

25 Pages

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Float: A Whitby Story

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Float: A Whitby Story**Premise**

Della, an adolescent in the 19th century has created a world of magic in her daily routine in Whitby, England. Growing up with her lover Louis, she is torn when he takes a job on a whaling ship. The danger of whaling and Louis being at sea has Della looking to the ocean for answers, even if the answers aren't what she expected. Della uses Celtic magic, against Christian beliefs, determined to save her fiancé. Her friend, Carrie, becomes worry of Della when she begins ranting about Sirens in the ocean. It's left for Della and her sidekick Crispin to curse the sirens away from the Whitby shore. Unless it's all in Della's head.

Historical Information**Prior to 1800**

Whitby Abbey an Anglian
monastery which leads to
the Roman form of
Christianity. Housed
Celtic monks and nuns.

657 AD Whitby Abbey Would be raided by
Danes, remain desolate
for 200 years and then
given to William the
Conqueror who founded a
new monastery.

614 AD-680

AD

St. Hilda

The founding abbess of
the Whitby monastery, a
Christian Saint who
learned Celtic
Monasticism in her first
convent. She was known
for influencing the
king, as well as, the
myth of a snake's plague

of snakes that she cursed away and turned to stone explaining the ammonite fossils on the shore of Whitby.

Even though Whitby Abbey had been destroyed and rebuilt many times, the most destructive of these occurrences were during the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

1536-1545

Destruction of
Whitby Abbey

Henry VIII destroyed the second monastery of Whitby Abbey, which was a flourishing educational monastery.

It continued to be an important landmark for sailors and a sacred ground.

6/27/04

Market Place

The Whitby market place where Whitby jet can be

purchased, jewelry made
from fossilized monkey
puzzle trees

Explorer, Navigator,
Cartographer and Captain
in the Royal Navy. At 17
he was taken on as a
merchant navy
apprentice. Cook also
studied algebra,
geometry, trigonometry,
navigation, and
astronomy.

1728-1779 Captain Cook

50,000 plus death of

1542-1811

European Witch Hunts accused witches by
lynching or burned at
the stake.

Float: A Whitby Story,

1816 AD

Setting of
Float

takes place during an
era of Roman
Christianity, with a
thriving port, during

the age of Romanticism.

Whitby was growing in wealth and size while boat building and whaling grew in popularity. The oil from the blubber was used in lamps for homes and street lighting. The most successful year was in 1814 when over 172 Whales were caught.

1753-1831 Whaling

Main Character**Della**

(Image retrieved from Flickr.com)

Della has a dark soul underneath her average appearance. Her black hair, persistent attitude, and need for adventure is reflected in the stories she tells and her need to figure out a plan. After all, Della might have a good side to her, if you can get past her vivid imagination.

Born in 1798 she grew up living with her mother, Hazel, and father, Samuel, in Whitby, England. Samuel died when she was nine while working on a fishing boat off the coast. The cause of death wasn't clear, but it was expected he had slipped off the deck and drowned since no body was found and he was last seen on deck at night. There was no storm or other causalities. Della and her mother were devastated, and their lives changed drastically. Once cared for by Samuel's good fishing wages, Hazel took work as a wool spinner while Della worked as a bakery

apprentice kneading dough. Della and her father had a very close, loving relationship. He would take her to the outskirts of Whitby and roam the forest collecting herbs, mushrooms, stones, and other valuable objects. He taught her to appreciate nature and give thanks to God for their prosperous environment, including the ocean. Paying respect through shrines and Celtic crosses. After his death Della became introverted.

Della's work for Markus as a baker's assistant, starting at the age of ten. She ran through the cobblestone streets at dawn to make it in time for work. It was during these excursions into town from her house on the hill that she meets Louis, a young boy that traveled to town with his father. In passing, Louis woes Della with stories of mythology and Odysseus, that she held onto like a gem. Della and Louis fall in love over the years regardless of common marriage arrangements. Della's mother, Hazel had taken to Louis.

