

# A Different Kind of Magic

by

K Gorman

Copyright 2010 © by K Gorman

\*

At twilight, when the sun sank and the street lamps flickered to light, she slipped down the stairs to the street, and walked to the crossroads nearest her place. There she waited, as if in a dream. After a few minutes, a wolf trotted down the road and stopped in front of her.

“I am Fenrir,” he said. She remembered him from the Norse texts she’d read.

““The wolf who will swallow the heavens,”” she quoted, and remembered something else: “I thought you were bound.”

“I am,” he said, and she felt the air tremble with his growl.

“I’m not looking for you,” she told him and, tired, walked back into her life. The bound wolf watched her go, and then faded as the street lamp outshone the moonshine on his coat.

In her apartment, she knew there was more than one way to be bound.

\*

The next night, with the moon a waning crescent in the sky, she walked to the street corner again as the lights were flickering on. A car alarm from another street whined, but all went silent when she reached the corner. There she waited, as if in a dream. After a few minutes, a fox stepped down the road to her. It was white, and its three tails glowed faintly in the dusk. Its image tapered in places, like candle flames.

“You cannot help me,” she said, and it watched her walk to her apartment until the streetlight faded it away.

In her kitchen, she slumped over the table and closed her eyes, her head over her folded arms.

\*

The next night a Shade appeared at her crossroads. She watched it for several minutes. It walked with a body of shadow and long, skinny legs. With a head as tall as the hydro pole, it looked down on her. She shivered in the cold and, when it faded from the light, she walked home.

She kept the light on till dawn.

\*

The fourth night, with a still waning moon, and a wind that bit the skin between her gloves and coat, she waited again. After a few minutes, a woman walked out of the night.

“I am Lachesis,” said the spirit woman with hair like spiders’ silk, “do you know me?”

“Yes,” said the woman who waited, “you are one of the Fates. Maybe you can help me find what I seek.”

“I cannot help the blind,” said the Fate, and the spirit faded with the street light’s charm.

The woman lingered, as if some thought kept her, on the corner. She waited until the last light of the sun slipped from the sky, and would have waited longer, but the wind drove her inside.

\*

The fifth night she waited, and a crow watched her, from across the street, on a fence. The lamplight came on, and the crow took off.

\*

The sixth night, with the last, slightest sliver of a moon watching her, she went out and found someone already waiting for her. He had a guitar case that carried all the promises in the world. She recognized him and laughed.

“Not even the Devil can help me,” she said, and turned back. She never made it to the corner, and the man leaned against the stop sign until the light came on.

\*

The seventh night set with the moon dark in the sky and the wind whispering from the sea. She waited by the stop sign. The cold clutched her bones. She saw a wolf trot down the street to her.

“What are you looking for?” Asked Fenrir, whose teeth the stars feared.

“I am looking for a different kind of magic,” she said, and looked behind him, down the street.

“Then you are looking in the wrong place,” said the wolf.

“There is no other place for it,” she said, “but the place where magic comes.”

“There is no other kind of magic,” said the wolf, “but what you live in. The Fate is right, there is no helping the blind.”

“Then there is no magic in this world,” she told the wolf who would eat the moon.

“None that you can find, though you’ve found a great deal.”

She turned away from him, her eyes closed against an old ache in her throat.

“Maybe you’re looking from the wrong side,” said the wolf. She looked back and stopped. And thought.

When the light came on, its spell faded both of them.

There was no wolf nor woman. For a long moment, the wind held its breath and, below the buzz of the light, a set of footsteps could be heard. They were accompanied by the clicking of old claws, and walked down a road that went much farther than the cracked pavement of this city’s horizon.

\*\*\*

Thanks for reading! For the latest news and stories, check out my website at <http://kgorman.ca/>