and Fash and said, “Our camp at Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa is not too far. We can talk there and get some proper medical help. Do you think you can walk or should I send for a cart to carry you?”

“I may be old,” said Fash, struggling to his feet (with only a few yelps), “but I'm not ready to be led around the countryside on a pony cart quite yet. If we walk slowly, I think I can manage.”

Alec laughed. “Still as stubborn as ever, I see, my old friend.”

Kayleigh tied her kerchief around Fash's head to protect his wound and, gathering up their gear, the little group set off southward across and up the hillside. Nick, who was walking behind Kayleigh and who feared he may have offended his young friend with his earlier remarks, said cheerfully, “Why, Preemie Kayleigh, I do believe you must be a full inch taller than you were the last time I saw you.”

Kayleigh turned her head and said with a saucy smirk, “Why Nick, I was just thinking that you looked to be about an inch shorter than I remembered.”

They all laughed and even the limping Fash let out a low chough of amusement.

“Are we friends again, Preemie?” asked Nick.

“Of course we are—we could never be anything else. How have you been Nick? I heard you had recovered from your run-in with Tehi Tegi on Snaefell.”

“Yes, I'm quite recovered, thank you for asking. But, I believe you have had more excitement, thanks to the pixies, since I saw you last.”

“Well, I'm not sure excitement is the word, but it was quite an adventure—oh, that reminds me, how is Ned? How is his arm? He was treated very cruelly by those horrible kobold creatures when we were in Port Soderick.”

“Ned is well and fully recovered. Indeed, thanks largely to you, Preemie Kayleigh, he has been sent off the island.”

“What!” Kayleigh stopped and turned around. “He's been sent away. Because of me?”

Alec came up beside them and said, “Before my brother gets himself in your bad books again, Preemie, you should know that Ned has been honoured by our King and asked go on a special mission across the water.”

“Oh! That's different,” said Kayleigh, resuming the march. “But why because of me?”

“After he returned to the court following your meeting with the pixies at Spanish Head,” Nick continued, “there was quite a long and heated debate about whether Ned should have released the captive pixies. Many at the court thought they should have been brought before the King and punished for all the trouble and injury they had caused. Ned had a hard time at first convincing the court that your friend Opal and her father were different from the pixies who had invaded Laxey and Foxdale. But eventually, and with the support of Alec here, the King decided that there might be hope for peace with the pixies. After further consideration, it was agreed that Ned would lead a small delegation across to Cornwall to meet with the pixie King.”

“That's wonderful!” said Kayleigh. “I'm very happy to hear that. I wish I could have sent a message with Ned to give to Opal. No more trouble with pixies!—that would be nice!”

“Before you sign a peace agreement in your imagination,” Alec interrupted her reverie, “you should know that peace is still highly unlikely and, in the meantime, we still have some very determined pixies here who want to cause us all trouble.”

“Oh, right,” said Kayleigh, feeling her optimism suddenly deflate. “I'd almost forgotten. And those pixies are still working with the witch.”

They were now approaching the summit of Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa. As they climbed round and up the north flank of the hill, the wind blowing in off the sea picked up in strength. Cold gusts buffeted them as they made their way to the fairy encampment, which was located next to a rocky outcrop just below the summit on the eastern slope of the mountain, out of the wind. While they were working their way

around from the northern exposed part of the Cronk, Kayleigh caught a glimpse of another mountain, higher still, to the northeast. As she looked, a shiver ran through her and she stopped. A feeling of dread came over her and she was suddenly afraid. Fash, who walked beside her, noticed her reaction.

“You can feel it, can't you?” he observed.

“I can feel something, yes,” she responded in a low voice. “What is that mountain over there?”

“That is South Barrule. Probably the most magic-haunted place on Mann. It has a long history—so much has happened there over the millennia,” he said in a sad tone, “so much.”



Figure 14: *View from Summit of Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa*

He, too, stopped and gazed across at the mountain. It was a cold, clear night, without a moon. A few thin clouds were moving fast, blown by the strong winds. Some snagged on the mountain's rounded summit and tore apart. Between the gaps in the cloud tatters, Kayleigh thought she could see fires flickering near the mountain top. She shivered again.

“Barrule,” she said. “I’ve heard of it. I hope I never have to get any nearer to it than this. Let’s go, Fash, I’m cold and tired and that mountain gives me the creeps.”

“And so it should, young Preemie, so it should.”

Kayleigh saw that a group of about twenty fairies—including the ten who had met them—were camped out at Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa. Nick led Fash over to the edge of the camp, where one of the fairies had a cot and a small infirmary set up. Alec brought Kayleigh over to the fire and introduced her to the other fairies. They each bowed very respectfully as they were introduced. They offered Kayleigh some food—which she declined—and she sat by the fire. She untied the cloak she had worn since leaving Fash’s mound and unzipped her purple jacket.

“Still dressing like the Purple Demon, I see, Preemie,” observed Alec.

“Yes, I’m afraid so. My Mum asked the other day, if I wasn’t getting tired of it, but I told her ‘no’, that purple is still my favourite colour.”

“So it would seem, so it would seem. And how is your young brother?”

“He’s very well, thank you—except that he got quite a scare earlier to—” (she was about to say ‘today’, but remembered that she wasn’t sure how long she’d been away with Fash). “That is, we both had quite a scare recently.”

“Oh, dear,” said Alec. “Please tell us what happened.”

And Kayleigh related the events that had occurred at Peel Castle and how Fash had saved them from the four men. “I wish that evil witch would just leave me alone,” she ended with a sigh.

At the mention of Tehi Tegi, all the fairies exchanged silent looks among themselves.

“What’s the matter? What did I say?” Kayleigh asked.

“Well,” began Alec, “you’re not the only one who has been troubled by the unwelcome attentions of Tehi Tegi.”

“Tell me what’s happened,” Kayleigh said with urgency. “Is that the long story Nick mentioned earlier?”

“Yes, I’m afraid so,” sighed Alec, “we were preparing for the upcoming midwinter celebrations—they were to be held in Silverdale Glen this year—and our King

and the whole court, including Finvarra, the King's youngest son, had just arrived. It was right after Ned and his party left for Cornwall, and everyone was feeling optimistic and looking forward to the festivities to come.”

Alec leaned forward and poked the fire. He seemed deep in thought.

“So, what happened?” Kayleigh asked impatiently.

“What happened,” said Nick, picking up the story from his brother, “can be explained in two words: Tehi Tegi—that's what happened.”

“What did she do?”

“My brother and I feel some shame in this matter, although we erred through inaction only. Finvarra, the King's son, and some of his friends, had obtained some horses—one of them, a quite magnificent Irish mare—and they wanted to ride them up along the Silverburn River to get some air and exercise. They informed Alec and me, and we insisted that a couple of older fairies accompany them for safety's sake. I went to get two of our more able folk and the prince and his friends promised they'd wait for them at the edge of the camp. But they didn't wait. The young fools rode out immediately—and at a fast pace—as we soon discovered. When the two who were to accompany the young ones reported that they couldn't find them in camp, we guessed what they'd done. Alec and I quickly assembled a small group and we rode out after them. We tracked them up the Glen and saw that they had followed a branch of the stream that had its headwaters in the Cringle tree plantation. Not much farther along, though, just to the west of Ballarobin, we lost their trail—and, unable to see any sign of the riders, we became quite concerned. We split up: I took two of our folk with me and Alec took the rest.”

“And what happened? What did you find?” Kayleigh had been following the story with great interest.

“My group,” continued Alec, “follow the stream uphill westward. Near a stand of scrubby trees, just below the plantation, we found them. Finvarra's two companions were lying on the ground. I was sure they must be dead, but was greatly—if only momentarily—relieved to find them alive, but paralyzed.”

“Paralyzed!” exclaimed Kayleigh, “I think I know what that means.” She glanced over at Nick who told her with a nod of his head that she was right.

“Yes,” continued Alec, “Tehi Tegi had been waiting for them—whether she knew they were coming somehow or whether it was accidental, we don't know. In any case, the only person not accounted for was the King's son. She had taken him.”

