

reluctantly, for she loved to run bareheaded. She put the faded blue hood on over her long, heavy braid of glossy, jet-black hair, and smiled chummily at her reflection in the little greenish glass. The smile began at the corners of her lips and spread over her face in a slow, subtle, very wonderful way, as Douglas Starr often thought. It was her dead mother's smile—the thing that had caught and held him long ago when he had first seen Juliet Murray. It seemed to be Emily's only physical inheritance from her mother. In all else, he thought, she was like the Starrs—in her large, purplish-grey eyes with their very long lashes and black brows, in her high, white forehead—too high for beauty—in the delicate modeling of her pale oval face and sensitive mouth, in the little ears that were pointed just a wee bit to show that she was kin to tribes of elfland.

“I'm going for a walk with the Wind Woman, dear,” said Emily. “I wish I could take you too.

Do you *ever* get out of that room, I wonder. The Wind Woman is going to be out in the fields to-night. She is tall and misty, with thin, grey, silky clothes blowing all about her—and wings like a bat's—only you can see through them—and shining eyes like stars looking through her long, loose hair. She can fly—but to-night she will walk with me all over the fields. She's a *great* friend of mine—the Wind Woman is. I've known her ever since I was six. We're *old, old* friends—but not quite so old as you and I, little Emily-in-the-glass. We've been friends *always*, haven't we?"

With a blown kiss to little Emily-in-the-glass, Emily-out-of-the-glass was off.

The Wind Woman was waiting for her outside—ruffling the little spears of striped grass that were sticking up stiffly in the bed under the sitting-room window—tossing the big boughs of Adam-and-Eve—whispering among the misty green branches of the birches

—teasing the “Rooster Pine” behind the house
—it really did look like an enormous,
ridiculous rooster, with a huge, bunchy tail and
a head thrown back to crow.

It was so long since Emily had been out for a walk that she was half crazy with the joy of it. The winter had been so stormy and the snow so deep that she was never allowed out; April had been a month of rain and wind; so on this May evening she felt like a released prisoner. Where should she go? Down the brook—or over the fields to the spruce barrens? Emily chose the latter.

She loved the spruce barrens, away at the further end of the long, sloping pasture. That was a place where magic was made. She came more fully into her fairy birthright there than in any other place. Nobody who saw Emily skimming over the bare field would have envied her. She was little and pale and poorly clad; sometimes she shivered in her thin jacket; yet a

queen might have gladly given a crown for her visions—her dreams of wonder. The brown, frosted grasses under her feet were velvet piles. The old, mossy, gnarled half-dead spruce-tree, under which she paused for a moment to look up into the sky, was a marble column in a palace of the gods; the far dusky hills were the ramparts of a city of wonder. And for companions she had all the fairies of the countryside—for she could believe in them here—the fairies of the white clover and satin catkins, the little green folk of the grass, the elves of the young fir-trees, sprites of wind and wild fern and thistledown. Anything might happen there—everything might come true.

And the barrens were such a splendid place in which to play hide and seek with the Wind Woman. She was so very *real* there; if you could just spring quickly enough around a little cluster of spruces—only you never could—you would see her as well as feel her and hear

her. There she was—that *was* the sweep of her grey cloak—no, she was laughing up in the very top of the taller trees—and the chase was on again—till, all at once, it seemed as if the Wind Woman were gone—and the evening was bathed in a wonderful silence—and there was a sudden rift in the curdled clouds westward, and a lovely, pale, pinky-green lake of sky with a new moon in it.

Emily stood and looked at it with clasped hands and her little black head upturned. She must go home and write down a description of it in the yellow account book, where the last thing written had been, “Mike’s Biograffy.” It would hurt her with its beauty until she wrote it down. Then she would read it to Father. She must not forget how the tips of the trees on the hill came out like fine black lace across the edge of the pinky-green sky.

And then, for one glorious, supreme moment, came “the flash.”