



Tessa stood upon a knoll, drinking in the moonlight that flooded the valley below.

It looked as if a giant had scooped a bowl from the earth, bordered by wooded hills on one side and low-lying mountains on the other—mountains she had never gone near, much less ventured beyond. The celestial bodies hung closer than Tessa remembered them being in the mortal realm; here, the moon dominated half the sky, craters visible even to her naked human eyes, and the stars...they dotted that azure-black expanse like burning crystals, their light gently pulsating.

At the base of the valley, silver shimmered across a grand lake the rickety market had sprouted atop, wooden planks and carts and temporary hovels cluttering the decks and bridges scarcely held together by rope and magick. Wisps bobbed along the lake's surface, drawn to the water and bustle, some lazily floating to the high rooftops stacked precariously on multiple buildings. All of it looked ready to topple with one wind gust.

She could already hear the shouts and laughter as goblins and other cloaked fae bellowed their wares, some of the chatter no doubt heated arguments as they haggled over every enchanted item, every misbegotten and nightmarish ingredient or object.

Even so, she felt more comfortable here than any other part of Faerie. So long as you had something to trade, the merchants could care less where you came from, what you needed the items for. Ask not, tell not—the unspoken rule of the Goblin Market. One that made them rich indeed.

After one last check to ensure everything was securely strapped to her, Tessa descended the steep hill. *A few more trips. Then I'm done with this place.*