“Oh, dear. That can't be good. Do you know what she wants with him?”

“Yes, she wasn't long in making her demands.”

“Demands!” said Kayleigh. “What demands?”

“Before I continue, I think I'd like Caillagh-ny-Faashagh to hear this part of the story. We need his advice on how to proceed. Let me go and see how he's feeling.”

“Oh, poor Fash. I feel terrible. I was so wrapped up in your story that I forgot him for the moment. Let me come with you.”

So Kayleigh and Alec walked over to where Fash was being tended. She saw an old man with a bandage around his head. Underneath his long crimson coat, instead of his blue doublet, which lay on the cot, he was wrapped around the ribs with more bandages. He had just gotten to his feet with the aid of a wooden walking stick when they reached him.

“Fash, how are you feeling?” asked Kayleigh with concern.

“Oh, pretty well—all things considered, but it will take some time before I am back to my old self,” the old man said with a smile.

Kayleigh was just able to restrain herself from asking which old self he meant. She helped him to hobble over to the fire; and to get down, with difficulty, onto a seat. Nick and Alec quickly filled-in the first part of their story for Fash.

“Well, that explains the part of the message we received at Knockaloe about someone being taken,” Fash said with a frown.

“What you have not heard, old friend,” said Alec, “is the demands we have just received. She wants two things from our King and if he refuses either, the witch says he will never see his son again.”

“That's awful!” said Kayleigh disgustedly. “She is a very evil creature.”

“To be sure, she is that,” added Fash. “But before we judge just how evil, might we not hear her demands.”

“This is where we need your counsel, Caillagh-ny-Faashagh,” said Nick, who seemed to Kayleigh to be on much less informal terms with Fash than his brother was.

“Indeed. And you shall have my counsel, and my assistance for what it may be worth. What is it the ‘sweet lady’ requires from your King?”

“The sweet lady, as you call her, wants Olaf's Cup, which she believes to be in our King's keeping.”

At the words, ‘Olaf’s Cup’, Kayleigh saw Fash start upright. His already pale features seem to turn an ashen grey.

“Olaf’s Cup,” he muttered. “Now I understand why your King wants my counsel. I thought it odd at first, but no longer. But tell me, what is her second demand of the Fairy King?”

Here, all of fairies fell silent. Kayleigh thought they looked very uncomfortable—embarrassed even. She saw Nick and Alec exchange glances.

“Come, come,” said the old man, “out with it, my lads. What is it she wants?”

Alec nodded to his brother. After clearing his throat, Nick said, almost in a whisper, “She wants Preemie Kayleigh.”

Kayleigh jumped to her feet. Looking down on Nick, who, even by the dim light of the fire, could be seen to be blushing, she shouted, “You've got to be kidding.” Then she turned to Alec and placing her hands on her hips added, “You *are* joking, aren't you?”

Alec stood up, and somehow did not turn to stone under Kayleigh's basilisk stare. “I'm afraid it's true, Preemie. This is what she wants in return for the safe return of the King's son.”

For once, Kayleigh was speechless; she folded her arms and looked up into the sky. Her left foot was tapping up and down rapidly. Everyone could tell how very agitated she was.

“Preemie Kayleigh,” said Alec, “you must know that no one—not even our King himself—has any intention of turning you over to Tehi Tegi. I hope you believe me when I say we would never, ever do such a thing.”

“Humph!” was all the reply he received.

Fash had not reacted to Kayleigh's distress and was evidently deep in thought. After a moment he asked, “Are you absolutely certain that she asked for this particular preemie and not just ‘a’ preemie?”

“Oh, yes,” replied Alec, “she was most specific.”

“How very interesting!” the old man said, almost to himself.

Kayleigh could remain silent no longer. “Interesting! I'm so glad you find it so very *interesting*. Well, I don't find it *interesting*, one little bit. It's a real pain in the you-know-what.”

“Preemie Kayleigh!” interrupted Nick, “please control yourself and show more respect to Caillagh-ny-Faashagh. I must say I am quite shocked.”

Kayleigh was about to turn her anger on Nick, when Fash stood up.

“Now, now. Preemie Kayleigh has every right to feel angry. She has been dragged into events about which, at her age, she should be blissfully unaware. I take no offence at her words—in fact, I am amazed at her composure. She has not thrown anything or struck anyone or uttered any rude curses. I commend you, young Preemie, for your self control.”

There was clearly much wisdom in the old man, for Kayleigh couldn't help but laugh at his words. “Oh, I'm sorry,” she said. “Nick; Alec; Fash—all of you—I'm very sorry. I shouldn't take this out on my friends. It's just that it makes me so mad. And I don't even know why she is so interested in me. Can someone tell me?”

Fash placed a hand on her shoulder and said with a wink, “Maybe it has something to do with that glow your pixie friend mentioned.”

Kayleigh, lost in her thoughts, stayed by the fire with some of the fairies, while Fash, Alec, Nick and two of the others stood together a little apart and conversed in urgent whispers. She looked up from time to time to watch her friends as they walked a circuit around the campfire.

“I wonder what they're talking about?” she asked herself. But although she was curious, she finally decided that all she really wanted was to go home. She suddenly felt

very lonely; she missed her family and her school friends; and she was particularly anxious about missing her Christmas concert. She had just about made up her mind to ask Nick or Alec to take her home, when the two fairies and Fash returned to her side by the fire.

“Premie,” said Alec, “as these events involve you, we would like to ask you something. Will you join our council?”

“Oh, I suppose,” she replied with a heavy sigh.

Fash, who was obviously in pain, needed to lie down; so they walked over to the make-shift infirmary, and he lay on the cot, while the others gathered around him. “First of all, Premie Kayleigh,” began Fash, “we have agreed that everything must be done to prevent Tehi Tegi from ever obtaining Olaf’s Cup. It is a far too powerful artefact. Secondly, we all agree that you will not be surrendered as part of any arrangement. However, and as you well know, unless we stop her once and for all, she will continue to pursue you.”

Kayleigh looked from one sombre face to the next. An expression her granny sometimes used popped into her head: ‘waiting for the other shoe to drop’. “And so?” she asked. “What are you going to do?”

“Well,” said Nick, “we must understand the situation better. We need to know more about Tehi Tegi’s plans. And we have to make sure that the king’s son is still alive.”

“Uh, huh,” Kayleigh nodded, determined not to appear very interested.

“Premie,” continued Fash, “I think you and I ought to meet with her.”

“What! Are you crazy? I don’t want to get anywhere near that horrid witch.”

“I understand your concern,” the old man replied. “It would be a parlay. Nothing more. We just want to hear what she has to say, so we can better understand what we are up against.”

“How do you know, you can trust her?” asked Kayleigh.

“I doubt she really believes that the Fairy King has Olaf’s Cup. She must assume that I have it—though I do not. I don’t think she’ll harm either of us until she knows for sure where it is. Will you come with me?”

“If you think it's important,” Kayleigh replied. “And only if you promise I won't have to stay with her.”

“I do. And I will,” Fash said in a solemn voice.

Once they had all agreed to the idea of a parlay, things began to happen quickly. Nick and two of the other fairies were instructed to leave immediately for the Round Table crossroads, just down the hill – the place, at the foot of South Barrule, where they had been told to bring their response to Tehi Tegi's demands. Kayleigh sat by the fire and watched Fash and Alec huddled together in animated discussion. At one point, she overheard Alec exclaim:

“A Lhiannan Shee!”

Finally, Alec stood up, bowed to Fash and, seeing Kayleigh watching him, he came over to her, where she stood with her back to the fire. The fairy looked up at her. “I must leave you for a while, Premie. Fash has entrusted me with an important task. But I shall return as soon as I can.”

Before Kayleigh could say a word, he bowed deeply and hurried off. She turned from watching him jump on his pony, tethered to a heather bush nearby, to see Fash beckoning her over to him.

“Will you join me in some refreshment? I was about to brew myself a herbal restorative. You look like you could use one too.”

