

## **OMNIBUS**

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## Reviews

Linda Madl, acclaimed author of SPEAK OF LOVE says of THE BIRTH OF SPRING ~ A Dream Realm Award Winner for Best Young Adult Fantasy, “McGathy is a master of the lyrical language that draws the reader into the Faery realm. When you’ve finished reading this tale, you’ll be ready for the next. ‘But what of fall, Storyteller? How did it come into the world?’”

In THIEF OF DREAMS, Sheri L. McGathy, has written a wonderfully romantic story filled with heart-warming romance and suspense and shows us that love can conquer all. ~ In the Library Reviews

THE ANCIENT ONE is a beautiful story of love and hate, innocence and loss. It is the stuff from which legends are born... ~ Kelley A. Hartsell, CK2S Kwips and Kritiques

WHERE LIES BEAUTY, a tale inspired by a fairy tale, captured this reader’s attention from the first paragraph. ~ Tina Morgan, Fiction Factor

Sheri L McGathy has truly captured the essence of hope, love, and beauty in these four tales. From the despair of death in a world trapped in an endless winter through the joy of love born from knowing the true inner beauty of another, these four stories will take the reader on a mystical journey that will guide them to see the magic that is there in their own lives. ~ Carol Hightshoe – Author of the Chaos Reigns Saga

## A Note from the Author

I'm often asked why I write fantasy, and I usually answer that fantasy, to me, evokes the wonder of dreams and unfettered possibilities. It can be filled with fanciful pleasures or unimaginable fears—all the things we believed in without question when we were kids. Fantasy is Santa and pixie dust, unicorns with long golden horns, and the monster that lurked in the shadows beneath your bed when you were little. Fantasy is fantastical and holds the promise that wishes just might come true if only we dare to believe in the magic of the moment.

Magical moments exist all about us, yet all too often, our busy lifestyles cause us not to notice. We're simply unable to pause long enough to allow the magic to touch us. The moment passes unnoticed and unremarked.

I think twilight is one of those magical moments—a time when the world holds its breath as if waiting for something special to occur. The day has not yet arrived or ended, and the night is not yet born or faded. A hush settles over the land and a sense of awe surrounds us. So much so, that we accept the possibility of other realms where elves exist, magic works, unicorns graze, dragons fly, and anything is possible if only we believe. And maybe, if we wish hard enough, we might be able to bring a bit of that magic to our daily lives.

Twilight holds the promise of enchantment and ignites my imagination. It makes me ask, "What if?" It's simply magical.

I personally feel that magical moments come to us in many forms and strike in many different ways. Old legends, ancient puzzles, a word or words overheard in a crowded place are all things that make me ask, "What if?"

Each story in this collection was conceived from its own what if moment. THE BIRTH OF SPRING was born from my fascination with the fairy tale charm of three while THIEF OF DREAMS sprang from a line in an old ballad. THE ANCIENT ONE developed both from my love of trees and from a very simple question: How does one become a goddess? The idea for WHERE LIES BEAUTY started with a rose and a single tear.

I'm very pleased to be able to share with you four of my favorite "What if?" creations captured in one book. I hope you enjoy!

~ Sheri L. McGathy

For Regan and Kameron

~ May the magic always brighten your world ~ And for Linda, who never fails to wear the sombrero.

Sample file

## The Birth of Spring: An Enchanted Storyteller Tale

“Gather round, children, gather near,” the old Storyteller called out as he made his way slowly through the town. “Tis a tale I have to tell, and a tale that wishes told. Come, come, gather near.”

He leaned heavily on his staff as he eased himself to the ground beneath an ancient oak standing in the center of the village square. There he silently waited for the children to come—and they would come—for all loved an enchanted tale.

He did not have long to wait.

“Come closer.” The Storyteller wiggled a crooked finger as the children neared. “Sit, and I shall tell a tale so old, it was first whispered on a dragon’s breath and spread by the waft of its mighty wing. Long has this tale remained hidden in the mists of time; long has it yearned to be told.”

The Storyteller smiled as the eyes of the young shone bright within the pale light of the approaching eve tide. He leaned back against the oak and folded his hands around the gnarled wooden staff. Letting his voice grow soft and whispery, he said, “Close your eyes and come with me to the Faery realms, to a time when the season stood still and the wheel was unable to turn . . . .”

“. . . How dare he!” The Summer Queen, Lith-ah, flung the missive to the floor.

“He dares much,” her advisor, Gavin, said as he bent and retrieved the parchment. “And threatens more.”

The queen turned her back to him and stepped out onto the balcony. The sun shone warm against her skin, yet the breeze held a chill she had not felt or known before in her realm. She heard Gavin’s soft step behind her. Without turning to face him, she asked, “Do you think him serious?”

“Aye, the Winter King has the strength to hold the wheel. Even now, ice creeps ever closer to your border. Soon, he will hold all the southern realm within his frozen grasp.”

“And our envoys?”

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“He laughed at them and tossed them from his court.” Gavin balled his hands at his side. “This new king ignores the treaties his father made. He refuses to release the season to you. No longer content to share the wheel, he instead has chosen to halt its turning. He wishes all the lands, including your realm, my queen, to be imprisoned in the long sleep— forever.”

Lith-ah gripped the railing so tightly that her knuckles turned as white as the marble beneath her fingers. “If he would do this, then he leaves me no choice.”

“My Queen, we could send another envoy. Surely, the Winter King will soon see the folly of his youth. We could—”

The Summer Queen silenced him with her upheld hand. Squaring her shoulders, she met her advisor’s concerned gaze and stated with a voice gone flat and devoid of emotion, “Gavin, call our people to war.”

“Ah,” the Storyteller said, his voice low, as he leaned forward to look the children in their eyes, “even as the Summer Queen called her people to war, her daughter, Astar, sought to prevent its coming.” The Storyteller sighed. “But what could one so young hope to do that had not been tried by those so much older and wiser than she?” The old man shook his head. “Gather closer, children, and I shall tell you . . . .”

. . . Astar crossed the courtyard unnoticed in the confusion following the announcement that the southern realm would go to war. No one sought to question her as she slipped from her chambers and hurried down the walkway stairs toward the outer bailey. No Home Guard hailed her or nodded her way as she passed through the towering palace gates and stepped clear of the chaos within.

As soon as she was beyond the last watchtower, she left the road and kept to the shadows at the base of the palace wall until she reached the footpath that led into the wood.