



October 31st dawned clear and bright above Serendipity Bay. It was a place like no other. It was like being at the center of different worlds. Everyone knew that to the south was nothing but empty desert and that the north was all high forest. But all along the west was a hot tropical beach, and on the east there were warm meadowlands.



Two orphaned sisters named Sybil and Libys lived beside Serendipity Bay. One lived on the east side and one lived on the west. They not only lived opposite each other, they were very different in nature.

**Libys was a famous cook and
a homebody.**

**She was happiest when busy
in her eastside cabin, with
Housecat asleep on the
window seat.**



Sybil, a great poetess, was a wanderer.
She loved living out of doors, and
she was happiest hanging around a
tree, thinking.

Sybil was doing just that, late in the
day of October 31st, when she saw
Libys hurrying down the beach road.
Libys had rowed across the bay, to
find a coconut for their Halloween punch.

Oh oh-- I hope Libys doesn't see me,
Sybil thought. *She will want me to*
help her get ready for tonight's
party, but I want to finish my new poem!

Well, Sybil need not have worried,
because Libys was deep in thought. But
Sybil *would* have had good reason to
worry, if she knew what her sister was thinking.

Libys was not headed for home, as Sybil thought.

Libys was going to THE BOG!



The story around Serendipity Bay was that The Bog had no bottom and that a fearsome creature lived in its depths. Yet “Granmere”—the sisters’ grandmother—used to visit The Bog every Halloween, and no one knew why. Granmere loved Life, whether in the cabin with Libys or outdoors with Sybil. She had died almost a whole year ago, and this would be their first Halloween without her.

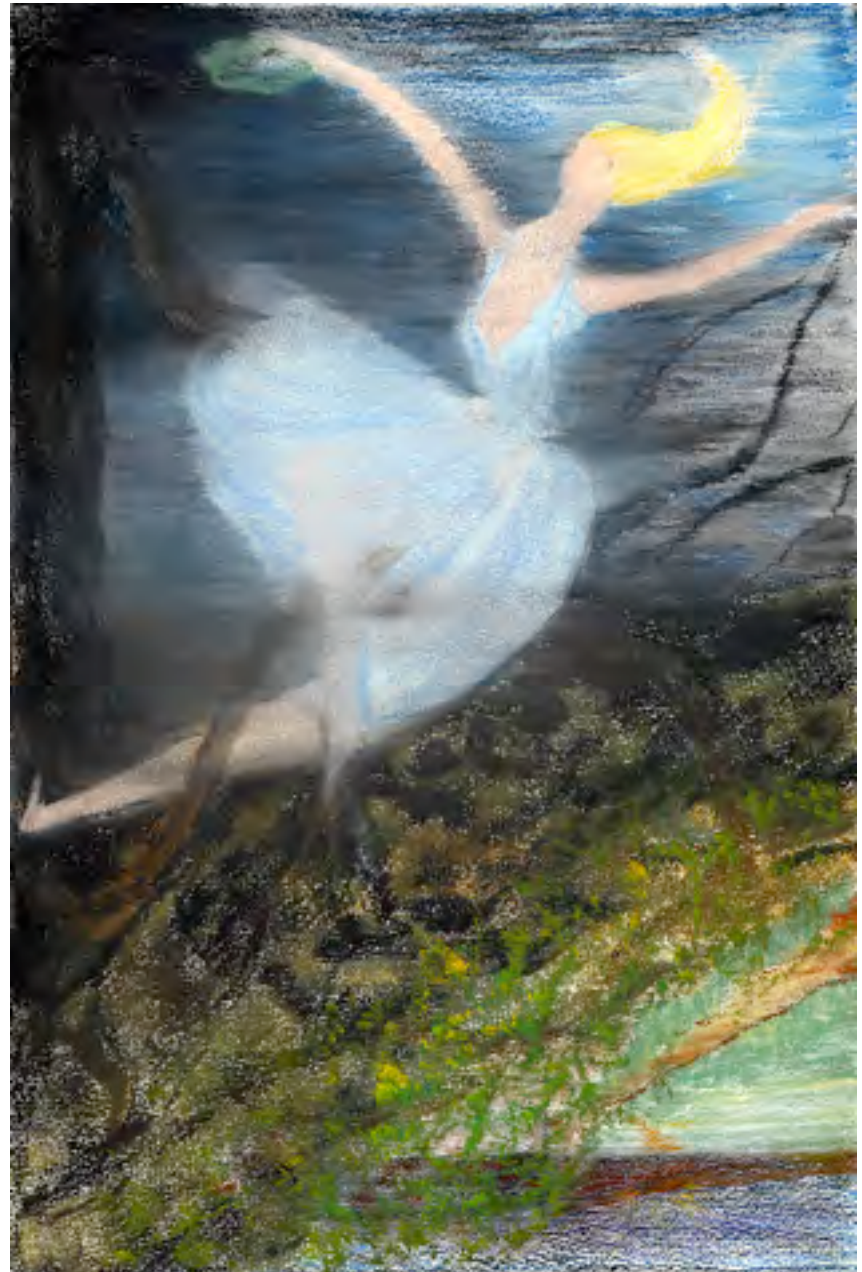


The Bog was dark and still under the tangled trees, and Libys’ thoughts got sadder the farther she rowed. *Our party won’t be the same without grandmother—just Sybil, me, and Housecat*, she was thinking, when all of a sudden a low branch knocked her right out of the boat.

**Immediately Libys went down, however,
something very strange happened....**

She didn't feel afraid!