“I suppose—but will you explain things to me. I hate not knowing what's going on.”

“Yes, of course,” the old man replied. He opened the little package he had carried around his neck since they'd left Knockaloe. From it, he took bits of three dried plants and a little vial of powder and mixed them together in a small pot of hot water that had been heating in the coals of the fire, and which Kayleigh brought over to him.

“Let's just let that steep for a few minutes. Now, Premie, you probably want to know about Olaf's Cup and why Tehi Tegi wants it.”

“Yes, I would—though I suppose it's another ‘long story’.”

“Oh, yes,” the old man said with a chuckle, “most certainly it is. But, I will only tell you the necessary parts. It is a very powerful magic object – I don't think even Tehi Tegi knows how powerful. It has a long history, but I'll begin 1100 of your years ago. One of its many names is Olaf's Cup, because it was buried with Olaf, the uncle of the Viking King Magnus. Magnus was the first Viking to rule over Mann. Hearing of the cup's many magical properties, Magnus did a wicked thing: he opened his uncle's grave and took out the cup. This all happened in Norway. When Magnus came to the Isle of Man, the cup was one of the many things he brought with him. Perhaps, because of your interest in pixies, I will add that a number of others travelled over here with the Vikings: pixies; a few trolls; some kobolds, and even a witch.”

“Was the witch Tehi Tegi?” she asked.

“Oh, no,” he said with a smile, as he poured the herbal brew into two cups and handed one to Kayleigh. “That was long before her time.”

“So, is that how the fight between the fairies and the pixies began?” she asked.

“It was how it began with the Manx fairies. No pixies had ever set foot on this island before that.”

“You said trolls came over, too. Are trolls real, then?”

“Oh, yes—at least they were. I haven't heard of any around these parts for a long time. They got into a long-running disagreement with the Giants; which the Giants eventually won.”

“Giants!” exclaimed Kayleigh. “Are you joking with me?”

“I would never do that, young Preemie. I think too highly of you.”

He sipped his herbal restorative and motioned for Kayleigh to do the same. She found it was sweet and smelled of flowers. The taste of it cheered her up.

“But, surely, Preemie,” Fash continued, “you can't tell me you don't know about the Manx Giants. If that is so, then I despair of your education. It seems you learn trivial things like dancing, but not the important history of your country.”

Kayleigh was about to take him to task on the subject of dancing, but she didn't want to lose the thread of the story. “Can you go back to telling me about the cup,” she asked.

“Yes—it's better not to get me started on the deficiencies of the modern world. Well, where were we? Oh, yes. The cup has many magical properties; it can heal the sick—even restore youth in some cases. It is also called ‘the Cup of Peace’ because if two enemies drink from it, they are bound to be reconciled. This property of the cup has made it famous. In fact, one of the first uses to which it was put when King Magnus arrived was to seal a peace between the people of the north part of the island and those from the south.”

“I think I've heard about that in history class. There was once a great battle between the two at . . . at some place near Peel,” she said, trying unsuccessfully to remember the location of the battle.

“I see you do know some history—that is good. Olaf's Cup has other, darker powers, though. It was in my care for a while and I tried to understand it. All I could do was to confirm that it concentrates life energy in certain ways—hence, its healing and youth-granting abilities.”

“Why do you think Tehi Tegi wants it?” Kayleigh asked.

“For two reasons, I believe. The first is vanity. If I am correct, she has been able to return to her physical self, but not with her former beautiful young appearance. She hopes the cup can restore her youth. Second, she knew that the cup was powerful—perhaps she has been able to learn more about its workings than I could. I think she plans to use its power in her own evil designs.”

Just then, they heard the lookouts call out to someone approaching the camp. It turned out to be Nick returning from his meeting with Tehi Tegi's envoy. He came directly over to where Fash and Kayleigh were sitting.

“What news?” Fash called out.

“She has agreed to a meeting. You and I, and Premie Kayleigh are to go immediately to the Devil's Den. She will wait for us there.”

“The Devil's Den? What's that?” asked Kayleigh nervously.

“Interesting; very interesting,” mused Fash—ignoring Kayleigh's question. “Well, I suppose we had better get started.”

Nick turned to Kayleigh and whispered, “I'll explain while we are travelling.”



Figure 15: *South Barrule Mountain*

Kayleigh, Fash, Nick and six fairies crossed the saddle of land that separated Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa from South Barrule. They passed the Round Table crossroads and soon reached the foot of Barrule. In the southeast, a three-quarter moon, pale as death, peeked over a hill at them. Kayleigh turned and looked up with dread and shivered once again at the sight of the wind-blown summit above her. As they walked, Nick explained to Kayleigh that the Devil's Den was a deep hole in the earth near the foot of the mountain. In the past, magicians and wizards had used it as a prison and even today strange noises could be heard rising out of its unexplored depths.

"We never go near it," said Nick. "It is a frightening place. Some say that monsters and demons still lurk down there."

"Great! This just keeps getting better and better," said Kayleigh, sarcastically.

"You find it enjoyable, Preemie?" Nick asked.

"Not at all," was her sombre reply.

After they had hiked along the base of the mountain for a while, and were approaching their destination, Nick instructed the six fairies who had accompanied them

to remain there, while the others went on to the meeting place. Nick took a burning torch from one of the fairies and went ahead to light the way. A low ridge separated them from the pit opening. Looking up, they could see someone standing on the ridge, backlit by the moonlight. All they could make out was a short figure whose back was turned to them, wrapped in a great cloak, which moved as the wind gusted. At the sound of their approach, which they made no effort to hide, the figure on the ridge seemed to straighten and stretch, and—so Kayleigh would have sworn—grow taller. When they were within twenty paces of the top, the hooded figure turned to face them.

Kayleigh, who walked close behind Fash, could now see it was a tall woman. They climbed up to her on the crest of the ridge.

“Ah, Master Fash, so good to see you again. I had thought you were dead.” The woman’s voice was deep and musical.

“No, I’m sorry to disappoint you, but I’m not dead yet.”

“And I see you have the Premie with you. So nice to see *you* again, too, my child. I wanted to thank you for all the help you gave me, when last we met.”

Kayleigh had already correctly guessed that this was Tehi Tegi in her human form. She couldn’t see her face—it was hidden in the shadows of the cloak’s hood—but there was no mistaking that voice.

“We’re not here for small talk,” Fash said before Kayleigh could speak. “Before we consider your demands, we want to ensure that the Fairy King’s son is alive and well.”

“Really. I was quite sure you arranged this meeting just so you could see me again, after all these years.”

As she spoke, she threw back the hood of her cloak and took a step towards them. Kayleigh gasped. In the light of Nick’s torch, she realized that she knew this face. For a moment, she didn’t know where from, but the bright blue eyes were a dead give-away. It was the same girl as in the picture that hung in Fash’s home at Knockaloe—the same, but different. The face and eyes were identical, but instead of black hair, Tehi Tegi’s was silvery white. Before Kayleigh could say anything, Fash started to laugh his deep-throated chuckle.

“Still as vain as ever, I see,” he said. “It must be a terrible drain on your frail powers to keep up this illusion of youthful appearance. I hope you are not doing so for my sake, for I, more than anyone, know what you really are.”

“Let’s get to business,” the witch snapped angrily. “You know what I want, and if your mind hasn’t grown too feeble, you can guess why I want it. You asked for proof of my captive’s safety—well you shall have it. Look there.”

She pointed over the edge of the ridge down into the crater-like hollow below: the entrance to the Devil’s Den. Fash, Nick and Kayleigh stepped closer to the edge and looked down. At the bottom of the slope, they could now see the black hole in the earth that was the entrance to the pit. At the brink of the hole they saw, sitting on a rock, a fairy with an iron collar around his neck. A chain from the collar extended into the shadows beneath the far wall, just above the pit opening. At the sight of the fairy, Nick immediately called out to him in what Kayleigh had come to recognize as the fairy language. The captive looked up, waved and shouted a reply.

“It is Finvarra, the King’s son,” Nick confirmed. “He says he is unhurt.”

