

The Seeing

By Elivia Shaffer

Hello. My name is Peter Crowley.

Does that mean anything to you?

Probably not. After all, you're only human. Now, don't get the wrong idea, I'm human too.

Okay, that's a lie. Well, half of one anyway, because I am only half human.

Surprised? So far, you have only known me for about fifteen seconds, but as you continue to read this narrative, you will go in one of two directions. Either almost everything about this story will surprise you, or you will simply stop being surprised by anything.

I promise I will not ramble away like this for too long. Soon, my dear reader, you will begin the most exciting, frightening, unique story you have ever read. But first, you must learn about my kind: faeries.

Yes, faeries are real, but not the type you're thinking of. A fairy, spelled F-A-I-R-Y, is a fictional creature created by a bored human mind, probably originating from a sprite, which is real. However, a faerie, spelled F-A-E-R-I-E, is a term that refers to the magical creatures that surround you every day.

Though you cannot see them, every second, every hour, every day, every year of your life you are constantly surrounded by another world. A world that contains magic, and creatures beyond imagining. However, these beings rarely show themselves to humans, for if the human race were to discover the magic of faeries, the consequences would be great.

Occasionally, a faerie will reveal itself to a human, and any child of both faerie and human is part of a unique race: the seeing.

There used to be a lot of us, but then something happened. Someone went mad, others tasted the addictive drug of power. People went missing, but no one was told. Secrets that never should have been were hidden for years, and the result? A group of naive, inexperienced kids were left to try to save a world their elders had neglected, and many mistakes were made. But I'm getting ahead of myself. We must go in chronological order for you to truly appreciate the significance of the following events. And so, brave souls who dare to see, we begin.

* * *

It was my seventeenth birthday, and although my sweet mother tried her hardest, it was just as depressing as any other year. Most kids celebrate their birthdays, but for me it was just a reminder that the older I got, the harder life was. See, the older a half-blood like myself was, the harder it was to stay out of trouble, because it was constantly more difficult to pretend that I couldn't see the Faeries and appear normal to the humans. Most humans thought I was insane, and Faeries thought I was somewhat of a threat. It was understandable, but it made for a rather lonely childhood.

I walked down the street, reflecting on these thoughts, when I heard a stranger's voice.

"Excuse me!" A girl, probably my age or a year younger, ran up behind me. She was somewhat short, with long, strawberry blond hair, tan skin, and a petite build. She looked

like the type who would be a fun, optimistic, person to talk to. She was cute, but determined.

I was not used to cute, determined girls talking to me, so it took me a second to realize she expected an answer. “Um, yes?” Wasn’t that an original answer? You may applaud now.

“Are you Peter Crowley?” She asked with a smile. “Yeah, uh.... Why?” I had a pretty good guess why. This was probably another kid who wanted to mock the crazy boy who sees things. No one other than my mother knew I could see faeries, but people still notice when you start to stare at things that aren’t there. The most notorious of my incidents of insanity was when I had gotten caught in the middle of a werewolf versus fae soccer game. As all of them ran past, thinking I couldn’t see them, I dodged, tripped, and glared after the fae boy who had knocked me over. Sadly, this whole scene was viewed by some human kids from my school. *SIGH*. Anyway, back to my conversation....

She gave a little joyful bounce, and moved so that she was standing in front of me. “Good! I’ve been wanting to talk to you!”

What? This surprised me so much that I looked up from my feet and straight into her face, and sucked in my breath. Her eyes.

Half-bloods look just like humans, but there is one way to identify them. All half-blood’s eyes are bright green, the color of emeralds.

Like hers.

I blinked, and then stared. No. It couldn't be. It wasn't possible. How could it be that after seventeen years of being the only seeing I had ever heard of, suddenly one literally just runs up and calls my name.

I was about to make up some excuse to make a quick getaway, when something that sounded like an elephant stampede came from behind me. I turned to see a very large group of centaurs running down the street.

"Oh, blast it. I forgot Saturday was the foot race." I said this quietly enough so that the girl couldn't hear me, but as I turned back to her she was staring at the oncoming herd. She looked at me, and then back at the race.

"So you are half blood." "I—" I didn't get to finish that thought, for at that moment the centaurs were upon us. Literally.

Because humans can't see faeries, faeries normally ignore humans, not really caring what they might do to them. For example, whenever you somehow trip on a flat floor, it was probably a faerie absent-mindedly running into you. So, these centaurs simply ran around us without batting an eye.

However, I was somewhat concerned whether or not I got crushed, and the girl was scared stiff. One of the centaurs ran directly beside her, knocking her to the ground. She screamed as she fell, and then curled into a ball with her hands over her head in terror. Another of them was coming directly toward her, and I realized with horror that he couldn't see her. He was going to trample her!

