

Victoria's Lullaby

Chapter One

Port Townsend, Washington
Thursday, 8 Jun 1893
8:15 P.M.

“Your tenacity is not helping, Victoria, and you are driving me positively mad with your pacing! *Pinkerton's Book of Enchantments* simply does not work, at least not the way you expect. The only traveling you are doing is across my Parisian rug. Father is not the only who will be displeased if you wear a pathway through it.”

Victoria narrowed her eyes and glared at her companion. In her guarded opinion, Hilda Eisenbeis had no sense of adventure, and no imagination, either. The girl remained trapped in this veritable castle. Everything the spoilt girl fancied was handed to her on a silver platter by her overindulgent father, the great Baron of Port Townsend, Washington, the lordly Charles Eisenbeis.

Dismissing Hilda's complaints, Victoria said, “It will work, Hilda. I am simply waiting for someone in the next century to pick up the book and read it at this exact hour and minute. As soon as someone does that, I will be transported into his or her time without further argument.”

“What am I supposed to tell your parents when they arrive at summer's end if you transport yourself forward in time?” Hilda asked, throwing herself onto the luxurious satin bedclothes on her four-poster cherry wood bed.

“You mean if they should happen to notice I am missing?” Victoria could not refrain from sounding slightly dismissive.

“Of course they'll notice,” insisted Hilda. “If only because they will not have anyone to ship off to boarding school if you go

missing.”

“You are being charitable, Hilda, and I am not certain that it suits you,” teased Victoria.

“Hmmpf! The only charitable activity my father allows me is my attendance at Sunday Services. You should consider yourself very fortunate indeed, Victoria. At least your father sent you across the sea to spend the summer with me.”

“If you could walk in my shoes, you would understand the plight I suffer every year at Lady Barrington’s School for the Advancement of Proper Ladies. Lady Barrington positively loathes me and makes certain all the other young ladies know it. Father warned me as I boarded the ship from London that if I failed to find a suitable husband again this year, he would definitely send me back to her. If I can only make Pinkerton’s intonation charm work, I can escape all of it.”

Hilda rolled over on the bed, her nightdress tightening beneath her. Tugging on it, she remarked with a sour expression, “It is better I am altruistic rather than delusional like yourself.”

Unwilling to be baited into another argument, Victoria stopped pacing long enough to glance at herself in the long, gold-framed mirror that stood on a pedestal in a corner of the bedchamber. Her flaming red hair, pulled up on her head in a fashionable coif with a few tendril ringlets dangling on the sides, gave her an air of superiority she certainly did not feel, and her oval green eyes hid well the fire of discontent that surged through her. Straightening the lace at her neck, she grimaced as she realized she looked like a spinster schoolmarm. She smoothed out the rich velvet of her ankle-length, forest-green dress, and tenderly caressed each pearl button down her shapely bosom. Examining herself from every angle, beginning at the top of her head with her matching velvet hat down to the tips of her dainty slippers, Victoria saw only deceit reflected there. Her willful heart could never match the obedient, acquiescent

image in the mirror.

When she came upon *Pinkerton's Book of Enchantments* in the Baron's private library last week, the chapter on time travel had given her renewed hope for her future. For the first time in years, she had a plan to escape her father's clutches. She had longed for a new life in a place where her parents, particularly her father, could govern her no longer, and Pinkerton's just might facilitate her dreams.

The enchantment simply had to work, she decided for the hundredth time, because another year at boarding school would make Victoria the oldest student ever to attend there! Not even her mother remembered any other girl who had attended Lady Barrington's School for the Advancement of Proper Ladies annually. A young lady began at age sixteen, and sometimes attended for two years, but never beyond the age of twenty. Victoria had recently turned twenty-one. All the other proper ladies with whom Victoria had attended were married by now, and many had already given birth to their first child. They had all excelled in the tactful art of restraint that a proper lady needed to marry a man of refinement, all except Victoria. *I will not go back there another year!* she vowed to herself. *I simply cannot do it. Not again!*