“Now, Fash,” said the witch, “you have your confirmation. Bring me Olaf’s Cup. The Preemie can stay with me until you return.”

Kayleigh hadn’t spoken until now, but she couldn’t stay quiet at hearing this remark: “No way! I’m not staying here. Uh, uh, no way.”

Fash interrupted her: “The terms of our parlay were that all parties would be free to leave. Preemie Kayleigh will be coming with us. We will return if and when I find the cup.”

“*If* you find it. Don’t play me for a fool, Fash.” She turned toward her captive and placing her fingers to her lips, she let out a loud whistle. Down below, the chain holding the prisoner moved and a dark shape came out of the shadows.

“A Buggane!” cried Nick.

“Yes. *My* Buggane. He has been very patient in not tearing your friend down there to pieces. I don’t know how much longer I can restrain him.”

Kayleigh remembered her previous encounters with the Buggane and how he could break rocks apart with his huge clawed hands. She remembered his fangs and his

fiery eyes—she had had nightmares about him. She turned away and could not continue to look at the monster.

“You have until the moon sets,” Tehi Tegi said to Fash. “If you don't deliver the cup and the Preemie by then, don't bother returning.”

With that, she turned and walked away along the ridge, and turning uphill, she began to ascend the flank of South Barrule. Nick seemed about to climb down to the captive, when Fash grabbed him.

“Not yet, my friend. Now is not the time. Let us go.”

“But ...”

“Now is not the time,” Fash repeated, then he turned and started back to where they had left the other fairies.

After walking part way back to the camp in silence, Kayleigh caught up to Fash and said, “Tehi Tegi was the girl in the painting, wasn't she? She used to be your apprentice.”

“That is correct—but, that was long ago.”

“But she looks the same, except for the colour of her hair. She doesn't seem to have changed much.”

“Oh, she is very different,” said Fash in a cold voice. “Nothing of the girl in the painting survives. Even her appearance is an illusion. Did you not see how she seemed to grow taller, as we approached? She was using one of the enchantments I taught her to make herself look young and beautiful. She is not. I want you to promise me, young Preemie, that you will never be taken in by any of her deceptions.”

“I promise,” said Kayleigh, “I could never trust her after all the cruel things she has done.”

By the time they got back to camp, both Kayleigh and Fash were tired and he was obviously in pain from his bandaged ribs. Nick quickly excused himself and, mounting a fresh pony, set off to tell the fairy court that the King's son was alive and unhurt, and to explain the witch's demands.

Fash drank some more of his herbal remedy—now cold—and turned to Kayleigh. “We can do nothing until your friend Alec returns, Preemie. I think I will lie down and rest, and I advise you to do the same.”

She was feeling cold so she walked to the fire to warm herself. The moon had climbed higher, and in its reflected light she saw that the summit of South Barrule was white with frost or snow. She pulled her grey cape around her shoulders and lay down by the fire to think. Staring up at the stars, she felt a million miles away from her other life. It was as though Evan and her Mum and Dad and her friends were all a dream, that they never really existed except in her imagination. She felt alone and out of place and tears welled up in her eyes.

A gentle shake on her shoulder awakened her, and she heard Alec’s voice saying, “Wake up, Preemie Kayleigh, wake up.”

She started and sat upright. “What’s the matter? How long have I been asleep?”

“Don’t be alarmed, Preemie. There is no danger. You were asleep when I returned and I didn’t want to wake you—you seemed so peaceful.”

“But, where did you go, Alec? What was it Fash asked you to do?”

“Well,” he began, “despite the evil circumstance that prompted it, I have had a most wonderful experience. I have been to meet a Lhiannan Shee—I had not thought any remained on Mann.”

“What is a Lhiannan Shee—another monster?”

“No, not at all. A Lhiannan Shee is what you would call a fairy. Not like us—but similar. You see, there are several branches or families of fairy-folk. I suppose at one time we were all the same, long ago, but over time, we split into different . . . races, you might say. Some good; and some not-so-good.”

“But why did Fash ask you to find one of these other fairies?”

“He asked me to find one in particular—the Lhiannan Shee who had been entrusted to guard the Cup of Peace.”

“So Fash really doesn’t have it then?”

“No. From what I can now piece together,” continued Alec, “the fairies—that is *my* fairies—at one time held the cup. Something happened—I’m not sure what, but it was stolen²⁴. Eventually, Fash recovered it and guarded it for a while himself. When he began to realize its true power, he refused to give it back to my people and instead he gave it to one of the Lhiannan Shee that he knew he could trust. She has guarded it these many years.”

“And you met with her and got the cup?” Kayleigh asked, intrigued by the story.

“Yes, I met with her. It was one of the most memorable events of my life,” he replied, dreamily. “She is very beautiful. So serene. So ... So ... wondrous.”

Alec heaved a great sigh and Kayleigh smiled at her friend. “If I thought it were possible, I’d say you were smitten with her, Alec.”

“What?” he replied, coming back to his senses. “Oh, no. Certainly not, Preemie. But it was very special to meet her.”

“Special, huh. I see. That’s good,” Kayleigh said with a smile. “But you remembered to bring the cup, I hope.”

“I don’t have it—no, that wasn’t the plan. I was to alert the Lhiannan Shee that Caillagh-ny-Faashagh had need of it and to ask her to bring it to him. She won’t surrender it to anyone but Fash.”

Before Alec had awakened Kayleigh, he had reported back to Fash, who had been resting on the infirmary cot. They had decided to confront Tehi Tegi as soon as Olaf’s Cup arrived, for Alec became very worried when he heard that an unpredictable Buggane was guarding the King’s son and he wanted to secure his release as soon as possible. As Alec spoke to Kayleigh, all around them the fairy camp was mobilizing; they were packing up their gear and preparing to march.

Kayleigh walked over to where Fash was sitting. He seemed deep in thought. She decided not to disturb him and was turning back toward the fire, when he looked up and saw her.

²⁴ Sophia Morrison’s tale of *The Fairy Cup* tells how this happened – although the ending is obviously in error.

“Premie Kayleigh,” he said with a smile, “come here, come here. I’d like your company.”

“Are you sure I’m not disturbing you?”

“Not at all, not at all. In fact, it is you I am thinking about.”

“Me?” Kayleigh said, a little nervously.

“Yes. I’ve been trying to devise a course of action that will keep you and the fairy prince safe, but which will prevent Tehi Tegi from obtaining Olaf’s Cup.”

“And what have you decided?”

“I haven’t. I don’t see a solution,” he replied with a sigh.

“That’s not good news. Is there anything I can do to help? I don’t want to go with that dreadful witch—in fact, I wish I was back home right now—but if that would stop others from getting hurt, maybe I should go with her. It might be easier for the fairies to rescue me later, once the king’s son is safe.”

“You are very brave for such a youngster,” Fash said as he reached out his arms and took Kayleigh’s hands in his. He was staring intently into her eyes and Kayleigh saw that Fash’s eyes—his old man’s eyes—were grey, like the sea on a cloudy day. He suddenly seemed to Kayleigh to be very old indeed, and very tired.

“What is it?” she asked at last. “What are you thinking?”

“I was remembering the feeling I got the first time I met you at Peel Castle. You have a great deal of potential—even Tehi Tegi sees it—and that gives me the hint of an idea. Tell me honestly, Premie,” he said with a gentle smile, “do you trust me?”

“Of course I do, Fash. You must know that by now.”

“Yes. I think I do. Will you believe me, then, if I tell you that I will do nothing that deliberately puts you in danger?”

“Y-Y-Yes,” Kayleigh replied. She was starting to get a worried feeling in her stomach.

“Do you remember when I placed the suggestion in your father’s mind to stop his opposition to your coming with me? You remember that aside from that he was perfectly normal?”

“Uh-huh.”

“Well, would you trust me to do something similar to you, to give you some protection from Tehi Tegi's powers? It won't hurt, and you'll feel completely yourself afterwards.”

“I guess so—if you think it's necessary and will help us to get this awful business over with.”

