

THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC

WINNER OF THE 2008 PETIGRU REVIEW CONTEST, SHORT STORY DIVISION, SOUTH CAROLINA'S WRITERS WORKSHOP LITERARY JOURNAL

Evening was descending on the small community of Sparkleberry South Carolina as a reedy, gray-haired black gentleman known as Bluesy Figwater settled into his front porch rocker. He sighed, contentment washing over him, the creaking of wood on wood keeping time with the whirl of cicadas on this soft, summer evening. A low-country mist hovered above the rose bushes along Bluesy's front yard fence. There was no breeze, but the blue bottles hanging on the old man's 'Spirit Tree' swayed producing a musical tinkling. Bluesy's world seemed at spiritual peace. Then a sudden rattling of that glass made the old man raise an eyebrow.

Sparkleberry had been peaceful for more than a year since Bluesy'd defeated the devil by redeeming the soul of a misguided youth named Cruise Handee at Halester's spring fed pond. The defeat of the devil had been witnessed by the entire town. Eventually, a new business sprang up there called Sparkling Bottled Water. Family owned its profits were shared equally with employees. The company was successfully cranking out well over a million bottles of healthy spring water each week. Sparkleberry prospered. Townsfolk once again worked for a company whose owner they both respected and trusted. Bills could be paid and homes did not go into foreclosure. Parents could afford to send their children to college. This small slice of America felt blessed.

Magic had been passed on to Bluesy through his mother by way of his grandmother, who'd spent a lifetime picking and choosing which form of voodoo she would keep and which she would throw to the wind. Literally. The Figwaters were good people and did not want to harm anyone. Forget the dolls and pins. They strove only to better the lives of others.

Bluesy shunned attention. He was content to help when his fellow citizens needed help, but when the State Newspaper up in Columbia had wanted to do a piece on his life story, he'd sprinkled his magic potion over his phone and it stopped ringing. He was connected to good spirits and had no desire to explain to outsiders. His stunted dogwood, gnarled, windblown, and a century old, was magical. Animals and every other part of Nature were in harmony with Bluesy. His only enemy was evil itself. Bluesy was on call and any time his services were needed, the needy somehow found him.

Peace cloaked Bluesy and his quiet cottage and he was content to rock in the oak rocker he had built from a hundred-year-old white oak tree. Rocking, remembering, his eyes quickly grew heavy, and soon a small snore bubbled up through his wide lips.

A big, black stretch limo pulled up in front of his little bungalow, the heavy back door swung open. An Indian wearing full headdress got out and walked through Bluesy's iron gate past his magic bottle tree, setting off jangling and clanging as if the tree were weathering a terrible storm. The racket woke Bluesy. He worried about the noise and his neighbors.

He didn't have long to worry, because the Indian walked up his pathway to the front porch steps and stood, lance straight in front of him and announced, "I'm Chief Flying Eagle. Should I say, 'Hey, bro'?" After a moment's hesitation, the chief cleared his throat. "Anyway I've come for you because the res's community watering hole has dried up, and man, we've long

forgotten the necessary prayers to Spirit Mountain, to Father of Earth, Wind and Water. We just surf the Internet for information, and there's a lot of it, but, we still don't know how to get back our water and then we get all this spam stuff. The sky doesn't cloud up anymore and it doesn't rain. Our wells are dry and our corn is withering. The old chiefs told of a secret spring, but there's no one left who knows about this spring. This knowledge is supposed to reside here," the chief hit his chest and coughed. "Sorry—sinuses. Anyway this spring can't be found and we need you, Water Man."

Bluesy blinked and ran his long dark fingers through close-cropped hair. "Figwater is my birth name, Chief. I'm sorry you had to come all this way, but you need to check the yellow pages unde--"

"No, but. Your name is F-i-g-w-a-t-e-r and I am tired of letting my fingers do the walking."

"Yes sir, it is my name, but--"

"There are no buts." The chief shook his head. "Hurry up, man." The tall Indian reached down and grabbed Bluesy by the elbow and lifted him. He was surprisingly strong.

"I ain't never been out west, except one time when me and my band played a gig up at Harrah's casino. I play the trumpet, you know, an--" Bluesy smiled in memory.

"This is no time for an old man story. You," the chief pulled Bluesy, "come with me."

"I don't know nothin' about that dried-up place out yonder." Bluesy nodded toward the west. I live in the Low Country of South Carolina. We got plenty of water. Maybe--"

"You are the Water Man. The man who talks to spirits," the chief insisted.

