



The Lord Stones Walk by Sarah Stewart

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Chapter One

I am Willow. Willow of the Isle they say. I have walked through the first of the moors and past the last waters of the forest. I have come to walk the last of the Lord Stones Walk for the final time. I will pass through the village and make my way upon the first path. My green skirt lingers with the leaves preparing for my trail as my cloak bellows with the wind announcing my presence. So I wander down the trail with Agatha at my tail, her charcoal black furry consuming ferns and feather thieves as she goes.

I am ready for what's to come. I know I am. I know. I have known for a long time now that this day would come. It was written in the stones of the earth, waiting my arrival, set there for all of eyes to see. Yet none but one human eye has seen it. It awaits by the pathways opening trusting in our times. Holding to our gaze. Yet none but one human eye. Yes, only one human eye has seen what it's destiny awaits. And I will hold it to its inhuman fate and thrust myself through the gates of shadow and leaf and venture forward to what must become of us.

Me and Agatha. We know the truth of this trail as was set in stone. For thy who walks these hidden paths forged in the times of the elves and hollowed with all the pixies to be seen. One will walk with us to be awaited. For if none come within the fourth of the hour, we shall go on alone. Though they shall not know their fate of course but we shall. Yes, we shall. We will guide them to their fate at the end of this trail where the end shall be sealed.

Chapter Two

I'm waiting. Yes I'm here waiting, sat by the opening of the rocky terrain. I'm waiting. There's a whisper in the air of a young shadow. It follows the edges to walk and closes back behind me. It trails the edges of the north face, jagged rocks and swims between the cracks that fall up the edges. It pushes past the boot length grass and calls out to the silvery-green grasshoppers. It follows me here and now waiting. Waiting for my call. It knows where the sheep lie and passes them by leaving them to rest, undisturbing yet knowing.

It knows who I am and where I've been and waits now. It waits in every crack and cunny it can sliver through. It becomes uneasy now. Unsettled, as if the knowing approach of its master stirs more than excitement. Yes. Yes, it does. It stirs power. Power in those who cannot await.

He is here now. I can feel his presence lifting behind me.

'Jack,' I whisper sharply spinning around to face him, my oak woven staff silently meeting the floor. It is him it has to be I know it is I have known for a long time now. Agatha meets my gaze and her muddy paws claw at the edges for his freshly made walking boots.

'Careful there, kitty. These are new I don't want muddy paws all over them.' He goes to touch her as she hisses sharply at him her tongue slightly sticking out as she staggers back to my side. 'She says that she is not a kitty her name is Agatha and if you are to hike The Lord of Stones then you must abandon any grudges you hold against mud,' I translate so he can understand her harsh language. He takes a step forward towards me as if he's now only seeing me. 'Who are you? I feel as if I know you,' he calls reaching out to steady himself over the icy cold wind. 'Don't fret everything that is meant to happen will. You will know in a minute. Time will tell what I cannot.' It all happens at once. The winds change course sweeping in circles around him lifting his toes from the earth's surface. The sheep awaken from their light stupor as if the events of which await us have called to them. And I step backwards with the hopes that nothing will interfere. That nothing will try and put a stop to the events which must take place for our hike to continue.

Chapter Three

'What is happening to me?' Jack calls out in a terror-stricken voice as he thrashes against the wind. 'Don't try and fight it. If you try and fight it, it may cause you harm but if you just stay still, it will be painless,' I shout standing on my tippy toes trying to make myself heard over the rustle of the wind. Agatha jumps up onto my shoulder curling her soft frightened face into the crook of my neck. 'How do I know I can trust you?' he calls out again but this time he sounds less frightened. Not at ease but less frightened. 'You know it. Deep down you know it. Just listen to your instincts. Don't fight it.' Then finally he gives in letting the air of the breeze consume him. He stays like that for a while hidden from view by the whooshing of the breeze. Agatha lifts her head from my heated neck as if deciding that there is no longer anything to fear and she's right there. There is no longer any lingering fear rustling the air. Everything just seems to hold still. The sheep stay frozen in place as if the wind has turned them to icy stone. The grass doesn't part and swing with the brushing of the wind trying to force itself towards Jack. The only two living things that move are me and Agatha and I'm glad of it gives me time to prepare myself. To prepare Agatha. Then in one very shattered second everything falls, and the wind slowly but surely returns Jack to his feet. He is unsteady for a minute wobbling on his two big toes I let the wind catch him. I know it is with us now. It will not let us fall. It will guide us through the darkness and out the other side.

Chapter Four

His eyes meet mine, glinting silvery green in the setting sun. 'I know you,' he says softly shaking his head. 'I think deep down I've always known you.' Then he smiled at me. It was just so soft, so bright that I knew. I just knew he would follow me. Trust me to lead him through the darkness. 'I've always known you, Jack. Your journey was written in stone by the first of the witches on the first setting of the stones. I have always, always known you,' I called out to him softly as Agatha leapt down from my shoulder and padded softly towards him rubbing her soft fur against the ends of his winter ready trousers. 'Are you ready?' I asked reaching forward as if to ask for his hand. 'I think so. I don't think I'll ever be fully ready, but I don't really think I can turn back either so yes I am ready,' he replied with a quick smile as he took my welcoming hand. So we headed off into the darkness weaving around us. It all seems so quiet and so loud all at once. As if the breeze was singing out to us calling, whispering the songs of the winds and willows. It trails around us guarding us from our potential fall. I know we shall not fall. I know. I know because it was set in stone.

Chapter Five

We've been hiking awhile now, the breeze watching over us carefully. I think Jack gave them a scare awhile back when he took a harsh tumble towards the edge. They stopped him of course. They would never have let him fall. Never. But it was close either way. We're getting close to the end now. I can see it coming just around the corner. He knows. I think

knows but I can't be sure. I hope he knows. There's something yet to come. I think Agatha sensed it first. Her senses are much more heightened than ours so I think she can feel it all before us. Even the breeze that surrounds us it's like she knows their every move and can adapt to it.

We're here. Jack comes to a halt behind me.

'We're here,' I say it again but this time so the rest of the world can hear me. I can sense his fear before I see it. Seems the vision didn't tell him that much.

'You'll be fine. I promise,' I say weakly as I squeeze his hand in the hopes it brings him some kind of comfort. 'Agatha will go first.'

And so she goes padding off through the wall of darkness and as we follow, the wall disappearing behind us...

The End