“I do,” answered the old man. “Now, continue to look into my eyes; try to clear your mind or to focus on one single image.”

Kayleigh stared into Fash's grey eyes and thought of the Christmas concert she might be missing. She tried to imagine herself going through her dance routine. As she mentally worked through her steps, she was vaguely aware that Fash was speaking in a low voice. She was almost at the end of her routine, when she felt Fash shaking her by the shoulders.

“Preemie. Come back. It's done.”

“Oh,” she was startled to find herself back in the fairy camp. “Did it work?”

“We won't know until later, but I think so. You have a strong mind, young Preemie.”

“I don't feel anything—which I guess is good. What do we do now?”

“Now we must be going. I have to get Olaf's Cup, and then we must meet again with our mutual 'friend'.”

“Will we meet the Lhiannan Shee? Alec told me about her. I'd love to see her.”

“Perhaps you will.”

With that, Fash stood up and he and Kayleigh went to join the rest of the fairies who were by now ready to go. Alec had already sent a messenger to arrange another meeting at the Devil's Den. He selected two stout fairy bowmen to accompany Kayleigh, Fash and him, and he dispatched the rest to the Round Table crossroads, where they were to wait for them.

“Where are we going, Alec?” asked Kayleigh.

“Not far. Fash asked the Lhiannan Shee to meet him in Glen Rushen—just north of here—at the foot of Dalby Mountain. She'll have the cup with her, but she'll only give it to Fash.”

The five of them mounted ponies, the largest of which had been assigned to Fash. He wanted to conserve as much energy as he could for the upcoming encounter with the witch, so he did not assume the form of the Moddey Doo. Kayleigh wished she had old Fury to ride on, but found that ‘Misty’ was a very gentle grey mare who was easy for her to ride. They set out, following a stream down from Cronk Fedjag into the trees that grew on either side of the upper glen. Numerous streamlets drained into Glen Rushen from the east—from South Barrule. After half an hour of gentle descent, they approached a natural pool, fed by a small waterfall. Here they dismounted and Fash went on ahead. Kayleigh and Alec followed, while the other two fairies watched the ponies.

Kayleigh heard Fash call out in a language that sounded to her like Manx. The air around the pool was damp and a cold breeze blew down the glen, making Kayleigh shiver. When she and Alec were about ten paces behind Fash, she saw the waterfall shimmer and glow as though a light had been turned on behind it. From out of the waterfall a shape emerged and waded into the pool. Both Kayleigh and Alec gasped simultaneously. Although indistinct, as though strangely out of focus, Kayleigh knew it was a tall woman. She had long fair hair that hung over her shoulders and halfway down her back, and she wore a silver coloured garment made of something like silk. In her hands, she carried a small object. The Lhiannan Shee waded to where Fash stood at the edge of the pool. He bowed to her and they exchanged a few words. She turned and looked in Kayleigh’s direction and seemed to nod at her. Then she bent over the object she carried, as if peering into it, before handing it to Fash. He bowed again and without a sound, she took one step backward and sank slowly beneath the waters of the pool.

“Wow!” Kayleigh whispered.

“Wow, indeed, Premie,” said a subdued Alec. “Have you ever seen anything so lovely?”

“I couldn't see her very clearly—she seemed out of focus—but I think she must have been very beautiful.”

“Oh, yes. Without doubt.”

Fash turned, and they could see that he held a carved crystal cup in his hands. It stood about ten inches tall. Its base, stem and bowl had been carved from a single piece of crystal. The sides were engraved with curling geometrical patterns and around the circular base was the figure of a snake or serpent about to bite its own tail.

“Olaf’s Cup,” said Fash.

“And the Cup of Peace,” added Alec.

“It’s also the cause of all the troubles we’ve been having with the witch,” Kayleigh couldn’t help adding.

“Perhaps so,” Fash smiled, “but that is not the cup’s fault.”

He brought the cup to Kayleigh and, to her surprise, he placed it into her hands. It was heavier than it looked. Inside the bowl were a few drops of water that Kayleigh assumed were from the waterfall.

“Come,” said Fash, “we must be going. But before we leave, would you dip your finger into the cup and rub the water on your eyes, Preemie.”

Kayleigh did as she was asked and immediately noted a change. The world around her seemed brighter, more distinct, less hazy. Alec and Fash appeared more solid, real and well-defined. “Goodness,” she said, “what was that?”

“Tears of the Lhiannan Shee—a rare gift. To help you see our world more clearly.” Fash took the cup back from Kayleigh, wrapped it in the folds of his coat and they all mounted their ponies and set off to join the other fairies at the crossroads.

To save time they climbed the steep eastern hillside of the glen and cut through the Glen Rushen Plantation, emerging from the trees just below the agreed meeting place. Once in the open Kayleigh saw the moon was well up in the sky. It seemed to have turned colder and she shivered and blew on her fingers, which were numb from gripping onto her pony. When they met the others, Kayleigh was pleased to see that Nick had rejoined them, bringing twenty fairy reinforcements with him. She and Alec filled him in on all that had happened since his departure. In return, Nick relayed that the Fairy Court was much relieved upon hearing that Prince Finvarra was alive, but gravely concerned

that he was chained to an unpredictable Buggane. Fash joined them to go over their plans. He knelt down and began:

“Tehi Tegi's conditions for the exchange are that Preemie Kayleigh and I bring Olaf's Cup to her. All fairies and all pixies are to stand off at least one hundred paces. When she gets the cup and the Preemie, she will release the fairy prince to me. At least that is what she claims. Naturally, I don't believe a word of it. Once she has what she wants, she will almost certainly try to exact her revenge on me, for what she considers are past wrongs.”

“So what will we do?” Kayleigh asked, nervously.

Fash opened his crimson coat and took out Olaf's Cup. He handed it to Kayleigh. “This mustn't leave your possession. She will try to take it—refuse her. There will come a point when Tehi Tegi demands it of you under some threat—either of your life, or mine, or the fairy prince's. At that moment, you must challenge her to take it.”

“What! That's crazy. How can I ever hope to stop a powerful witch from taking what she wants?” Kayleigh asked.

“Remember, young Preemie,” replied the old man, “Olaf's Cup is also known as the Cup of Peace. That is because much of its power requires the cooperative will of two people to activate it. If she strives to take it, you must strive against her. Also, don't forget I have placed a suggestion in your mind that will help you. We'll have to rely on your own natural ability to do the rest.”

Nick was getting agitated throughout this discussion, and finally he blurted out: “With every respect, Caillagh-ny-Faashagh, you cannot expect Preemie Kayleigh to match Tehi Tegi's power. She will be hurt or taken or worse.”

“No,” Fash responded, “I don't expect our young friend here to defeat this witch in a battle of wills. Remember our objectives: we must free the prince and protect both the cup and Preemie Kayleigh. I don't expect to defeat Tehi Tegi—that's for another day.”

“But I don't see how . . . ,” Nick began to respond.

“Look, my lad, we don't have much time. You are going to have to trust my judgement in this. Your job is to have all your people at the ready in case anything goes

wrong. We know she controls a Buggane, a band of pixies and a handful of Glashtyn. You must be prepared to defend against them.”

“Don't forget the Fynoderee,” interjected Kayleigh.

“Oh, yes—I'd forgotten about him. Thank you, Preemie.”

At this point, Alec, who had been kneeling silently beside his brother, stood up and said, “*We'll* do our part to watch your back, Fash. I know *you'll* do everything in your power to protect Preemie Kayleigh and Prince Finvarra. Let us go and see what awaits us.”

Nick was about to speak, when his brother signalled him not to. They assembled themselves into a troop, with fairy scouts in the lead and bringing up the rear. Kayleigh, carrying the cup, and Fash were in the middle of the group on their ponies. As they approached the lower slopes of South Barrule, Kayleigh again felt the oppressive presence of the mountain. She felt sick in her stomach with worry.

“This can't end well,” she said to herself. “Something bad is bound to happen.”

She tilted her head upward and saw the pale moon, staring down intently at her. She had never felt so far from home, or missed her family so much.

