



**One Night With The Fae**  
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# Chapter 1

## New Chapter

Slightly drunk on the darkest night of the year, Cara was halfway down Conyngham road before she noticed the lights in the Phoenix Park. She was almost certain they hadn't been there a minute ago but now she saw beaming lights protruding from the trees and flashes of light in various colours echoing across the sky. She followed her friends, staring at the lights in wonder.

"What do you think those lights are for? A rave or something?" she said, half to herself.

Her best friend, Louise, stopped shouting at her boyfriend long enough to look around quizzically. "What lights?"

Unwilling to wait for an answer, Louise turned her attention back to her boyfriend, continuing the shouting match as if there had been no interruption. Cara gazed at the park, longing to go over and see, not really bothered that her friend hadn't seen anything. They were heading home and she was already late but when the others stopped into the nearest chipper for a few bags doused in salt, vinegar and grease, she decided to cross the road and check out the strange lights. She told herself she would be back before they even noticed her gone. They were used to her wandering off on nights out, they would wait. She hoped.

She crossed over when the traffic lights turned red, weaving in and out of the cars to cut across two roads before making her way straight through the entrance. As soon as she stepped past the gate, her ears filled with the sounds of the strangest music she had ever heard. She followed the lights but they seemed to move further and further away all the time. At first she had expected to go as far as the monument but she found herself heading past the zoo and not stopping. The music was calling to her now; she could feel it vibrating in her veins with every note.

She wanted to stop. So stupid, she told herself, always doing the impulsive thing without thinking about it. She needed to turn back and

walk the rest of the way home with her friends. But her feet kept moving forward, faster and faster in time with the music that almost seemed to build up into a frenzy. It was pitch black and the park was dangerous at night, she had to be careful but she didn't feel in control of her own body. Her mind was there, her thoughts and wants were there but nothing seemed to connect them with the rest of her body. All of the street lights blackened as she moved along. A fleeting look behind her showed her nothing but an empty expanding darkness. She had to keep moving just to stay within some light. Light was safe, avoid the dark, she thought but it seemed to creep up behind her, forcing her to move further into the park.

Even more worrying was the fact she hadn't seen a soul since she left her friends. The park was usually full of life at this time of night between drug dealers and prostitutes, customers and Gardaí; it had never been this lifeless. Somehow their absence screamed that something was wrong. If the lights were from some kind of party then surely there would be voices, shouts, laughter, anything. The only sound she could hear aside from the drumming of music was the wind rustling in and out of the undergrowth of the many overbearing trees. In the dark, they seemed to lean towards her, as if meaning to snatch her up in their barren branches.

Cara shivered, trying to push the childlike imagery of boogey men and evil trees out of her mind. She ended up in a part of the park normally used by joggers, dog walkers and the odd junkie. She was soon surrounded by the thick trunks of ancient oak trees that she couldn't remember ever seeing before. But the lights had stopped moving. And so did her feet. At last. Glistening and inexplicably more compact and vivid than before, the lights hovered above a clearing. The ground almost looked dead, it was so unexpectedly barren in the middle of so much nature. Empty except for dead leaves and twigs. In the very centre was a large fissure in the ground. The lights dipped inside.

Cara's feet no longer led her against her will. It was her own curiosity that persuaded her to approach the widened gap in the soil. Peering downwards she was startled to note a set of stone steps leading underground. Glancing around first, she took a tentative step forward. Immediately, the steps lit up, transforming them into something warm and inviting. The music she had heard was louder now and it no longer sounded strange. More appealing than odd.

Her hips swayed in time with the music. She eagerly danced down the steps to the bottom. She gasped in shock as her eyes took in the

scene before her. She had stepped into the middle of a party but not the average kind. This one was full of creatures unfamiliar to her eyes. For a second she assumed they were costumes but as one particularly hideous being turned in her direction, she saw that its claws were real and its fangs unimaginably sharp. She backed up instantly, eager to leave, but the steps were gone. Only a stone wall stood behind her. Her eyes darted around anxiously, looking for a way out and seeing none.

