

THE SPRITE

“Ann Dear, we have visitors!” an excited Emma calls out from down the hall. “We are in the living room!”

Feeling urgency in her mother’s voice, Ann replies, “Coming, Mother, I’ll be right there.”

Setting her guitar aside and leaving the music room, she goes quickly to the living room. They weren’t expecting visitors and she is curious to find out what’s going on.

She enters the living room and is delightfully surprised. The room is filled with hundreds of colorful sprites. Ann joins her mother who is standing in the middle of the room surrounded by a fluttering melee of iridescent wings. Ann can see her mom is enjoying the kind invasion.

Sprites are of Scottish or Irish origin. Sometimes mistaken for fireflies, they are forest dwellers and are rarely seen except for the luminescence glow of their wings just after sunset. None more than 12 inches tall, all have translucent gossamer wings and can fly. The men and boys dress in Gaelic regalia, the women, and young ladies wear knee length or ankle length tartan skirts, along with color coordinated blouse and vest, a lace shirtwaist and tailor-made blouse that compliments the kilted skirt.

As soon as Ann walks into the room, one of the smaller Sprites flies to her and hovers in front of her. Ann smiles, she recognizes this one.

Holding out her hand, the little Sprite lightly settles on her palm. Ann draws her near for a better look.

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Ann exclaims, “Hi, Enid! You look great! I wasn’t expecting to see you again so soon. Your wings seem to be working perfect, I am so pleased!” She pauses for a moment, perhaps overwhelmed by all the Sprite visitors, and says, “Is this your family?”

Enid silently replies with a big smile and nods her head and gestures while trying to speak. But a Sprite’s vocal range is far above the range of a witches hearing. Ann isn’t able to follow Enid and can’t tell what she is trying to say.

Emma, seeing her daughter’s frustration says, “I can read their lips, honey.” She then asks, “Is this young one the one you saved from the spider’s web the other day?”

“Yes, her name is Enid. She knew I could not hear her, but she can understand me. So, after I got her out of the web and helped get the sticky silk off her wings, she scratched her name in a tree. Poor thing, I think she got tangled in that web mere moments before I got there. I shudder to think what would have happened if the spider got to her first.” She then reveals, “There were several other sprites around her, but they didn’t seem to be able to help her much. The best they could do was to keep the spider away using twigs and sticks to beat it with. They were lucky, the spider was nowhere to be seen.”

Mom smiles and turning to the little sprite says, “Enid, dear, look at me. I can read your lips. I’ll let Ann know what you are trying to tell her, okay?”

Little Enid nods her head in excitement and turns to face Emma. Young Sprites are very animated and find it quite hard to just stay still for even a

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moment, but Enid tries, and Emma can understand some of what she is trying to say, but little Enid is just too excited!

Ann gently lowers her hand to the coffee table, allowing Enid to hop down.

A handsome fellow who seems to be the clan leader flies forward. Landing on the coffee table, he stands next to Enid. Emma and Ann watch as he politely interrupts. Placing a loving hand on Enid's shoulder, he kneels down and speaks to her for a moment. Enid smiles sheepishly, nods her head, and stands to one side allowing him to approach Emma and Ann. It becomes quite clear that he is Enid's father. She holds onto her father's hand and stands beside him looking up at him fondly.

Showing his Highland Celtic heritage, he is smartly dressed wearing a kilt that proudly displays their tartan clan. The plaid kilt is complemented with a blue Inverness Cape, sporran, shirt and tie, kilt hose and shoes and a single-edged knife or Highland Dagger.

Emma says, "You must be Enid's father? I'm Emma, Ann is my daughter, but you probably already know that." Emma offers her hand in friendship, the Sprite, nods his head and takes her index finger with both of his hands thus acknowledges her offer of friendship.

He lip speaks to Emma for a few moments. Emma nods and turns to Ann.

"Ann, he says he is Enid's father, they are Seelie Sprites. He thinks that is important for us to know. I remember them as being good natured and kind to humans." She pauses for a moment, smiles and adds, "But I remember they

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can be pranksters and sometimes aren't aware of the chaos they can create. He says his name is Caelan."

Caelan hears her comment about Seeley Sprites being pranksters and smiles.

Ann delighted to know who he is reaches her hand out and says, "Hi Mr. Caelan! So nice to see all of you and to know that Enid is well. I felt so sorry for her when I saw her trapped in that web and was so happy to get her out of that mess. I had to hold her close to my heart to help warm her and calm her down. She was terrified and just couldn't stop shivering from fear." She pauses for a moment then remarks, "I had to use magic on the spider silk to remove it from her wings, that was the only way I could get it off without hurting her."

Smiling he bows to her in gratitude.

He motions to Emma and again lip syncs to her silently. She pays close attention to what he has to say.

After some minutes, she says, "I understand, thank you." She then smiles and says to him, "We have the same problem when our kids won't listen, too. Just incredibly happy they don't get hurt most of the time when they do disobey. We parents can only hope they have learned a lesson from that."

Caelan smiles and nods his head, then looks at his daughter. She smiles sheepishly and shakes her head "yes". She won't be doing that again anytime soon!