They made their way around the base of the mountain until they were within view of the Devil's Den. As before, the lone figure of the witch, now with a long wooden staff in one hand, stood on the ridge above the opening to the pit. This time, however, further back and higher up the hillside Kayleigh could clearly see a band of pixies—about fifty in number. Standing in their midst, very still, was the unmistakable tall shaggy shape of a Fynoderee.

“Poor Finn,” Kayleigh said to Nick, as he helped her down from the pony, “I wonder if he knows it's me. I'm sure he'd come over to say hello if he did.”

“I suspect, Preemie Kayleigh, that he is under some enchantment. It is unusual for a Fynoderee to be so still.”

Kayleigh came around to where Fash was talking to Alec.

“Well, young Preemie, are you ready?”

“No,” she replied, “I’m cold; I’m scared; and I am, for sure, not ready.”

“If it is any comfort to you, child, neither am I. But it must be done—so let us get it over with.”

With that, he took Kayleigh by her free hand (her other one gripped Olaf’s Cup under the folds of her grey cloak) and they began to climb the ridge to where Tehi Tegi was waiting. As they did so, Alec and Nick positioned the fairies so they could respond quickly to any movement from the pixies. When they reached the top, Fash seemed out of breath from the short climb and a worried Kayleigh asked, “Are you okay, Fash? I know you’re hurt, but you seem so tired.”

“I am very tired,” he said in a louder voice than was necessary for Kayleigh to hear. Then he looked down at her and winked one of his grey eyes. “I am a *very* old man, you know.”

Ten feet away, Tehi Tegi snorted, “Old *and* weak. What a pathetic sight you are, Fash.”

Tehi Tegi looked the same as she had at their last meeting and Kayleigh remembered that she must be using some of her witch’s power to appear young and beautiful. She also knew that Fash had been careful to get as much rest as possible so as to conserve his own strength. These two observations gave her a small amount of hope.

“I see the Premie. Now where is the cup? I hope for the fairy prince’s sake that you have it.”

As she spoke, she looked down towards the opening of the Devil’s Den. Finvarra sat where he had before, but he was now unchained, though his wrists were bound together with rope. Standing near him was the Buggane. It towered above the little fairy. Its sharp tusks and claws shone in the moonlight, but the creature’s eyes were closed and it stood very still. Kayleigh thought of Finn and how he hadn’t moved either.

“They must be both under some spell, I guess,” she thought to herself.

“If you don’t hand over the cup, it will take just one command from me for my large friend down there to awaken. He’s been out of sorts lately. Irritable. Off his food. If he’s disturbed he’ll be cranky and hungry—it will be most unpleasant.”

Kayleigh was about to say something rude to the witch, but she caught herself and, instead, she untied her cloak and let it drop to the ground. Then she held out Olaf's Cup. "Is this what you want?" she said in a stern voice.

Tehi Tegi smiled as her eyes fell on the cup. "It is *one* of the things that I want, yes. Bring it here, child."

"Not so fast," interjected Fash. "Let us get the fairy up here first. We wouldn't want you to lose your concentration, would we?"

"Very well." She shouted down to the prince and told him to climb up to them. He needed no second encouragement to get away from the Buggane who loomed above him. He ran toward the lower part of the ridge below them and began scrambling up. As the slope steepened, he was having a hard time maintaining his balance with his hands tied.

While Kayleigh watched the fairy struggle up towards them, she was aware that Tehi Tegi was looking in her direction—whether at the cup or at her or at both, she was unsure.

When the fairy prince was nearing the top of the ridge, Tehi Tegi moved closer to Kayleigh. Seeing this, Fash quickly placed himself between them. The witch laughed.

"You're very protective of this youngster, aren't you?"

She took another few steps and stood now in front of Fash, looking down at him. Kayleigh saw that the witch was at least a foot taller than the old man.

"We made a bargain—remember. The cup and the Preemie in return for the fairy prince."

"We made no bargain," the old man countered. "Nothing you could say would convince me that you could be trusted. I know you too well. Your long history is filled with lies, treachery and deceit."

"You old fool. Whatever I have become is because of you. You started me down this path, long ago, and now you accuse *me* of deceit. You're a hypocrite, Fash. A stupid, old, worn-out hypocrite. You thought you'd stopped me once, but you were wrong then and you're wrong now."

With that, in a lightning swift motion, she swung the long staff she held in her hand and struck Fash squarely on the shoulder. He lost his footing, slipped off the ridge and began to slide down into the hollow where the Buggane was stationed.

“Fash!” Kayleigh screamed. She tried to grab him before he fell, but she was too slow. Quickly, Tehi Tegi shouted out a command in the direction of the Buggane, and then she reached out to Kayleigh. Just in time, Kayleigh ducked and took a few paces backwards, putting some distance between her and the witch.

“Give me that cup now, child. There’s still time for you to save your friend. Give it to me and I’ll call off the beast.”

Kayleigh glanced down quickly. She saw that Fash had by now tumbled to the bottom of the slope and that the fairy prince had lost his footing in the excitement and was also sliding backwards. Over near the opening to the pit, the towering dark shape of the Buggane was stirring. It raised its enormous head, let out a terrible roar and raked the rocky ground with its huge clawed hands.

Kayleigh wanted to hand over the cup, but remembered that Fash had insisted she never give it up—no matter what. “If you want this cup, you’ll have to take it from me. And if either of those two is hurt, you’ll never ever get it. I promise you.”

The witch laughed out loud. “A brave speech. But I think that senile old fool has given you some bad advice. How are you going to stop me taking it from you?”

“Like this,” Kayleigh shouted as she turned and stepped over the edge and started sliding down into the hollow towards Fash.

She heard Tehi Tegi, shouting behind her: “Foolish child, I’ll recover the cup once my pet has finished with you.”

“Not if I destroy it first. There’s a big hole down there and this crystal cup may shatter, if I throw it in.”

Kayleigh was sliding down feet first and was nearing the bottom when she looked over and saw Fash and the fairy prince—two tiny figures—standing in front of the advancing monster. The beast raged and roared and reached out a clawed hand. Fash stepped in front of the prince and the full weight of the Buggane’s swinging arm hit him broadside. Kayleigh screamed as the old man was knocked away like a rag doll. He

went sailing through the air, landing in a heap on the far side of the hollow. She was trying to regain her footing to help her friend, when suddenly her feet and legs started to tingle. She tried to stand, but her legs wouldn't respond. She looked back up the slope to see Tehi Tegi staring at her with great intensity. The witch had changed. She was no longer a tall and beautiful young woman. Instead, she now appeared much shorter and older, and she was leaning heavily on her staff for support.

“She’s used that paralyzing spell on me—now I’m done for, for sure,” thought Kayleigh.

She was within twenty feet of the dark hole that was the entrance to the Devil’s Den. Still clutching the cup, she began to crawl towards it, using her arms.

“Preemie! I command you to stop! Obey me!” the witch shouted in an imperious voice.

“Like I’m going to obey *you!*” Kayleigh retorted over her shoulder, as she raised her arm to throw the cup into the pit.

“Stop!” commanded the witch with such authority that Kayleigh couldn't help but turn to look up at her. The old woman was down on her knees, both arms raised above her head. Although Kayleigh couldn't make out the words, she saw that Tehi Tegi was muttering an incantation. Her eyes were tightly shut, and she was deep in concentration.

Kayleigh turned away and braced herself for the worst. Over to her left, movement on the ridge top caught her attention. It was the fairies, led by Nick and Alec. “Of course,” Kayleigh told herself, “they must have seen what happened.”

But before she had time to feel hopeful, an arrow flew past above her and almost hit Finvarra. He had been making his way towards her, just steps ahead of the Buggane. Kayleigh looked around to see where the arrow came from and saw, up on her right, the advancing pixies and, towering above them, the Fynoderee, Finn.

