

## OCTOBER WALKS

### A COUNTRY COTTAGE

The fire is in full motion in the fire place. The smell of freshly baked ginger cookies is seeping into the living room. Cherries, dried plums and checkerberries are proudly making the walls look better.

There is a painting of some general opposite the fire place. But its head is of the great grey hound wearing the hat. Must be a surrealist influence- the signature of the painter looks like a snot.

It must be just before four on a Sunday afternoon. It seems like a roast turkey or chicken or some bird of sorts should be in the oven. With lots of potatoes for sure. Some soft jazz can be heard in the background. Creates the mood as they say. My auntie loves jazz. I guess she put it on to help her with those ginger cookies- extra level of festive.

There's an open bottle of red wine on the table in front of the fire place. Châteauneuf du Pape 1976. And a glass of wine that was definitely drunk from.

It looks like my auntie is preparing for Christmas. Or at least a dinner of sorts- it's October after all. But she's not- my uncle simply killed himself. He wasn't a fan of the rain.

The Spaniards Inn,  
Hampstead, October 2024

## A LIGHTHOUSE

Love is like a ship on an Oxford canal built in 1781. It comes and goes. Leaving slimy bricks behind.

I don't have a ship. I live in the lighthouse. I'm like a fairy godmother to them: if I don't let my magic light dance through the night, if I don't press the button to call the giants to cry and warn them of the edge of the cliff, there would be more broken ships than there hearts ever been. But luckily that isn't the case.

The lighthouse smells of Earl Grey. And some dust. The old Bill is drying his herrings not far, so I don't need to make you aware of that smell.

Normally people visit the lighthouse when it's sunny. Nobody is a friend of the water once they're outside of the beach. I don't blame them. Nobody likes getting wet with their clothes on. And I understand. But my favourite time is when it's grey. Maybe some drizzle. That's the weather for the lighthouse. That's when it's in its own element- the light blue and white stripes painted on its core blend in with the sky. That's when it looks the proudest. That's when I fall in love.

It's a weird life I lead. Or so the cheesemonger Mary tells me. She doesn't understand how a woman willingly would agree to live in a lighthouse. For good.

But she doesn't know that I'm not a woman. I'm a goddess. And there was a time when I fell in love.

He was a captain. The sailors are normally afraid to flirt with me. They say they are out of my league. But they don't understand that I don't mind- good captains are hard to find.

Anyway, one day I was minding my own business, the next- I was wrapped in the ropes in his ship, in his chamber. I wasn't caught- I just like to pretend that I am weak, that I am human. Sometimes.

He was human. At least from that point onwards he was. I had a feeling he might have been half-god some time ago, but I think he did something with no return, so he was made mortal. But love is like a ship- you can force the direction onto it but the real power lies within the sea.

And the sea I saw in his eyes. Those "sea at night fighting for life" coloured eyes. With the eyelashes that tickled every time he looked at me.

Well, that was it- I was in love. I would wait for him in the lighthouse, making sure they all got home ok. Then he'd make fire in his cottage, open some oysters and leave a bottle of Champagne with me (he was a captain, remember), while he was cooking the dinner for us. It seemed that he knew everything: how to cook, how to fish, how to fuck. And he loved me too. But as all sailors he loved her- the sea- more.

I was angry at first. Then I accepted it. I even tried being friends with her. But the sea is like love- you cannot control her.

He wanted me. He did really love me (I'm the goddess, remember- we're not easy to find).

One day he presented a ring to me. He wanted me to become his wife, move to his cottage, be with him till the rest of his life (I'm immortal- I'm a goddess- but he knew that from the start). I said 'yes'. I loved him very very much. And then we fucked.

The night was stormy. I was lying in his bed. Awake. Next to him. Also awake- I knew he was. He could not resist her rage. And even though he knew he was mortal, he still thought he could conquer her.

I didn't say anything. I got up from the bed, dressed up and left. I was heading home. It was pouring down with rain. I was heading to the lighthouse. Then I remembered the ring. So I gave it to her. I was not going to compete with the sea. I said "fuck you" and threw it as far as I could.