Emma turns to Ann and says, "Caelan wanted us to know that even though Sprites are very resilient, their greatest fear are spiders and spider webs. It

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seems that for some reason, once they are caught in a spider's web, they cannot get out, even with many Sprites helping, they cannot break the web. Caelan has a knife that is able to cut the web, so as soon as he can, he can cut the web and the Sprite is released from the web's grip, but no Sprite has the ability to remove the silk from the wings. He was surprised that you could do that without hurting Enid. He also said that Enid and her friends weren't supposed to be out at that time of day. They were out when the sun was high enough in the sky they could not easily see spider webs. The time for Sprites to be out is in the early morning and late evening. They can see the webs quite clearly either in the glitter of the morning dew or in the evening twilight so they can avoid them."

Caelan gestures to Emma again and she watches his lips as he speaks to her. She smiles and turns to Ann and says, "he says they don't have the magic we have to completely and safely remove the web from their wings. The web damages their wings to where flying is difficult. He wants to know if you can teach them this magic trick? He also wanted you to know Enid loves your voice and that little song, the one you sang to her that day while keeping her warm."

Ann turns to her mom and remarks, "That song is the one you and dad used to sing to us when we were little and scared. It's called 'You Got Me Singing' and I remember it was nice and I always felt safe listening to the melody, your voice, and words."

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Emma turning to Caelan says, “Let’s sit down. You are welcome to sit on the books on the coffee table while we talk. Tell the others to feel free to sit as well.” She then thinks for a moment then says, “I am so sorry, but we don’t have any refreshments to offer you. And yes, our family can teach your people the magic you need to safely remove the web silk from your wings.”

He gestures to the others who settle down in the living room. Enid sets down on a stack of National Geographic magazines on the table next to her dad, who remains standing. He then turns to Emma and silently lip speaks to her.

He has much to say, for the next several minutes Emma merely shakes her head and says “Yes” and “okay” at times.

Finally finished speaking, Caelan sits down, Emma replies to Caelan, “That’s so generous of you and your clan. I know Ann will be more than pleased. Tell the others to bring it in, we have to see this!” She turns to Ann and excitedly says, “They have prepared something just for you. This is very generous of them, and it would not be easy for them to do, but they know of no other way to thank you for saving their Enid.”

Ann and her mother rise from the couch and head to the front door. Enid flies next to Ann, staying close and resting her small hand on Ann’s shoulder, smiling at her friend in anticipation of her reaction.

Emma opens both front doors to the living room and stands back. She gasps, “Oh my!” and watches as what has to be several hundred Sprites fly in carrying a beautiful, hooded cloak.

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Stunned, Emma exclaims, “Ann, this they made just for you!”

The Sprites carefully set the cloak down on the couch and move back. Ann approaches the garment and is speechless but the tears of gratitude in her eyes speaks volumes of how she feels. She touches the coat and says, “It’s so beautiful! I don’t know how to thank you all enough!”

Enid gives Ann a kiss on her cheek.

Caelan gestures for Emma to come closer and speaks to her.

Emma watches Caelan intently. She then says to Ann, “he says this is a present from all who live in the shire of the forest. Your kindness to one is kindness to all and they all appreciate what you have done. Their little Enid is very precious to them. The elegant cape and hood is made from a secret blend of their magic and a mix of rare forest materials and is trimmed with gold threads and silk. A ray of sunshine was added to bring good luck. Put it on, honey. I’ll bet it fits you very well.”

Ann picks up the robe and gently puts it on. She is delighted.

And it does fit nicely.

The Sprites gather closely, Ann can see they are trying to say something.

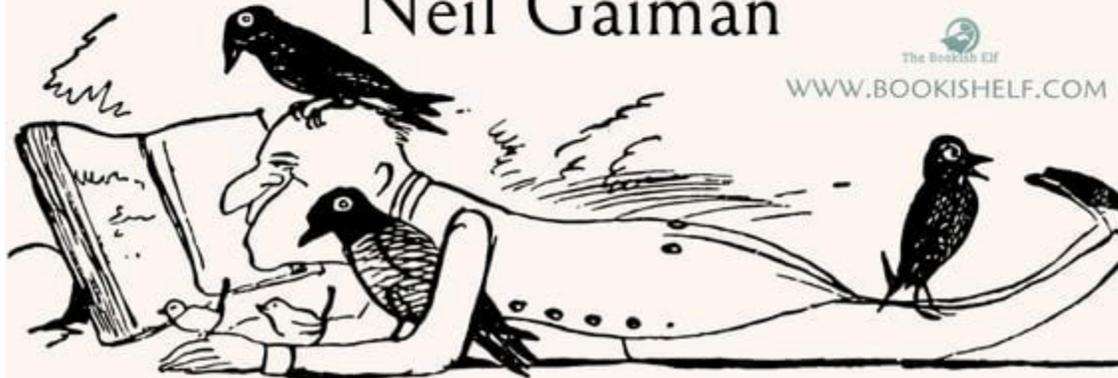
“Mom, what are the Sprites saying?”

Emma proudly smiles while watching the Sprites gather around Ann, lightly touching her and that magnificent red coat.

She replies, “The Sprites are calling you “Little Red Riding Hood.”

"Fiction gives us empathy: it puts us inside the minds of other people, gives us the gifts of seeing the world through their eyes. Fiction is a lie that tells us true things, over and over." -

Neil Gaiman



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