

“Add the apple,” Selena hissed.

Drake frowned. “Aren’t you supposed to use *eye of newt*?”

Selena glared at him and tossed a handful of herbs into the pot, turning the mixture blue.

“This isn’t a fairy tale, Drake. Now help me.”

Arm outstretched, revealing a phoenix tattoo on his wrist, he obeyed. “I don’t understand how simmering random junk in Mom’s stockpot will get you anywhere.”

Not answering, Selena turned the heat off and, outside, tossed the contents against the oak tree. A door appeared, and she yanked it open.

“That’s because until now, you didn’t know my world existed.”



I’ll admit being handed the fantasy genre again, I really wanted to revolt. Whose idea was this, anyway? Mine, apparently. When I sat down to write and realized I needed to include the action of brewing a magical potion, the line “eye of newt” came to mind, and I built everything else around it.

That’s not as odd as it sounds. Many of my longer story ideas have all come from small fragments of articles, interviews, tv shows, movies, or songs. It only takes a spark to start a fire, or a small idea to write a story, and everything else blossoms.

I’m also a total sucker for those little fairy doors people put on trees. Some people go all out and create elaborate little doors, and others are simple. Back when we lived on The Island, we used to walk around a smaller island. Weird, I know, but you could literally walk around

the entire circumference in a matter of minutes. It was honestly one of my favorite places to walk because you never knew what you might find.

We crossed over a small footbridge through wetlands and popped out the other side amongst ghostly limbless trees that grew out over the river. There were burrows from wildlife that were always so tempting to peer into, and eventually the council constructed a second footbridge where you could look out over an expansive section of the water. We stood there once looking for the elusive seal who used to pop up in odd places — including the middle of the road to spook tourists. You'd walk through an open field, and eventually the path, lined with trees, turned to dirt.

One day, while waiting for the dog to get out of the mud, I spotted a little fairy door on a nearby tree. It caused a lot of excitement when I pointed it out to the kids, and we spotted a half dozen more before reaching the second footbridge. We also discovered some little fairies made from clothes pegs hanging from trees. Eventually, most of the fairies disappeared, and a few of the doors, too, but we still got excited each time we passed any that remained.

The Reluctant Author