He left the first thing in the morning. The wives of his sailors must have been pretty pissed too. He didn't come back. I think she swallowed him. In anger. Probably regretted it afterwards. He was a mortal after all.

I was back in my lighthouse. Back to looking after all those ships. If it's not me- they might end up crashing into those cliffs. And we don't really want that to happen- each of them has a captain.

I like the idea that love, as the sea, is unexpected. (We - me and the sea- learned to like each other in the end).

The Ship,  
Richmond, October 2024

## AT KINGS CROSS

The season has changed- it was obvious now. The scarves, mittens and Christmas decorations on Oxford Street have all come to the daylight.

I have just arrived at King's Cross via the channel. Yes, I did take the Eurostar. 'The Sky is crying at the station' said a man on the phone pushing me out of his way, so he could leave the station first. I assumed Sky was his daughter, so I didn't allow myself to get upset. But then I saw it: there was a big gap in the ceiling by the 'Harry Potter' store and the water was pouring down from above.

I always thought Harry Potter was just a fictional character from the book for children but I guess magic does exist- the water drops did look like tears. I decided to try it. I know, I know, it sounds disgusting. But it was the sky's tears, so they must have been different. At least a little bit, don't you think? Anyway, it was salty. So- definitely tears and not rain.

Then I got angry at the man that pushed me. I didn't deserve to be treated like that unless he was running to fix it. He was rather cute, so I decided not to be angry after all. Better for everyone.

The strangest thing was that the crowd didn't seem to be building around it. It was very strange indeed: things, unexpected things like this always attract a crowd. But not this time. It looked like people didn't care about it. Or didn't want to. Or both.

The tears or the puddle of the tears on the floor started changing colour. It became dark purple, then grey, silver and then dark green. Some red dots started appearing. A CHRISTMAS DECORATION! That's what it was! I could not believe I allowed myself to be fooled so easily! No wonder everyone is ignoring it- it's not very tasteful. Also, it's probably been there for a while now- it's October after all- hence nobody is reacting to it.

I was very upset with myself for being so naive but I finally let it go. I am learning to own my emotions and stand by my actions- not judging myself. I was told I should try therapy- it's a better way to start understanding oneself. But I don't think I am ready for it yet because I think I know all the answers to all my questions ATM. And it's not about that- everyone can talk. It's taking action is what is challenging. But it's ok- I'm not too bad at it and I'm getting even better- I am actively working at celebrating my emotions and trying to force myself to change.

The puddle turned water colour again. But I thought I could hear the bells somewhere in the distance. Then I realised it was the clock marking the time. It was quarter to six.

A lot of suited and booted people with bags, portfolios, rucksacks and suitcases were running through the station trying to catch their train.

I decided then, that I will never marry a man with a suit running through a station to make it to the train. Unless the s(S)ky was crying at the station.

Then I looked at the puddle by the 'Harry Potter' store. I could see the frost creeping in and the whole puddle slowly turning into a frozen lake. I wanted to have a closer look, so I moved towards it. A light just above started flickering. I thought it must have marked a presence of some magical creature (like in 'Harry Potter') or something of that sort. I was intrigued. I looked around,

waited a bit- nothing happened. So, I moved towards the puddle. Again, light flickered. Then I thought it must be giving a message or something (it's a shame I don't know morse code).

I could see the reflection of Kings Cross in the puddle now. I guess it fully froze by now: the ceiling, the pigeons, the tops of people's heads were reflected in it. I leant forward, I wanted to see myself in the frozen puddle of Sky's tears. I couldn't see anything. I'm not the master of physics but it seemed unnatural, wrong. I know I was leaning enough to be able to see myself in the puddle by now. Everything else was there but me. I was missing.

The light flickered again and then I thought I saw something. In the dark. Bits in between. I saw someone staring at me. The light flickered again and then it all went dark. I approached the puddle, in the darkness, and I saw myself. Staring at myself in the puddle at Kings Cross station. And then it landed on me - I was a ghost.

The Parcel Yard,  
Kings Cross, October 2024