Della's only problem, as she comes into womanhood is that she is experiencing, quiet, a different world than everyone else. As she experiments with witchcraft magic came to life but with-it, she sees creatures, demons, and odd entities. Her friend Carrie is sure Della is not right in the mind. Hallucinations and delusions or was the magic here all along?

Supporting Characters

Louis (Love Interest)

Della's fiancé, Louis, plays the love interest in Della's life. He enhances her imagination and is her muse. Louis traveled with his father, Channing's, from England selling goods from the city like silks and tools. When they were both kids Louis had noticed Della running through the streets, always like she was late. He was desperate to stop. One day, when Louis and his father were selling parts to a clockmaker, three blocks from Della's bakery, he waited for along the road. When she ran past, he stopped her with his book, Odysseus in hand. He told her about a man he had met in Cambridge that had told him of a story of Siren's. He told her about the captain of his crew and how he had to save his men from drowning by putting wax in their ear. The next time he stopped her again and told her more stories. They eventually got to know each other and fell in love.

Louis was taken up as an apprentice of a merchant captain that was closely tied to the ship makers of Whitby. At the age of ten, he stayed in Whitby learning the craft of ship making and going on short voyages with Captain Augustus. At nineteen he is taken aboard a whaling ship under Captain Phineas. These voyages are much more dangerous and take more time out at sea.

Louis is torn from Della, a move he must make to be a supportive husband.

Sirens (Antagonist)

The Sirens are mystical creatures made up by Della. They are winged and sing song's containing forbidden knowledge of great wealth, love and happiness. Their beautiful song mesmerizes sailors to fall into the sea, seeking the music. These creatures have flawless bodies with large wings, but their faces are monstrous, scaled with long curved noses with sharp tips and eyes that are dark black, covered by long hair. The Siren's hideout in an abandoned alum facility in Saltwick Bay. Their objective is to kill mariners, protecting the ocean creatures. They have been in mythology since 750 BC. They are entities of Della's hallucinations.

Hazel (Flat Character)

Della's mother is a supporting character. She loves her daughter and is very driven, trying to distract herself from all the pain caused by her husband's death. She loves to cook, particularly, seafood. She works at a factory as a wool spinner. Sometimes she falls negligent of her teenage daughter, staring into space during periods of silence. Her home is clean, and she owns very few belongings. Hazel's best friend is Markus the Baker. He helps her when necessary. Hazel does not get remarried

but instead dedicates her life to her daughter. She is often found indoors cleaning or working.

Crispin (Deuteragonist)

Always in a worn red overcoat, Crispin will follow Della to the end of the world. Orphaned as a child, he is the towns go to helper, always doing the dirty work when called upon. He loves to hear Della's stories and goes on her adventures into the woods or up to the Abbey. He lives at St.Mary, sleeping on a pew or in the back corner of the church. Crispin is a good whistler and will often make a tune to fill the silence. On occasion, he comes up with a very good idea even though he is not viewed as being smart. His hobbies include making use of not useful disregarded objects and building odd contractions that are often more work than it is worth.

Carrie (Secondary Character)

Carrie has a London attitude, with snark to go with it. She is tolerated by her best friend, Della, who seeks her out when she needs to have a serious talk. Carrie will take creditability for any of Della's stories, as long as it puts her in a better light. Carries mother and father are wealthy admired townsfolk. Carrie loves to go to the farmers market and pick up clothing and jewelry brought from the merchants afar. When Carrie starts to notice something going wrong with Della her loyalty is

questioned. It's helping Della get through the obstacles that she learns to humble herself. Carrie even though self-centered is looking for friendship and adventure.

Helda Ghost (Mentor)

The ghost of St. Hilda, a woman that lived in 614-680AD, was an abbess of Whitby Abbey. Her advice and wisdom were sought out by kings. It was told that her sociable manner gave her more of a knowledge of what the community wanted to prosper and she would manipulate the king to help provide for all classes. Della finds Hilda's ghost at the abbey and is followed by her throughout the story. Even though Hilda's ghost is encouraging Della to seek out reasons and purpose she if guiding her in a direction that might not be productive for Della.