Without thinking, I yelled for him to stop and grabbed his arm. "Slow down, you idiot. You're going to kill her!" The half man, half horse stopped in surprise. For a few seconds,

both of us just stared at each other, then I realized the girl was still cowering on the ground. Turning from the shocked centaur, I knelt beside her. "Are you all right?" I asked, but she didn't move, only whimpered. "Come on," I said gently, shaking her shoulder, "you can get up now. The centaurs are all gone. All but this one." Slowly, she sat up, but did not stand.

"You two are half-bloods, aren't you?" The centaur said.

I looked up at him, feeling terrified, but making myself look calm. "Yeah." I said. "So what." I may have sounded somewhat surly, but at the time I was too scared to care.

"I can't believe it. Half-bloods, and two of them! Real, live half-bloods!" The centaur continued these exclamations, but I ignored him and turned back to the girl, who still had not tried to stand.

"Are you all right?" I repeated.

"I- I don't know. I think I may have twisted something in my leg." I looked down at her ankle, and it had already become swollen.

Looking back up at the centaur, I addressed him. "What's your name?"

The centaur started, and then looked at me. "What? Oh! Carter. My name is Carter. And yours?"

"Peter Crowly. And this is..." I looked at the girl to finish the sentence.

"Penny."

"Penny," I repeated, "and we seem to be in a bit of trouble. Seeing as you almost killed her, maybe you can help us."

Carter hesitated and looked a bit awkward. During the slight pause I was able to get a better look at him. The horse part of him was a sleek brown, well built and tall. The man half

was thin and muscular, with hair that was also brown, as well as brown eyes. He looked to be about nineteen, maybe twenty. “Uh, what? Oh, um, sure.”

“Good. We need to get Penny inside. Do you live near here?” This last comment was addressed to the invalid.

“I... What?” She seemed puzzled, as well as Carter. “Of course not. How could I?” Now I was confused. “By your house being somewhere in the near vicinity. What do you mean, how could you?”

Both of them remained silent. “Look, I didn’t think it was that hard of a question. And we need to get out of the open road, or we’re going to get hit by a car. Or someone will see us talking to an invisible centaur. Now, Penny, where do you live?”

“Peter, don’t you know that already?” Penny asked quietly. “All half-bloods live in the same type of place.”

“After all, it is the law.” Carter added.

“Wha-? What on earth are you talking about? There are no laws about half-bloods. Humans don’t know we exist, and faeries think we’re all dead.” I countered. Both of them gave me strange looks.

“Peter, where do you live?” Penny said quietly. “With my mom, just down the road.”

Carter gazed at me thoughtfully. “I think we should go see your mom. Is she home?”

“Yeah, but it’s going to be a fun time explaining this one.” I grumbled, still wanting answers, but it was clear I wouldn’t get them here. “Penny, do you think you can walk?”

She blushed. “I—I don’t think...” “All right. Then I’m going to have to carry you.” “I can if you want.” Carter volunteered.

“That was my first idea, but it would look a little odd to humans, Penny bobbing alongside me on an invisible horse.”

“True.” He said.

I gently lifted Penny, surprised at how light she was. I started down the street with Carter close behind.

“Mom is going to love this.” I muttered. Penny looked up at me with a nervous sheen in her eyes, and I realized I was making her upset. “Don’t worry, I’m more concerned with trying to get the horse through the front door.” I joked, and she gave a little laugh. I smiled slightly. True, I had only met Penny about fifteen minutes ago, but she was another half-blood, and she seemed like a nice person.

She also had the answers to my questions, and I didn’t want to make her uncomfortable. My seventeenth birthday had been quite hectic already, and it was about to get a lot worse.

“Mom!” I called into our house as I gently set Penny on the living room couch. “I need some help! We have company!”

“Peter? Who’s here?” Mom called from upstairs.

I grabbed a floor lamp as Carter’s tail knocked it over. “Watch it, big guy. You’ll break something.” I muttered.

“Sorry.” Carter whispered, and promptly tipped over a chair.

“Peter, what happened?” Mom asked as she came down the stairs. She stopped as she noticed Penny. “Peter,” Her voice was somewhat concerned as she turned to me, “Who's your friend?”

“Mom, this is Penny. We met on the street when this guy and his friends knocked her down, and now she's hurt.”

“Who, Peter?” Mom said, looking around the room.

“Him!” I pointed at Carter, but she still looked confused.

“Carter, she's a human.” Penny told the centaur.

“Oh, right! Sorry.” He closed his eyes, and revealed himself to my mother.

“Peter Crowley, why is there a centaur in the living room? I thought I told you never to talk to faeries!” She cried.

