

Whimsical Waters

By Debra S. Kleinberger

In a glistening display of sparkling light the sun rose above the moss covered knoll and splashed a brilliant array of color across the surface of the marble bench. The bench was nestled at the foot of the knoll and just beneath a weeping willow that cascaded over the top in rivulets of green leafy tendrils. The plush mossy embankment that surrounded the bench offered a cushion to my weary bones and I sat admiring the morning spectacle. A misty haze hung magically around the edges of the bench in a peaceful serenity that lulled me and I can't be quite certain whether it was reality or dreams that occurred next.

My day had started in a most unusual way, a heavy fog bathed the morning and I would have loved to stay in bed, but a neighbor had phoned me with a rather pressing problem which required my immediate attention. So I rose wearily from my warm comfortable bed, dressed in a hurry with not the best of shoes on my feet nor the best of cloaks about me and started out at once in the direction of my neighbor's abode, walking briskly along the way. Upon arriving at her home the matter for which she had disturbed me had resolved itself. I could not fault the dear woman for her call, for obviously the situation was severe enough that I had risen to accommodate her and so, as I was already up and dressed, I decided to take a shortcut across the mossy knoll into town, by way of a well worn path that I had followed many times before, where I had hopes of obtaining a cup of coffee and perhaps a pastry or two.

The knoll was bathed in the dense fog and I had to watch my step on the dew covered grass that blanketed the mound in shimmering green for the tread of my shoes was worn and slick. For several moments the fog remained until at last the heavy curtain began to lift, leaving wispy

fingers of mist that clung to the ground creating an aura of mystery and I shuddered, as one will do when alone in the dim light of morning. The sounds of the day had not yet begun and a heavy silence pervaded the air, carpeting the knoll in an illusion of emptiness. The path was worn from my many journeys over the knoll and patches of earth peered through the grass like the bald spot on an old man's head, poking through despite the care the grass was given. Just over the top of the knoll my rather old knees faltered and I had to rest for awhile. There in the first throws of daylight stood the little marble bench glistening in the shafts of light that spilled from the rising sun, draped in the tendrils of the willow cascading gently from above, and with the mossy embankment that looked so inviting that I simply had to sit for a spell. It was then that it all happened.

I settled my tired frame upon the mossy carpet, rather than the bench, for it was the cushiony comfort that my sleepy countenance craved. My thoughts drifted as I watched the mist swirling in a mystical stew and I closed my eyes for but a moment, and it was in the first moment of awakening, or so I thought, that I detected a fluttering dance of movement across the marble's surface. I peered at the bench with eyes still bleary from my early morning jaunt, rubbing the remnants of sleep from my eyes and in the fragile rays of the morning sun the marble glistened with silvery ripples and I thought, at first, that it was dragonflies skimming the surface for a morsel to eat, but as I looked closer I could hardly believe my eyes; the same two eyes that had never deceived me grew large and round with astonishment and awe and hence my illusion that it could only have been a dream.

There in front of my very own eyes flitted the delicate, petite images of fairies, resplendent in pastel shades of gauzy, filmy attire. No bigger than the dragonflies for which I had mistook them, their opaque wings shimmered in the sunlight and they kissed the surface of the marble in

a whimsical dance of playfulness, darting in and about the mist with a youthful spirit. I held my breath, afraid that even the subtlest of movements would make them disappear, until the pain in my chest reached a crescendo and I had to breathe. I dropped my head in a moment of remorse, certain that they had fled with the first sounds of my breath as it escaped me and yet, when I lifted my eyes once more they were still there, dancing upon the mirrored surface of the glossy marble, weaving a magical spell of enchantment.

I was mesmerized, trapped as if I were a fly in a spider's web, unable to move, caught in the enchantment of the fairytale unfolding before me. In a magical moment of serenity I watched as a fairy plucked a small flower from the tiny reeds that graced the mossy knoll and presented the delicate bloom to another in a gesture that pulled at my heartstrings, causing a tear to drop from my eye. I did not try to brush it away and so it fell with a gentle plop in my lap, leaving one damp spot among the remaining dry fibers. I cannot say how long I sat there, whether it was mere minutes or hours, for time had no meaning for me as long as the fairies danced. They were gracefully flitting and spiraling in pirouettes that looked as if they were skating on glass, their reflections swimming in the glossy surface beneath them. Each fluid stroke brushed the silvery ripples with waves that ebbed in the morning mist, then rose from the glistening depths with renewed grandeur. With a sensuous rhythm, enticed by the moment, the fairies leaped and dove, the glossy sheen reaching upward to capture their magical shadows, receding only to begin anew. A timid playfulness engulfed them as they flitted across the surface, darting in and out of the mist, and I thought in my naivete that the moment was eternal but alas, like all truly beautiful things, there is a time when it must end. And so, with a blink of my eyes they were gone, just as the sun kissed the last of the dew from the tender blades of new grass and just as the last remnants of mist vanished into the morning air.

I breathed deeply of the dawn's vapors, filling my lungs as if to collect the magic of the moment, inhaling so deeply that my chest expanded to nearly twice its normal size and when I could no longer absorb any more of the vapor, slowly let it out again, cleansing my spirit with the taste of morning. The glistening marble splashed the sun's rays over the mossy mound and the sound of a hummingbird pulled me from my revelry. I no longer yearned for my comfortable bed but rather I clung to the magical moment that had captured me, savoring the last few minutes of the magic of the knoll. All of the magic that had held me vanished, slipping from the knoll as if a drain had opened, spilling the last of the mystical interlude into a black hole of no return, the dew kissed grass, the morning mist that clung to the ground, and above all, the fairies with their swimming shadows reflected from the mirrored marble. Oh – how I wanted to remain at the edge of my imagination, in the peaceful serenity that had claimed me, but when the knoll returned to the life of familiarity that often is overlooked during the course of a day, I continued on my way along the path worn thin by my footsteps into town, listening to the sounds of the morning.

I reached my destination shaken and wistful, ordered my coffee and pastry and sat in a corner booth, trying to hide from the harshness of reality, befuddled by a quandary. I never discussed that morning, not for a very long time; I thought people would think me daft. But I have reached an age of reflection, when it doesn't matter what people might say, and I share my story with anyone willing to listen. What possessed me to stop that morning I cannot say, whether it was the need for coffee or an unknown force calling to me from a foreign realm, but with a surety the memory is one that shall last me a lifetime. Was it a dream, you ask? I cannot say, perhaps in that brief moment that I was lulled by the scene, I dozed; but then again, who can say that the moment was not reality, for in my mind it was real, as real as the jam on my toast or the mud on

your shoes. And so you see is my quandary about my morning, nestled next to the glossy marble bench, mirrored in rippling silver waves, ensconced in the magic of the whimsical water.