

The Midnight Ride of Polly Revere

By John C. Tremblay

Like all gifts, the gem comes with a price...

With those words ringing in her head, Polly Revere threw on her cloak and stepped into the brisk night.

BZZZZZZZZZZZZ.

Polly reached for the vibrating pendant at her neck. Each time it shook, it glowed as bright as the moon above.

"I can't believe they work," she said excitedly, and then added, "Connect please," so that the conversation crystal would begin working its magic.

"Polly, are you there?" asked the voice of her best friend, Mabel-Lynne I. Shadow, as though she were standing beside her.

"Yes, I'm here," Polly replied.

Her fairy godmother's birthday present was even better than she imagined.

"Where are you?" Mabel-Lynne asked. "Still at the Harvest Ball?"

Polly nodded, before remembering that her friend couldn't see her. "Yes, I'm still here. I've been dancing with Boyden Elroy all night. Talk about husband material: smart and funny... sweet and sexy... I could stare into those blueberry eyes forever."

As if on cue, the hunky blonde Boyden stepped out of the manor house with two steaming mugs of mulled mead and gestured for Polly to come back inside. She indicated the number five with her free hand and blew a kiss as he walked away.

Mabel-Lynne scoffed. "Oh, you can do better than him. He's fourth in line for the estate, for goodness sakes. You should come with me to Misty Vale next week. You can meet some real nobles there; maybe even a prince or two."

Polly rolled her eyes and took a deep breath of the crisp air, rich with the smoky scents of the crackling fire inside.

"So what about you? Where are you right now? And what's with all that thumpety thumping?"

"I'm riding through Fawnwick Forest to meet up with a lucky lad in his father's hunting cottage."

"Isn't that a bit dangerous? You do remember what Godmother told us."

Mabel-Lynne chuckled "You worry too much."

KATHUD.

Polly looked around the grounds, goose-bumps forming on her arms. Though the tree branches looked like a net of spider legs in the eerie light of the full moon; there was nothing of dark purpose about. Whatever made the noise wasn't near her.

"Mabel-Lynne?"

THWUNK.

Polly gasped, the little clouds formed by her breathing like spirits drifting up to the Planes of Peace.

“Mabel-Lynne, please tell me you didn’t—”

“Well, what the hell else was I supposed to do with it?” she interrupted. “Damn thing broke its leg. It wasn’t good for anything anymore. Thank goodness I kept that mallet in my handbag in case I get attacked on the road. Though looking at it now, I don’t think I want it anymore.”

Rustling sounds and a soft thump indicated that she’d tossed it away.

“And oh, look what that did to my cloak. Do you think brain stains?”

“Look, wherever you are, stay put,” Polly said. “I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

Moments later Polly was riding in the back of a carriage with Boyden at the reins up front.

“We’re almost there,” she said over the unending prattle about how horrible she was for abandoning her best friend and how Mabel-Lynn’s date had probably sowed himself another bastard by now.

“That’s it! If I have to stop one more mosquito from sucking my teats, I’m going to scream. There’s a man riding this way. I’ll just hitch a lift with him.”

“Mabel-Lynne, you can’t!”

“Oh whatever. I’m sure it’ll be fine. It’s not like I’m in the Fearsome Forest. Although... his head does look a bit odd. Is that a... pumpkin?”

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEK.

Polly stared at the crystal which had stopped making noise and was no longer glowing.

"Mabel-Lynne?" she asked, paralyzed by fear.

When the carriage stopped a few moments later, she was still in shock.

"Polly, she's not out here," Boyden said from somewhere outside. "All that's left is the dead horse and a smashed jack-o-lantern."

Tears streamed down Polly's cheeks as the pendant throbbed, filling the carriage with a ghostly blue light. She made the connection tentatively, her stomach in knots.

"Mabel-Lynne?"

"Polly, I haven't got much time; but there's something I need to tell you."

Polly sniffled and wiped her tears away with the back of her hand.

"Heed my godmother's warning about talking and riding at the same time?"

Mabel-Lynne snorted. "You are too much. No, I was going to say I was wrong about Boyden. When midnight strikes and the ball ends, ride home with someone who has a good head on his shoulders, like him. You deserve that. Don't end up like me, always waiting for someone 'better' to chase after you, only to spend what remains of your life with someone you wish you'd never met."

The End