**It was as if she had dropped into a dream,
and it seemed so real....**



It was as if she were back with Granmere last Halloween, waiting for Sybil at the jacaranda tree. Granmere had been talking about the best way to live Life.

“So long as we do live, Granmere said, we can’t know if we will celebrate All Hallow’s Eve together again, afterward. What matters most, is that we share Life’s spirit well together in The Here and The Now.

*“Always count on living spirit, especially in a time of need. You never know where or when you might meet it eye-to-eye, but hold on to the thought:
that is where Love meets.”*





At about the same time that Libys got knocked into The Bog, Sybil arrived at the cabin. Nothing looked ready for the party, and Libys was nowhere in sight. Sybil *was* worried now, because she had not seen Libys' canoe back at the dock.

Libys, meanwhile, was sinking fast in The Bog when, all of a sudden—of all things!—

Something--or was it *someone*?--swooped up underneath her! She heard Granmere's voice one last time: *HOLD ON!*



Libys wrapped her legs tightly around whatever it was beneath her, and up, out and away from The Bog she rode, breaking the surface of Serendipity Bay in a big splash.

Worried Sybil, in the meantime, had run down to the sea road, not knowing which way to turn. There, she was surprised to see Root. Root lived up north and rarely was seen along Serendipity Bay. On top of that, Freelybird was with him. Freelybird, who dwelled at the mysterious south, also just about never was seen at the bay.



“Sybil!” Root yelled when he saw her. “Freelybird says Libys fell into The Bog!”

“*Oh, no!*” Sybil cried.

“But Freelybird says everything’s alright, because Libys was saved by Bog Frog.”

Bog Frog?? “Good Grief!” Sybil called back. “Come on!”



All three made haste to the cabin. There, indeed, was Libys, safe and sound, drying off by the fire.

It was midnight almost, by the time everyone settled down and Bog Frog was introduced all around. Libys happily served the punch and cookies, and with all the new friendship it turned out to be the best Halloween ever.

**Root, Freelybird and Bog Frog loved
listening to Libys tell the Halloween
story that Granmere used to tell,
and Sybil recited her new poem:**

*When loved ones from us have gone away
And we might not see them for another day,
Memories of them brighten the light,
as families and friends join on this night,
to share good company and Halloween treats,*

all together, where Love meets....



All Hallows' Eve With Granmere

Granmere started the ceremony as soon as they were seated and she had poured the traditional family punch. She would hold up her cup and say, "Tonight, we honor all good Ancestors from the very beginning of Humankind." Then everyone held up their cups, looked into each others' eyes, and took their first sip as Granmere began her story.

"The days between October 31st and November 2nd have been celebrated by peoples all around the world for a long, long time. Over 2,000 years ago, November 1st was New Year's Day for a people named the 'Celtics.' They called it *Samhain* (SOW-ehn) Time, or 'Summer's End'--a time for a last taste of summer's fruits before winter.

"An old Mexican custom is to celebrate *El Dia de Los Muertos*--'The Day of the Dead.' Families gather together to feast and honor their ancestors, sometimes with a colorful picnic at the very cemetery! They tell stories about the fine people who lived before them, which adds happy thoughts to their own lives."

At that point, Granmere might notice Sybil and Libys having trouble keeping their eyes off the cookies. She would pretend not to notice and ask, instead, "Would you like to hear how the name 'Halloween' came to be?"

Of course they would!

"Not so very long ago, some churches made November 1st the day to honor *their* ancestors. They called it 'All Hallows' Day,' because to 'hallow' a person means to pay great respect and admiration. Bye and bye, folks began to call the day before it--October 31st--'All Hallows' *Eve*.' So who can guess what the words, 'All Hallows' Eve,' turned into?"

"HallowEEN!" they exclaimed, of course!

“And , so, happy All Hallows’ Eve!” Granmere then proclaimed, *finally* passing the cookie plate. “HAPPY ALL HALLOWS’ EVE!” they echoed.

Granmere always purposely left out some things, so that the sisters could tell stories too. Libys told how it really has been only about 100 years, that Halloween is a bigger celebration for children than for grownups. Her favorite topic (naturally!) was Halloween foods. In apple-growing country, Halloween is called “Snap Apple Night,” and traditional treats are candied apples and nuts. People in pumpkin country love roasted pumpkin seeds. And a traditional Mexican treat is a tasty bread called *pan de muerto*, “bread of the dead!”

The sisters took turns each year, lighting the candle in the Halloween pumpkin. When it was Sybil’s turn, she told how Irish and Scottish people once used big beets or turnips to carve ‘jack-o’-lanterns.’ She especially liked telling about a character named Jack, after whom jack-o-lanterns supposedly got named. Jack, it was rumored, was a bad-tempered miser who wound up eternally walking the earth, with only one coal in his lantern to light the way.

Halloween certainly was quite a mix of old and new ideas, to celebrate Earth’s bounties and Humankind’s spirit. However, it also was a time to put on costumes and go “trick-or-treating.” Would Granmere explain why? “Remember those long-ago Celts?” she answered. “They thought that during Samhain time the spirits of persons who had died could visit the world again. As time went on, young people found fun in disguising *themselves* as spirits, and grownups joined in by offering treats, to keep the spirits happy. Nowadays, one can see all kinds of costumes--from scary ones like ghosts and skeletons to beautiful princesses, furry animals, and swashbuckling pirates.”

Well I guess! thought Housecat, who was not asleep as much of the time as it looked. *Who wouldn’t love putting on a mask, pretend to be anything one wanted, and collect candy from friends and neighbors at the same time!*

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