Leaving the mirror, Victoria turned the copy of Pinkerton's over in her hand and contemplated why the spell failed her. She had read the enchantment scores of times, all to no avail. Then, her eyes widened in horror as she realized the bewitchment could not possibly work while she was still holding the book in her hands. If she took *Pinkerton's Book of Enchantments* with her into the future, it would be unavailable to everyone from the future who might recite from it. Did holding it in her own hand mean she could never be brought forward in time? She read from the copyright page, "Six hundred copies in print," and breathed a sigh of relief. However, she remained unconvinced that she should need the book in the future, she immediately gave the book to Hilda and picked up her green

parasol from the bed. “Please donate this book to the local library the moment one is established in Port Townsend, sweet Hilda. I shall always treasure our friendship. Regardless of our differences, you have been a true friend to me.”

Hilda looked up at her in awe, as though such words had never been spoken to her before. Tears filled the brims of her eyes and she blinked them back. “But, Victoria, how will you ever manage living in the future? You are too outspoken and positively tactless. I doubt you have enough fortitude to pull it off.”

Victoria smiled. “That is precisely why I must try. I certainly do not belong at Lady Barrington’s School for the Advancement of Proper Ladies another year.” She bent low and kissed Hilda goodbye on the cheek. “I shall miss you, sweet Hilda. If I miss no one else in the nineteenth century, I shall certainly miss you.”

Standing up, Hilda walked to the maple vanity and picked up a small, brown book with a rich, new cover. “Then, at least take this with you. It may come in handy when you are trying to tactfully explain why you have arrived at a place and time where you were not invited.” She placed the book in Victoria’s hand and hugged her affectionately.

Turning this new book open to the title page, Victoria read, “*Etiquette for the Twentieth Century*. Why, Hilda, wherever did you get this?”

“At Waterman and Katz today. It arrived last week, and when I learned you were determined to make the enchantment work,” she admitted with a sly grin, “then you might as well know what the experts think you will be up against.”

Encouraged by her friend’s thoughtfulness, Victoria gave Hilda a quick hug and smiled. “Then, I shall get back to reciting the enchantment at once. Dear, sweet Hilda, with your faith I shall not fail.”

Stepping back, Victoria placed *Etiquette for the Twentieth*

Century inside her drawstring handbag, making certain her passport, birth and teaching certificates, and her money were still there then she looked lovingly into the eyes of the friend she had found in Hilda Eisenbeis and began the enchantment recitation once again. The words came freely to her mind because she had spoken them over a hundred times during the past few days:

“Winds of Time my journey tell,
Hear my words and serve me well.
Listen as we both shall speak.
Send me to the place I seek.
Send me forward as I ask,
Winds of Time, ‘tis an easy task.”

Suddenly, Victoria felt a rush of heat arising in her bosom and spreading outward until she thought she would be consumed with flames. She placed her hands upon her face and felt her cheeks hot to the touch. The room started to swirl around, making her dizzy and frightened.

However, nothing could have terrified her more than the look of pallid shock upon the face of her friend and confidante as Hilda Eisenbeis’ mouth dropped open. Hilda screamed, “Victoria!”

The name sounded muffled and far, far away.

A great rushing wind surrounded her and Victoria found her hands clutching the skirts of her velvet dress, holding them down so as not to expose her pantaloons.

Her lovely hat and parasol blew away and she had the distinct impression they had arrived out of thin air into an older woman’s bedchamber, frightening the woman into a dead faint.

Victoria’s long, flame-red hair came loose from its pins and swept about her face, blocking her vision as it wrapped around her head. She could not abandon her grip upon the lifting skirts of her dress to repair the disheveled damage to her hairstyle when she was whisked

from the year 1893 within the whirling vortex of a tornado.

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Port Townsend, Washington

Thursday, 11 Jun 2009

9:15 P.M.

“Hey, Charlie. Mom know you’re still awake?” Ian asked as he stepped into the hotel room at Manresa Castle and found his little brother reading aloud from under a blanket while using a flashlight. Ian turned on the hotel room light.

“You won’t tell, will you, Ian?” Charlie whispered, coming out from his hiding place. He gave Ian a mischievous grin as he nodded toward the open door that adjoined their hotel room with their mother’s.