“I didn't have a choice. And I don't see what harm it did.” I said. My mother was now sitting in a chair and crying hard. “Now they know you're here. They'll take you away!”

“What? Why would Penny and Carter take me away? You're not making any sense.” At this point, I was almost yelling. I couldn't for the life of me understand anything anyone was saying. I looked around the room at the other three occupants. His mother was crying, Carter was awkwardly staring at the floor, and Penny was staring at her ankle, trying not to look like she was in pain. I took a deep breath and spoke in a low tone. “I need you to tell me, right now, what's going on. Mom?”

“P–Peter, I.... You–OHHH.” She put her head in her hands and started crying again.

“Shhhh. Come on, Mom, don't cry. It can't be that bad.” I tried to comfort her, but she just kept shaking her head. I was starting to get worried. Maybe it was that bad.

“Peter.” Penny said gently, “ Peter, sit down.”

“Why.”

“Cause what I think she’s about to tell you might make you black out.” Carter said

“What?!?”

“Just do what they say, Peter.” my mother said faintly. She looked up at me. “ Dear, there’s no easy way to tell you this, so it will have to be blunt. Peter, you’re not legally allowed to live with me. You were supposed to have been turned out on the streets twelve years ago. See, faerie law states that if a human and a faerie have a child, the faerie parent must immediately leave, and the child may only stay with the human parent until age five. After that, they must be sent out on their own. Normally they end up in orphanages, or sometimes they will be helped out by another faerie to get to the faerie capital, Ferrian. Once they get there, the council will decide what to do with them.”

I didn’t say a word. Didn’t move. Didn’t think. My heart was sick, and my head was spinning. Silently, I got up and walked over to the open window. Outside was a group of neighborhood kids, and a group of faerie children. It was incredible, the two groups weaved in and out, the humans thinking they were the only ones out, and the faeries worked around the humans as if they weren’t even there. I felt my mother walk up next to me.

“It’s incredible.” I said, “That two worlds can exist and work around each other with such perfect harmony, but I and my kind are the only ones who can be part of both.” I turned to face her. “What happens to parents who keep their children?”

“I don’t know. Only one other person tried, and they disappeared.”

“Why haven’t you?”

She looked at me sadly. "When you were born, your father had to leave us, but he still keeps an eye on us. But something is wrong. He used to check in on me once a month, but I haven't seen him for a long time now."

"Why haven't I ever seen him?"

"It would have been too dangerous."

I walked over to a drawer and got out our first aid box and brought it over to Polly. "I learned how to do this in school. The bone's not broken, but you twisted it pretty badly. There, how does that feel?"

Polly stared at me. "Fine, but it's not the main problem here. You aren't legally allowed to stay and live here, so what are you going to do?"

"Don't know." I mumbled.

"Peter," Carter said. "There's something else you need to know."

"Yeah?" "The council recently released a report of someone who calls himself The Hunter. Apparently, he's been capturing half-bloods for years, but no one knows why. The council tried to keep it a secret, but now that, well, now they couldn't."

"And why not?"

He looked up at me. "Because there are only five half-bloods left in the entire world. The council sent out teams to find them before the hunter could." He paused for a minute, looking from me to Penny. "I'm a part of those teams."

I stared at the centaur. Then I got angry. "Oh, and you want us to just disappear with you to who knows where without you giving us the reason for why they want half-bloods!"

I'm not going to just abandon my mother and run off to a bunch of half-blood hating jerks who never even bothered to contact me in the entire seventeen years of my life."

"Peter, I know it sounds sketchy, but I need you to trust me—"

"TRUST YOU? You want me to trust you? How stupid do you think I am? I just met you a half hour ago!"

Carter turned to Penny. "And what about you?"

She bit her lip. "I have to admit, my position in life is a lot lower than Peter's, but I still don't think that I want to just blindly go with you. I don't know you either."

"I'm sorry to hear that." Carter said, but he wasn't Carter. He had started to change. Right before our eyes he morphed from a twenty-year-old centaur to a tall man in a robe. He was as pale as death, with blue black hair and deep black eyes, deep as night. "Because I'm afraid I'm not going to give you a choice."

Polly gasped, and jumped off the couch. She faltered, and I grabbed her to steady her. "Who are you?" she whispered.

He laughed, a powerful, terrifying laugh. "I, my dear, am the hunter. Also known as Emmyn Heilan. I needed the half-bloods to disappear for my own reasons, and I had seemed to succeed, but five little brats got away." He looked at the two of us, enraged, and lifted his hand, An eerie green mist curled around it. "I will end them."

My mother screamed as he shot toward us.

The only thing I can recall is Penny's cry, my mother's face, and the feeling of falling.

Then everything went dark.