



The Pirate Queen – A Timewalker Journey
By Christina Bauer
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Deleted Chapters:

The Pirate Queen – A Timewalker Journey

Part 1

Author's note: In earlier drafts of The Pirate Queen – A Timewalker Journey, after Jess and Selma first met, the two chatted for hours at Charon's Crossing. Although much of what they discussed stayed in the final book, it was re-written to be live action versus someone recalling a story. However, some of their tales simply didn't fit into the final manuscript. The ones which follow provide some more of Selma's history as well as describe Jess's first trip to Mrs. Brennan's lingerie store...

The Shopping Trip from Hell

After a few deep breaths Jess resumed her bizarre tale.

"You see Selma," Jess sighed, "dad doesn't have the patience to read a road sign... but he'll rip through a two-inch thick tech book in a week. After I told him about my strange nightmares, the unbelievable happened: Computer Wizard Nathan Ross switched from networking manuals to goeoy parenting magazines.

"One day dad read an article that changed everything. I'll never forget the title: *When will your little girl become a woman?* And there was this cheesy photo of a blonde teenager running downhill in a flouncy blue dress. Yuck."

Jess squirmed in her seat. "After the picture there was a test — the type where the magazine tells you what your score means." Jess rolled her eyes dramatically. "Dad answered the questions for me and what a disaster."

The hint of a smile crossed Selma's face. "What precisely did this test cover?"



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“Oh, things like: *Has your daughter become secretive... Does she take longer to get ready... Have her eating or sleeping habits changed...* Of course the answer to all these questions for almost anybody would be *Yes*. But the stuff about sleeping really hit a chord with dad. He announced that he knew why I was having awful nightmares. According to the test, I was ‘blossoming into young womanhood.’ The article listed all these things I should be do with my mom so I’d feel better about being a flower.”

Jess twisted the buttons on her mother’s old sweater. “I have to be honest here. Some of the stuff on the list was just fine: I needed my own room, maybe even my own phone. No problem. But it also said that I had to go bra shopping *pronto*.

“Well once dad saw the list, *it was all over!* It became a computer program to him... I had to buy a new bra before my bad dreams would stop.”

Grimacing, Jess took a sloppy gulp from her teacup. “So the big day came when we all went into town for the great Bra Shopping Extravaganza. You know that Westport isn’t that big — there are no department stores really — so we went into this underwear-only shop.”

A light gleamed in Selma’s eyes. “I may be familiar with the place.”

“Once we were all in front of the store, Jake turned on the charm. ‘Whoa dad,’ he said. ‘For boys like me, premature bra shopping may result in years of expensive therapy. Would it be alright if I visited the library instead?’

“Dad bought his whole story. ‘That’s a fine idea son,’ he said.

“Now Jake moved in for the kill. ‘May I have some pocket money please?’ he asked. ‘I may need to make copies of important documents.’ And in five seconds Jake had about 20 bucks American in his pocket. I’m sure it all turned into chocolate bars.” Jess puffed out her cheeks, mimicking her brother’s face filled with candy.

“So after Jake left, dad and I walked into the shop. It wasn’t at all like what I expected. Basically the place was a small room with long wooden drawers set into the walls. There were no racks of clothing anywhere: the saleslady found everything for you.”



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“This woman walked up to us — she actually looked a lot like Mrs. Santa Claus — and asked us what we needed. After dad explained that we were shopping for bras, she took me into this small dressing room in the back of the store. With her best Christmas smile she assured me that she’d return in a jiffy with something I’d fancy. So far, so good.

“But before she left the dressing room she said: ‘Are you making a decision today or will you be bringing your mum back with you?’

“Now I knew she was just doing her job, but I felt like someone had yanked on a rope tied around my stomach. My eyes burned red-hot and I didn’t want her to see me cry — so I just ran out the back of the store. And I kept running for who knows how long after that...”

Jess stared out the front window, wiping her nose with the back of her hand. The rims of her eyes glistened with tears.

Selma pulled a small white handkerchief from her pocket and offered it to the young girl. “I can sympathize with your feelings completely,” she said in her silvery voice. “You see, I lost both my parents.”

Her father and mother... both gone, thought Jess with a shiver. Tilting her head to one side in amazement, she regarded the woman before her with new eyes.

“How did it happen?” asked Jess.

* * *

Selma’s Tale

“My parents passed away when I was a wee girl,” Selma replied. “A strange disease took their lives. Witchcraft, some called it.” Selma shook her head. “I’ve always wondered how two such stout farmers would contract so strange an ailment—” She paused, taking a deep draught from her teacup.