She took all this in within seconds. The witch was about to complete whatever incantation she was preparing. Somehow, in the midst of this scene of chaos and confusion, Kayleigh remembered Fash’s instruction and the suggestion he had planted in her mind. She tried to clear her head and focus all her thoughts on Olaf's crystal cup. She closed her eyes and concentrated. Suddenly, unbidden, strange words came out of her

mouth and she lifted Olaf's Cup into the air just as Tehi Tegi opened her eyes and glared at her. There was a terrible crack and a bright flash of light and for the briefest moment Kayleigh felt as though she were up on the ridge looking down at herself through Tehi Tegi's eyes. Then, something hit her in her chest and head with the force of an explosion. She was knocked back against a boulder, on the brink of the dark opening to the Devil's Den, losing one of her purple running shoes and ripping her purple jacket in the process.

When she opened her eyes, Kayleigh was at first amazed to be alive. She looked up to where Tehi Tegi had been and saw only a pile of smoking clothes and a wooden staff falling to the ground. Olaf's Cup, which had dropped from Kayleigh's grasp into her lap, was glowing. She picked it up and found it was quite warm.

"Thank you, Fash," she whispered.

"Premie Kayleigh!" a voice shouted from somewhere above her, "get up and run."

She looked up to see Alec and five other fairies scrambling down the slope in her direction. Before she could answer, a dark shadow loomed over her. She twisted her neck and saw that less than ten feet away the Buggane was reaching out for her. He had swatted the prince aside and had come for her. She screamed and was starting to drag herself away when, to her left, another dark shape bounded into view. It was the Moddey Doo. He was limping badly on one paw, but he was running fast in her direction.

"Fash," she gasped, "you're alive!"

But he didn't answer. Instead, barking loudly to attract the monster's attention, the Black Dog of Peel Castle leapt into the air and struck the Buggane in the chest with the weight of his whole body. A gigantic clawed hand whipped around and grabbed the dog in mid-air, but Fash had been able to knock the beast off-balance and, still grasping the Moddey Doo, he lost his footing and toppled over the edge of the pit. The Buggane's free hand clawed at the rocks, just inches from where Kayleigh lay, but he couldn't hold on. With a great roar of anger, he fell into the darkness below, taking the black dog with him.

"Fash!" Kayleigh screamed. "Oh, no! Fash!"

Cut, bruised, paralyzed from the waist down, her purple jacket tattered and torn, Kayleigh was utterly miserable. But all around her a battle was raging. The pixies and fairies on the ridge above were exchanging bow and arrow volleys. Once the threat of the Buggane was gone, a group of twelve pixies, followed by the Fynoderee, started down into the hollow to prevent Alec and his people from rescuing Kayleigh and the prince. Alec was approaching her at a run, while his five companions had already reached the prince and were trying to protect him with their small shields from arrow fire.

Kayleigh saw they were outnumbered. Up on the ridge, a group of brave fairies had made it over to the pixie bowmen and were attacking them with their short swords.

“How are you, Premie?” Alec asked breathlessly, when he finally reached her side.

“Not so good—I can't walk. But, Alec, don't worry about me, I'm OK for now—you'd better go and help your friends.”

He looked over to see the six fairies moving in their direction. The arrow fire was now sporadic due to the engagement on the ridge top, but the pixies who had slid down into the hollow were almost upon them.

Then Kayleigh had a wild idea. “Alec, quickly, take my purple jacket and wave it in the air.”

“What? What good will that do?”

“Please, Alec, do it for me.”

She struggled out of her jacket (the one with the by now very dirty yellow butterfly embroidered on the back). Alec took it and waved it back and forth over his head—feeling decidedly foolish as he did so. Propped up against the boulder, Kayleigh waved her arms and shouted as loudly as she could.

“Finn! Over here, Finn. It's me, Kayleigh!”

The purple colour and the voice caught the attention of the Fynoderee. He remembered both from somewhere. “Huh?” he stopped for a moment, trying hard to remember and then he shouted, “Dancer Kayleigh!”

“Finn! Please help me, I'm hurt,” Kayleigh called out to him.

The big shaggy dim-witted Fynoderee pushed his way through the pixies, trampling two of them and knocking several others off their feet. He rushed straight over to Kayleigh and Alec. “Kayleigh. You here? How?”

“I will explain later, Finn. Can you please help my friends? The pixies will hurt them.”

“But me work for pixies. They give me food and good drink.”

“Yes, I know—but they are not very nice, are they? And besides, my friend Alec here will give you much more food and drink, won't you Alec?”

“Er . . . Yes, of course. Much more. And I'm sure Premie Kayleigh will dance for you, when she is better.”

“Yes. Me like watch dancing.”

The pixies had regrouped after the surprise rampage of their Fynoderee and were now engaging the six fairies in hand-to-hand fighting, with swords and clubs. Finn turned and ran to where the fight was raging.

“Stop, stop,” he shouted, “no more hurting.”

Two of the pixies made the mistake of sticking the points of their swords into Finn's leg. He swung out at them with his long arms, almost knocking them into the pit.

“Pixies bad,” he shouted. “Finn no work for you no more.” He swatted a few more of them and the rest began to retreat.

Up on the ridge-top, the pixie leaders could see they were losing allies rapidly. The witch had disappeared; the Buggane and the Fynoderee were no longer to be depended on. They gave a signal and a herald sounded the retreat on his horn. The pixie bowmen fired a final volley of arrows at the small group down in the hollow. One of the fairies protecting the prince was hit and went down. Alec grabbed a shield and tried to protect Kayleigh; but an arrow struck a rock nearby and bounced up, delivering a glancing blow to her shoulder.

The exhausted, pained and deeply saddened little girl, her fingers still locked around the crystal cup in her lap, let out a cry and then lost consciousness.

“Are we there yet, Daddy?” Evan asked for the tenth time in ten minutes.

“I think this is the place. That message the fairies gave you wasn’t very clear.”

He pulled off the main road and onto a narrow dirt lane, which soon ended at a wooden gate leading to some farmer’s high field near Eary Cushlin. They got out of the car, climbed over a stile and started along a footpath. Evan’s dad picked the boy up and sat him on his shoulders. He was a stocky little fellow and heavy, but his father knew they’d never make it up the hillside quickly if he let Evan walk, and he was anxious to get to the meeting place as soon as possible. They made their way through a stand of gorse bushes to catch another footpath that climbed steadily across the hillside towards the southwest. Eventually the track levelled off, and he set Evan down, so the boy could run along ahead of him.

When they reached the main hiking path that descended from the north side of Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa Mountain, both Evan and his dad stopped in their tracks. Coming down the path toward them was a large figure covered with coarse shaggy hair.

“Noderee,” shouted Evan, pointing at the approaching giant.

The creature saw them and stopped abruptly. It seemed confused, as though its mind had been a million miles away and their appearance had disturbed its reverie. It was definitely a Fynoderee, and in its arms, it was carrying something wrapped in what looked like a grey blanket. Two small feet clad in purple sneakers stuck out from under the edge of the blanket.

“Kayleigh,” Evan shouted, when he saw them. “It’s Kayleigh, Daddy.”

He began running up the hill towards them. “Kayleigh, Kayleigh,” he yelled.

His dad was right behind him and caught him by the collar of his jacket. “Whoa, son,” he said to the excited boy, “not so fast. We don’t want to frighten that big fellow. Let’s take it easy.”

“Hello,” he shouted. “We’re here to find a little girl. My daughter, Kayleigh. This boy is her brother.”

“Kayleigh,” the big creature spoke in a rough voice, not much accustomed to speech. “You friends of Kayleigh?”

“Yes. Yes, we are,” Dad said. “How is she? Is she hurt?”

“Don't know,” he replied. “Maybe.”

The Fynoderee knelt down on the heather beside the path and opened the blanket, which turned out to be an old grey cloak upon closer inspection. Inside, there was the dirtiest little girl they'd ever seen. Her hair and face were caked with mud and her hands, which clasped a small bundle tightly to her chest, were filthy. Her eyes were closed and she seemed asleep or unconscious. As Evan and his father approached her, the Fynoderee, eyed them warily. Dad took out his pocket handkerchief, moistened it in a little puddle beside the path and wiped his daughter's face.