“Depends on what you’re reading.” Ian closed the adjoining door quietly then arched an eyebrow and glanced in Charlie’s direction.

Holding up an antique, hard-cover book the size of a small paperback, Charlie explained, “I found it in the library today, while we were waiting for you to get here.”

“Let’s see then,” Ian insisted, having taken his role as surrogate father seriously ever since their own father died. When Charlie hesitated a little longer than comfortable, Ian snatched the book from his brother’s hand. Reading the title aloud, he said, “*Pinkerton’s Book of Enchantments*. What is this? Charlie, you know Mother doesn’t approve of the dark arts.”

“It’s not that,” the lad insisted indignantly, jumping from the bed and taking the book back from Ian. “It’s really old. It was printed in 1860 in London, England.”

“Let me look at it again,” said Ian, holding out his hand this time, waiting for Charlie to comply. “Please.”

Charlie gave the book warily back to Ian, apparently satisfied that he had been asked in a more mature manner.

Looking for an index, Ian found nothing more than a handwritten message scrawled onto the inside back cover, addressed simply to Princess. Glancing through the chapter headings, Ian read aloud, “How to Make Yourself Invisible. How to Fly Without Wings. How to Travel Through Time.” He sighed, looking at the title page. “London, England. 1860. Limited edition. Six hundred copies in print. Looks harmless enough.” Returning the book to Charlie, he removed his suit coat, white shirt and tie, and tossed them on the dresser then began unbuckling his belt.

“I’m going forward in time,” Charlie announced when he returned to one of the two beds and opened the book again. “Chapter Three says that if two people recite the enchantment in a different year, but on the same day of the week, at the exact hour and minute as someone from the future or from the past, the person from the past will be taken to the person from the future.”

“Sounds more like you’ll be bringing someone here from the past, Charlie.” Ian humored him as he sat on the edge of the second bed and removed his shoes.

“Why?”

“There were only six hundred copies of the book printed, all of them in London. For all you know, this may be the only copy in America.”

“So?”

“So you’ve got possession of the book. Someone in the future doesn’t—” He paused, considering that his brother may not understand. Besides, Ian thought the whole idea was nothing more than a child’s diversion. “At any rate, if you do bring someone forward from the past, make her pretty, about my age and available, would you?”

“Sure!” Charlie exclaimed. “You really think it will work?”

“With your faith,” Ian tousled his brother’s auburn hair momentarily and gave him an encouraging smile, “it’s bound to

work.” Standing, Ian walked into the bathroom, turned on the lights and tossed a small toiletry kit onto the counter.

Listening to Charlie read the words of the enchantment with great solemnity, as though he unshakably believed he would be transported into the future, Ian was amazed at how well his brother was reading. Wasn't it just last year Ian had helped him sound words out on a school assignment? Proud of his young brother's quickened ability, he heard:

“Winds of Time my journey tell,
Hear my words and serve me well.
Listen as we both shall speak.
Send me to the place I seek.
Send me forward as I ask,
Winds of Time, 'tis an easy task.”

There was a moment of silence then a burst of wind swept through the room and a long, loud gasp escaped Charlie's lips.

Ian poked his head around the bathroom doorframe to see what had caught the young boy's attention. His mouth dropped open and he watched in wide-eyed wonder as a small tornado seemed to fill the center of the spacious room, growing in size until it was about five feet tall and had the color of a dark, green forest.

Charlie squealed in delight and jumped up and down upon the bed, his arms waving around like a flying fish trying to escape a hungry predator. “It's working! Ian, it's working!”

When the whirlwind dissipated, a woman wearing a floor-length, velvet gown, complete with bustle, appeared out of nowhere. She was bent over, her thin arms and hands holding the green folds of the dress down, the fabric still trying to blow away from her slender ankles. A small, drawstring handbag dangled from her left wrist. Her long, curly red hair hung disheveled around her face and the look in her emerald eyes was nothing short of absolute astonishment.

“Oh, Charlie,” Ian moaned as he leaned against the door frame.
“Now, what have you done?”