Locations



(Image retrieved from Flickr.com)

Whitby

Whitby is a town of the northeast coast of England. It is known for Whitby Abbey, Captain Cook, Ammonites, Ship Building, Whaling, and Dracula. This town has many moods. While in some areas it is dark, moist and gothic, others are luscious, thriving like the river and the abundant farmland. Large cliffs protect the town from ocean storms, leading into the port and its lighthouse. The townspeople are self-supportive, bringing in wealth from the port, mining coal, and tourism. There is little crime most of which is illegal trade and brawls.

(Image retrieved from geography.org.uk)

Among the cliffs of Whitby is Whitby Abbey, the first monastery was built in 652AD and it has been built and rebuilt throughout the centuries. It is a landmark for travelers and a religious ground. In the 19th century, it was designating and there was erosion from wind and rain. The central tower would collapse in 1830. An image of the Celtic Green man is carved into the walls of the abbey. The Green Man represents nature. The abbey drew the attention of people seeking isolation and answers.



(Image Retrieved from commons.wikimedia.org)



The Forest and River Esk

Whitby is surrounded by North York Moors forest. The forest is lush with large trees of oak, ash, and birch. White heather flowers, bracken, bog asphodel and long grass plants such as crowberry. The forest is also

home to many edible fungi's such as chanterelles and black trumpets. Fox, snakes, birds, insects, butterflies, and moths are some of the animals that live in the forest. Running through Whitby and the North York Moors forest is the River Esk. This

river is bright blue supports thousands of varieties of fish and wildlife including otters and eel. It might be best known for its abundance of freshwater pearl mussels. It drains directly into the North Sea.



(Image retrieved from
Pixabay.com and edited by
Natascha P.)

Sirens Hide Away

The Sirens home is south
of Whitby in Saltwick Bay. Here

there is an abandoned alum quarry and processing facility. The building at the edge of the harbor also includes a cistern. It was in here that the sirens hide, plot and sleep. The building was made of large bricks and operated from 1649-1673. Along the road from Saltwick to Whitby there are mines in the mountains referred to as "pirate holes," that the sirens hide in to spy on ships from land. In front of the quarry, along the beach, are shipwrecks. The bay has a haunting feel regardless of the ocean's beauty.

Additional World Information

(Image retrieved from collections.lacma.org)

Clothing

Clothing would change according to the character's social positions. For example, Louis would wear a Brunswick and informal traveling gown. While Della would wear a shift with an apron, cap and a cape in the cold. Usually from white or single-color cloth. Carrie would wear a much more elaborate gown with a petticoat and mittens, regardless of the weather. Men wore breeches and leggings. Utilitarian women wore a "short gown" with a corset and petticoat. Since Whitby was a thriving town there would be fabrics varying in colors. Middle-aged women would wear bright colored dresses. Fishermen wore hats, vests, long-sleeved undershirts, scarfs and pants.

Celtic Christianity and Paganism

Celtic Christianity was a dominant religion within England until the 17th century. The deep seeded culture would continue up to the present day. It consisted of the druid (the leading

member/ politician/ medical professionals), vates (diviners and philosophers), vergobretus (judge) and the bard (poet). They were highly influenced by Roman Christians. Celtic's adapted quickly to hymns since they had similar practices. Celtic Christians also influenced Roman Christians by determining Easter's date. Celtic Christianity had prominent respect for nature and the wild, appreciative of God's gifts. They told stories and believed in higher learning, they were celebrating, and women were seen more equally than Roman Christianity. These practices would continue on and evidence could be found at Whitby Abbey that this was once a dominant culture.

Medicine and Technology

Maybe the most influential piece of technology occurring in the early 19th century would be Middleton Railway. It first opened up to public travelers in 1812, on a steam-locomotive bringing passengers from England. This was a big hit and the rant and rave for the time, even though it was a nine-hour horse-drawn carriage from Whitby. The train station would be referred to since it was industrializing England influencing the Whitby, Redcar (a.k.a Whitby-Loftus Line,) which was built between 1871-1883. Medicine was limited. Disease included pulmonary tuberculosis which was treated with electrotherapy and

cholera. Other inventions include percussion ignition which created modern firearms and the first haymaking machine.