A comforting sense of calm floated over her encasing her body but something deep down inside her warned her to get out. An inner alarm bell set off by the sights around her. Her emotions conflicted together until she wasn't sure what she really wanted to do. Something about the smell of the place reminded her of home and yet there was a desperate need crawling up in her gut to run away as fast as she could. Again, her curiosity got the better of her, she wanted to know exactly what was going on but decided being unobtrusive was the best not to mention safest method for this.

She made sure to stay against the walls; something told her that losing her bearings would be a mistake. Although with no visible exits, remembering where she started didn't seem as important. Her feet were aching by now; a night of dancing in heels had made its mark on her toes. She took off her shoes, not caring that her feet would get dirty on the soil. She liked how it felt against her toes. The smell of the slightly damp earth filled her nose in a surprisingly appealing way.

It distracted her from certain niggling worries about getting home. Not to mention who or what these creatures really were. Not for the first time, Cara wondered if her drink had been spiked and if she was now hallucinating. But it all seemed so real. She ordered herself to think clearly. A quick appraisal of the room showed her a large, sort of gothic looking place. There was a dance floor but no decent seating area. It was lit up by candles that hung high on the walls supported by ornately designed glass candelabras. They were at odds with the candles, like ice holding up fire. The flickering of the flames made shadows dart into every corner.

She sidestepped around the room slowly, avoiding the crowds. All manner of creatures danced in the middle of the room, some laughing, some arguing but all moving constantly. Her eyes followed their movements, intrigued by their focus. There was some hidden beauty in the way the monstrous looking ones pranced around together. They managed to come across as elegant despite their appearance. She watched them for too long, she realised, shaking her head to force herself to

concentrate and keep moving. She remembered stories about faery rings and humans forced to dance until they died. That was enough to push her forward.

Tables full of strange food and drink edged the dance floor. She passed by many of them but didn't recognise anything. Some of the food resembled fruit that she knew except the colours were wrong and some of the food seemed to bubble on the platters. She was too afraid to touch them. Most of the creatures carried ornate silver goblets that didn't seem to need refilling. Cara picked one up out of curiosity. It was filled to the brim with a clear golden liquid that reminded her of thin honey. It looked safe enough so she took a sip, hesitating at first but then draining the cup greedily and licking her lips afterwards. It tasted like heaven, a cup of liquid gold that settled warmly in her stomach and left her wanting more.

Staring into the goblet in amazement, she saw the liquid refill itself. She eagerly lifted it to her lips to drink again but a strong pale skinned hand stopped her.

"That's not for you," said a pretty white haired boy with silvery wings.

His skin was so pale it was almost transparent. She thought he was much taller than her at first but soon realised he was hovering above the ground, his wings moving rapidly. Cara stared enviously at his wings, they were stunning.

"You don't belong here, don't eat or drink anything else."

Although he sounded angry, his dark violet eyes were kind so she trusted him and put the cup down.

"Sorry," she said, turning back to speak to him some more but he was already gone. She felt a vague sense of disappointment. It would have been nice to talk to someone. To find out...anything.

The drink was beginning to numb her senses, she didn't get drunk easily but the room was already spinning a little.

"Wow," she muttered to herself. "What was that stuff, moonshine?"

She had been tipsy earlier but hurrying through the Phoenix Park in December in high heels and a skirt had done a good job at sobering her up. Now her cheeks grew hot; she tried to fan herself to cool down. She stumbled further along the room, almost knocking over a chair. She was beginning to attract attention, she realised, as some of the mythical looking creatures gazed at her in surprise. Some of them laughed harshly but none touched her.

She sat on a stool to settle herself and observed those around her. She felt like she was immersed in water, her movements were so slow and languid. The music was slow and almost hypnotic now. Cara swayed in time as she looked around to see where it was coming from. She was surprised she hadn't noticed before but a group of creatures with instruments sat next to a huge gold throne at the top of the room. They were playing frantically; even from her viewing point, she was sure she saw blood dripping from their fingers. She wondered just how long they had been playing.

The thought passed quickly because Cara was distracted by the throne. A beautiful, haughty looking woman with wavy red hair and emerald green eyes sat upon the jewel encrusted golden seat. She appeared closer to human than anything else in the room despite wearing the strangest looking gown that Cara had ever seen. It was dark green in colour, showed way too much cleavage and the skirt was slashed with deep slits that showed just how long her slender legs were.