“Kayleigh,” he said. “It's Dad and Evan. Are you okay?”

To their great relief, she opened her eyes. “Where am I?” she asked.

“Your friend here brought you down from Cronk-ny-Arrey-Laa. Evan and I received a message from the fairies to meet you here. Are you hurt or in pain?”

“My head is aching and my shoulder's very sore and I don't think I can walk,” she replied, “but everything else seems to be okay.”

She turned her head and saw the big shaggy creature kneeling in the heather beside her.

“Finn,” she said. “Oh, Finn, I'm glad to see you. Thank you for bringing me back to my family.”

“Kayleigh good friend to Finn, and Finn good friend to Kayleigh,” the Fynoderee replied.

Then, as if suddenly remembering something, Kayleigh sat bolt upright. “But what about the others, Finn? What about Fash and the fairies? What about Tehi Tegi?”

“Me not know about others. Fairies ask me bring you down. Then they leave fast—other way.”

“Oh, I wonder what's happened to them all,” Kayleigh said, almost to herself.

She continued to clutch the little bundle she was holding. Her father tried to take it from her, but she pulled back sharply.

“No,” she said—momentarily angry, “you can't have it!” Then, seeming to realize something, she spoke in a subdued tone, “I'm sorry, Dad.”

“What is it you have there, Sweetheart?” he asked.

She unwrapped the bundle of rags to reveal an intricately worked crystal goblet. “It's the Cup of Peace,” she said.

Kayleigh tried to stand, but her legs still weren't working—although she was beginning to get some feeling back in her feet. She beckoned to Finn. He bent down and she wrapped her arms about his neck in a long hug. Her father saw tears running down her cheeks. The Fynoderee got to his feet and, after they all made their farewells to him, he turned and started off south, across country. Kayleigh noticed that he walked with a limp and the fur on his right leg was matted and stained red. Soon he'd disappeared around the hillside.

“Well,” Dad asked, “shall we go home?”

“Oh, yes, please,” she replied.

He picked up his little girl and carried her back the way Evan and he had come. The boy ran on ahead, skipping and jumping and clearly very happy to have his sister back. Kayleigh just stared west, out to sea, deep in thought.

By the time they neared the car, flakes of snow were blowing in on a cold breeze from the west. Kayleigh looked up at her father.

“Dad, have I missed the Christmas concert?”

“I'm afraid so, sweetheart—but tomorrow's Christmas Eve and when we get home, Mum will have a nice dinner waiting for us. That might cheer you up. Are you hungry?”

“Starving.”

When they were getting near the car, something caught Kayleigh's eye. Up on the hillside behind them a large flock of sheep was grazing. She asked her father to stop, and shading her eyes with the palm of her hand, she said to him, “Dad, up there near that rock wall, is that a goat among the sheep?”

Her father followed her gaze: “Could be. I can’t really tell from here.”

Kayleigh was silent for most of the drive home even though Evan—very irritatingly—kept repeating over and over again: “Deck the halls with bowls of jelly – fa-lala-la-la.”

When at last they turned off the Peel Road and drove up the hill to Ballakermeen, she looked up at her father and said, “Dad. I don’t think I want to stay here any more. Can we leave the Isle of Man?”

“Funny you should say that,” he answered, “Mum and I were discussing that very thing the other day.”

That evening, after a lengthy, tear-filled reunion with her mother and after a long hot bath, Kayleigh and the family sat down for a pre-Christmas dinner. Despite her hunger, Kayleigh only picked at her food and, all through dinner, she was quiet. Her parents thought she must be exhausted from her ordeal—which she was—but that wasn’t the reason. She was thinking of the Cup of Peace. She had placed it on their mantelpiece and, after dinner, while her parents finished the Christmas decorating and Evan ran around excitedly wishing it was Christmas Day already, Kayleigh sat staring at the cup. As she listened to carols and Manx *carvels* playing in the background, she thought about the dispute between the fairies and the pixies and how Christmas was supposed to be a time for peace on earth. At last, she came to a decision.

“There’s one last thing I’m going to do before I leave the Isle of Man,” she told herself with firm resolve. Then she got up and began helping her mother to decorate the Christmas tree.

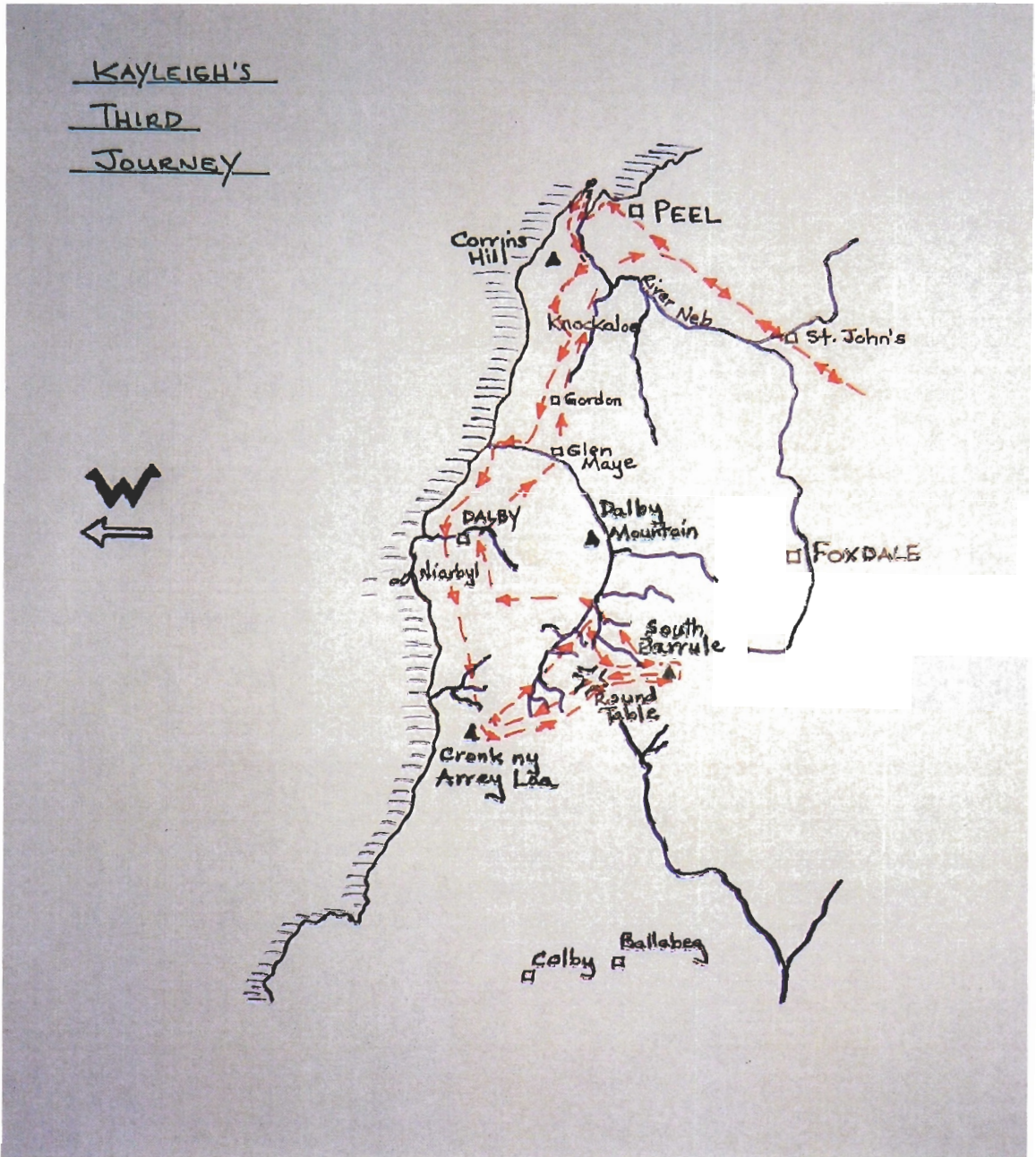


Figure 16: Kayleigh's Map of her Third Adventure

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