“So you didn’t even know them?” asked Jess.



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“I can recall a face sometimes, a gesture others. This happened many, many years ago and I was, after all, just a spit of a girl. In the end, I was taken in and raised by another.”

“Who was that?”

“Ushebti-heh.”

Jess screwed up her face. “That doesn’t sound Irish.”

“It’s not. She was an Egyptian lady, and I lived some of my youth in Cairo, Egypt... among other places.”

Jess leaned back in her chair, sizing up Selma with a wary gaze. “So if you were raised in Egypt, how did you end up back in Ireland?”

“You might say the sea brought me back,” Selma replied coolly. “I was shipwrecked near this very spot many years ago. The residents of Westport were so obliging and — *how shall I describe it?* — discrete that I decided to build my shop here.”

Jess paused for a long moment, her jaw hanging loose; then she wagged her head from side to side. “Look, I appreciate what you’re trying to do, but you don’t have to make up stuff to entertain me. I really have to be going anyway.” Once again Jess tried to stand, but her knees buckled like straw. With a thud, she collapsed back into the puffy armchair.

“You need to recover your strength,” Selma intoned, coolly refilling Jess’s cup. “Why not have a spot of tea and I’ll tell you my tale?”

Trying to keep her hands steady, Jess raised the cup to her lips. “Yeah, sure. Thanks.”

“I told you I was shipwrecked. It all began when my little sailboat passed by Ballyshannon, a harbor not far from here.” She pointed toward the north-west corner of the store.

“As I sailed along, a summer storm rolled in, fast. The skies darkened. Soon hurricane winds whipped the sails. Massive waves rolled under the boat’s little hull like liquid boulders. I could see nary two yards beyond the bridge. My only hope of finding safe harbor lay in the ship’s charts, compass and power motor... a navigational stratagem I had employed countless times.”



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Shuddering slightly, Selma continued. "I can not be sure as to *what* happened after that. The next sensation I was certain of was being underwater. Of drowning."

Jess leaned forward in her seat. "You mean your boat turned over?"

"More than that. Although the charts said I was on safe ground, I had steered straight onto a dangerous shoal. The boat's hull simply shattered, tossing me into open water."

"Whoa." Jess hugged her elbows.

"The temperature in the bay was nearly freezing. Suddenly I felt like a thousand daggers were stabbing all over my body. Instinctively I began to breathe, but took in a lungful of salt water instead. A dire mistake.

"It took all my strength to turn the focus away from my bursting lungs and onto a few vague thoughts: I was trapped underwater with no idea how to reach the surface. Though my mind reeled I could form no solution. Finally into this vortex of fear appeared three simple words: 'Follow the bubbles.'

"So I coughed out the last bit of air in my lungs and swam with all my might along their path. Soon I could make out a shifting plane above my head: the thin irregular skin separating water from air. I was closing in on the surface.

"I burst through to the stormy air, breathing in jagged, rasping gasps. All was pitch dark as the maelstrom raged about me. Sheets of rain struck my face so hard it felt like whips cracking. And the waves, oh you wouldn't believe the waves Jessica. Not one less than fifteen feet high." Selma raised her willowy arms above her head.

"A current would sweep me to the very crest of a giant wave, my stomach lurching from the two-story drop below me. Then I would tumble down into the trough... the sheer velocity of my fall plunging me deep under water. After breaking through to the surface again, I'd find myself surrounded by towering waves soaring tall as skyscrapers.

"Frantically I called out for help. There was no reply. Shivering and panting I paddled about in the freezing water with only my clothes for warmth. My arms and legs felt sluggish and numb. At this rate I knew I wouldn't last long.



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“Rapidly matters became worse. Although I tried to force my body to swim, it heeded my frantic commands at a slower and slower pace. My vision blurred. I was blacking out and powerless to stop it.” Selma fell silent.

Jess leaned forward in her chair. “And then what?” she prompted.

“Somehow I managed to struggle my way onto the very rocks that had smashed by ship,” Selma replied. “After that, the next thing I could recall was waking up in a local hospital. A local fisherman happened across me. The lad pulled me from the rocks and brought me to safety.”

“So you never found out why the ship sank?” Jessica asked.

“Parts of the vessel eventually washed ashore,” Selma answered. “The police found a small magnet had been placed inside the compass, rendering it useless in the sudden storm.”

“Do you mean... someone tried to ruin your ship?”

Selma smiled grimly. “Tried and succeeded. I have my share of enemies, Jessica. But I could never confirm which one was behind the attack.” She winked. “Though I have my suspicions.”