A tiny creature knelt at the woman's bare feet, apparently to be used as a footrest whenever the woman felt like inclined. It cowered low to the ground, the back of its bald head covered by long thin fingers and many pink scars. Behind the woman's head floated many lights but she was too far away for Cara to see how the lights drifted there seemingly unaided.

The woman was surrounded by huge muscular people with wings, pointed ears and an arsenal of weaponry that made Cara's stomach turn. Now that she noticed, it seemed most of the people in the room had wings or horns or even hooves instead of feet. It was almost as if a film of calm was touching her skin because she didn't panic like she should have. Her ability to be fully aware of what was normal was long gone. She noticed the red haired woman glare across the room. Instinctively, her eyes followed the path of the woman's with interest.

Another throne, this time a silver one, was on the other side of the room facing the gold one. In fact, the room seemed to grow with every glance; it was more like a huge hall now. Cara felt certain it hadn't been that big a minute ago. Resting on the silver throne, her mouth curved into a sneer, sat a woman who looked remarkably like the red head except her hair was blonde and straight and her eyes an icy grey. She was adorned with far too much jewellery. She wore black leather trousers and a dark red corset that somehow seemed alive. Cara couldn't stop herself from shuddering at how wrong it was. The warriors next to her were even scarier than the redhead's. One in particular was a muscular

woman with short brown hair cut into a choppy style. She seemed to be busy staring down the red headed woman. Cara was glad she wasn't looking like that in her direction.

The music changed again, the room seemed to fill with something darker. It wasn't anything that Cara could say specifically happened but the atmosphere had transformed completely. A squeal on the middle of the dance floor alerted her to a tall dark being with enormous black wings. He was handsome enough, she thought, his dark hair a bit too long and floppy for her liking but still, he was an impressive looking man. She wanted to say faery but this one was scary, nothing like the faery tales she had ever read except maybe the ears and wings. He was smiling broadly, even as he took out his sword and beheaded the wizened creature before him. He didn't bother cleaning the droplets of blood that had landed on his own skin but he made sure to wipe his sword on the creature's companion who was shaking with fear.

Even though she was horrified, Cara felt herself stare longingly at the dark man; he was as beautiful as he was terrifying. She willed herself to stop looking, amazed by the lust she was suddenly feeling, but her eyes didn't obey her. He turned around and caught her eye, his smile still wide and suddenly full of something that made Cara's blood run cold. He left the dance floor and approached the golden throne. After he had bowed his head low for the red haired woman, he knelt by her side, looking up at her adoringly.

Cara stood, firmly deciding she needed to find a way out. Someone had just killed in front of her. This wasn't where she needed to be. She kept her hands behind her, touching the wall and made sure her eyes kept moving to warn her of anything approaching. A silent scream welled up inside her; she was truly panicking for the first time. Something had cleared her head. She had a strong feeling she was in danger and that she needed to escape immediately. She couldn't find a door or a hallway or anything that would lead her away from the room. She caught a glimpse of the white haired boy who was staring at her, his face creased into a frown. She stepped towards him but something else crossed her path before she could reach him. An ugly, foul smelling old woman with long knotted hair and wart covered hands stood in her way.

"Come with me, dearest," the woman said, her voice dry and crackling.

Cara shook her head and backed away but the woman was surprisingly strong. She gripped Cara's arm and pulled her along with ease.

Cara prayed she was dreaming and that she would wake up but the pain of the woman's grasp was too real to ignore. The woman didn't even seem to notice Cara's struggles to escape. She led her into a bedroom. The walls looked like thick stone and were covered in nightmarish paintings. The four poster bed was huge and luxurious, covered with red velvet.

The woman pushed Cara onto the bed and offered her a basket full of red apples. She stood there and watched until Cara picked one up. It was shiny with health and almost bursting with juice. When Cara bit into it, the crunchy flesh startled her with its incredible flavour. The woman nodded with satisfaction as Cara relaxed instantly. She sank back against the pillows, took another bite of the delicious fruit and didn't even blink when the woman left and the doorway disappeared after her.

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