Synopsis

Della has been living under a cloud since her father, Samuel's boating fatality. The only light in her life seems to come from her internal magic and love for her fiancé. Nothing could get in between them until he decides to take a job on a whaling boat.

Della has a vivid imagination and a liking for magic and mythology. When she is convinced sirens are overturning ships and leading the sailors to their despair, she uses her magic to curse the sirens away. Crispin cannot see them, but he encourages and supports Della, enjoying their growing friendship. Carrie warns Della that her obsession with the sirens has gone too far. Doing whatever it takes to save Louis from death, Della poses as a man and works upon the whaling boat.

Late at night, the Siren's come and Della is found screaming on deck. She has bound Louis to the mast. Della attacks the sirens with her knife and by doing so falls into the ocean. The Captain jumps into the ocean rescuing her while Louis is untied by a shipmate. The captain reveals her as a woman and Louis ashamed leaves her. When Della awakes, she is relocated to York Retreat, a mental facility.

Story Excerpt

Mushroom Foraging

"Crispin, keep walking." Della moved along the path without hesitation as Crispin followed behind her tripping on pebbles and cracks. There was a steep ledge off the trail. In the deep dark areas of the mulch, under the shade of the trees, under logs, and up the trunks, grew agaric mushrooms. Della whispered to the trees and the ground thanking the earth for what she's found.

Crispin watched as Della moved so gracefully through the forest. She stood still a moment, her lips moving. The wind ceased, and the leaves went still. Her eyes were wide open but were completely still beside the movement of her lips. Gently, he touched her shoulder. She turned around so fast he thought of ducking. "Are you okay?"

Looking off into the distance as if she were somewhere else, she whispered, "I found them."

Crispin pushed his glasses closer to the bridge of his nose. He looked around but couldn't see anything but the forest floor. Della kneeled and lifted a branch, revealing a cluster of mushrooms. Crispin sighed with surprise.

"These will give us answers?" Crispin had never seen mushrooms like these before. His mother had warned him of the dangers of eating unknown funguses.

"They will help us see the dangers of the ocean. Nothing is as it seems. There is something causing mother nature to sink our boats. It is up to us to fix what is being done. I have a feeling it has to do with the whaling. Have you ever heard a whale cry?"

"No." Crispin's mind quickly drifted off to be left as a child. Crying for his mother, crying for food and shelter, eventually crying for any kind of love. It might not be the cry for life itself but the love of life, he has cried endlessly for its return. "I don't know why anyone would want to kill such a beautiful creature."

"We all deserve to live Crispin; life is hard enough." Della collected a bundle of white flowers as they returned to the shrine.

"Are those for the shrine?"

"Yes, they're magic."

"What kind of magic?"

"Paralysis."

"Huh?"

Siren's Fight

Della exits the galley and steps onto the deck of the boat, moisture clinging to her clothes. The moon was full hitting the ship with all of its light. The ocean patted against the hull. The silence told her it was time; the sirens would be there soon enough.

"What are you doing up here?" Louis said.

"I've come to release you of your duty," Della said in her disguise.

"It's already midnight. I've lost track of time."

"Have a sip of ale, it will help you sleep tonight." Della shoved the cup toward Louis avoiding his eyes under her hood. He takes a long drink of ale. As quickly as he consumed it, he was on the floor, heavy as a board. She dragged him to the mast. Using a pully, she tied his hands and used it to lift him against the wood. Arms and legs bound; she watched his eyes in fear as his body stood paralyzed.

A whale in the distance began to rise and submerge. Della watched it and for a second the voices in her head went quiet. The sirens began to flock from a pirate hole on the cliff. Six in total closed in the distance until their large wings bat

above. The open-air echoed with their song, a beautiful tune that sent a vibration throughout her body.

"You can't have him!" Della cried, kissing her beloved Louis. "Leave!"

The sirens body, naked and full breasted, came at her with a face of a demon, its long beak opening. She quickly dove. Grabbing the knife, she jumped at the siren as it flew away. The knife hit the middle of the sirens back. It shrieked filling the sky with its screams. Together they fell into the ocean. The waves consumed her, and Della lost consciousness.

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