“What do you mean?” Jess babbled, tea dribbling onto her chin.

“Nothing that would concern you,” Selma replied, rising from her chair. “Now, I do believe you are fit to depart for home. However, there are a few important matters we must discuss first.” Her face darkened. “About your nightmares.”

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Deleted Chapters

Part 2

Author's Note: In one version of The Pirate Queen, Jess discovered unusual woodwork on the walls of Charon's Crossing: an angel with a face like her mother's. After Jess touched the carving, she activate a trap door beneath her, sending her tumbling through the floor and into the scene which follows. I loved this sequence because it hints at the many secret passageways and hidden chambers inside Charon's Crossing, as well as the extensive history of the Guardians. However, I wanted to have a more significant way for Jess to find the lore-stone about her mother.

Landing

Jess fell onto a chilly marble floor with a thud. Instantly she sprang to her feet, her head twisting about.

"Who? What?" Jess stuttered, trying to get her bearings. Glancing about, she found herself alone in a long, arched room. The walls and ceiling curved into one great, low-hanging arch made from shards of white glass, the edges soldered together like a great stained glass window. A soft white light shined behind the massive curve, illuminating it entirely.

Jess raced about the empty space. "Someone! Help me!" she called, pounding on the glowing glass arch and kicking the black marble floor.

No answers came.

Jess scraped at the solder between the glass fragments, looking for a door. She found none.

"I'm trapped," Jess moaned. "How am I supposed to—" Her eye ran across a large silver trunk lying in the center of the floor, the sole object in the room.

With halting steps, Jess ambled over to the trunk.



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"It's beautiful," she murmured. "Like a long, low bench made out of silver." She ran her fingertips over the intricate decorations on its surface: the phases of the moon.

Maybe there's something in here that can help me escape, Jess figured.

Slowly she lifted the heavy silver lid and looked inside. A long silver-blue tunic lay within, the kind Jess had seen Joan of Arc wear in pictures at school. The fabric was embroidered with more images of the moon. Jess lifted the garment from the trunk.

"So soft," she said, her eyes widening in awe. Gingerly she set the tunic aside and returned her attention to the trunk.

Jess gasped. Beneath the tunic there had been hidden hundreds of white gems, each as large as a partridge egg. She lifted one, turning it over in the light. Thousands of tiny markings, the lightest of inner scratches, swirled throughout the stone.

"Wild," Jess cried. "These marks form some kind of pattern." Carefully she rolled the gem about her palm, watching its inner facets glitter in the white light.

Suddenly the stone moved, rising slightly above her outstretched hand.

"What the—" Jess leapt away from the trunk as if it were on fire. The gem tumbled from her hand, clanking noisily across the marble floor.

For a long time the stone lay there, with Jess staring intently at it.

"I know what this is," Jess said in an overly loud voice. "Some kind of dumb magic trick." Setting one hand on her hip, Jess sauntered up to the sparkling stone. In a quick, jerky movement, she kicked at it with her toe.

"You see, nothing bad happened," Jess said. "This pretty rock has some kind of gizmo inside." Picking up the stone once more, Jess carefully re-set the gem into her palm. Again it rose about an inch above her palm and hovered in space.

"Cool," Jess sighed, watching the gem spin.

"Maybe I'll just borrow this for a bit," Jess mused, slipping the strange gem into her pocket. "It feels like good luck. I'll tell Selma all about it tomorrow."



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Jess's upper lip curled. "If I ever see Selma again, that is." After replacing the tunic inside the trunk, she slammed the lid shut. Minutes passed as she glanced between the fragile glass walls and the solid silver chest.

"Maybe the stuff *inside* this thing wasn't the biggest help," Jess announced, "but that doesn't mean I can't use it to get *out*." Leaning over, Jess set her hands onto the closed trunk. Bracing her legs, she prepared to push the trunk straight through the glass walls around her.

Crrr-eak.

Jess shot upright, an electric alert coursing through her body. "Don't even *think* about trying to scare me," she declared, scanning the room.

In no time she spied the source of the noise: a jagged glass door swinging open on the opposite side of the room. Late afternoon twilight twinkled in behind it.

"Oh I see," Jess sighed. "Was that thing here the whole time? Just my luck." Racing through the open doorway, Jess excited into a narrow alleyway beside Charon's Crossing. She shot a quick glance at her watch.

"5 o'clock on the nose," she announced. "Time to head home."

As Jess sped toward her ramshackle cottage, she didn't notice the pale image of Selma in the storefront window, watching her every step. A wise smile warmed her gray face.

* * *