"Well, yes, but I told you, Figwater is only m--"

The chief shouted, "Come with me Spirit Man. Let's go!"

“Okay, but I need to pack. I got to have my potions.”

The chief shook his head, directing Bluesy toward the limo.

“Wait! What’s everyone gonna think, me riding off in a thing such as that?” Bluesy nodded toward the big sleek car. “Why, they’ll think I’ve gone over to the devil, that’s what they’ll think.”

An osprey swooped down beneath Bluesy’s low-roofed front porch and snatched at his closed-cropped hair with pointy talons. Bluesy yelled, “Yeow!”

The chief’s black eyes glowed green and knifed into Bluesy’s. With a voice sounding as if it had come from a bottomless well, he said, “Move it, old man. We’ll be back before the rising sun.”

Bluesy frowned, his snore waking him. His mouth yammered open making loud kissing noises. He squinted into the moonless, starless darkness. “Well, thank the Lord I was only dreamin’. That limo would embarrass me.” Bluesy was scooting forward in his rocker, preparing to stand when a fluttering breeze buffeted the still night and a familiar flapping of wings sounded and a pair of scratching talons gripped the wooden rail on his porch. “Uh, oh,” he muttered “You again.”

The bird held something in its beak. At the shock of seeing the messenger bird, Bluesy sat back into his rocker. The osprey hopped onto the wide arm of the rocking chair and tilted its head this way and that, then dropped a very large feather onto the old man’s lap. Bluesy squinted at the bird he associated with his connection to ‘The Great Beyond’. “I would ask you what you’re doin’ out this late, but I’m afraid you’ve gone and beat me to the answer.” Bluesy stared down at the feather. “That ain’t no local feather. That is the feather of a great bald eagle.” Bluesy

again lifted his eyes to the mysterious bird. The osprey leaped into the air, squirting a large white dropping onto Bluesy's wood-planked porch as he departed. "Well, that wasn't any dream. It was as true as that bird crap is true. I best pack me a bag before that Indian shows up and I mustn't forget my potions."

Sure enough that stretch Lincoln rolled up and Bluesy got in. With a blink of an eye he was off.

* * *

ARIZONA

Bluesy found himself sitting atop a razor-backed pinto horse and facing the biggest rock-strewn hole in the earth he'd ever seen. "Dear God in heaven I have been kidnapped to the moon aboard a half-starved horse!" he shouted. "And that Lincoln was some kind of time transporter. You haven't fooled me, Chief. What year is this, anyway? I mean do the people still ride around on horses?"

"This is the same time. It's just a different place. We are riding across the land horseback because it's fun. I never get to do this anymore," the chief said. "Native Americans have to be careful or soon we won't be able to ride horses. I'm practicing."

"Practicing?" Bluesy blinked and stared at the chief's beautiful white stallion. The horse sporting as many feathers in his jingling bridle as the chief wore on his headdress.

The Indian shook his head and said, "This is the Salt River Canyon. Your horses' name is Jughead and he's a very stupid horse, but he won't throw you. He's safe. He belongs to one of my wives—uh—to the tribe." The chief lifted a hand and motioned toward the eastern horizon. "We will ride up that mountain in the way of The People to make the spirits happy. If the spirits get pissed off, things get iffy."

Bluesy looked over the huge expanse. “We got to go way over yonder?” he squeaked. Rocking forward, he reached back and rubbed his butt. “My rump does not mesh with the bones of Jughead.” Bluesy looked down. “Holy cactus, Chief, I’m almost naked. This ain’t part of the deal. I’m an old man. This ain’t respectable. What happened to my clothes?”

“Clothes? Man the breezes feel good. You should embrace nature.”

Bluesy frowned. “I was afraid you’d say something like that. I guess I could ride way over there,” he nodded toward the distant vista, “if I had me one of those Lone Ranger saddles and some cowboy clothes. And I need me one of them big white hats. I’m one of the good guys, Chief. Besides, I don’t need no tan. This sun could cause wrinkles, too.” Bluesy reached into a leather pouch and extracted a pinch of powder, then sprinkled it over himself and his horse.

In a flash Bluesy and his horse began to ebb and flow, changing in a wavering tide. Finally, Bluesy looked down at himself and the saddle he sat in; he was wearing a black Jack Palance getup, and the pinto, though still board thin, was dressed in a fancy dan getup, made from Tonto black leather, laced in silver. Bluesy grabbed for his hat and to his satisfaction, touched a perfect white Stetson. Bluesy grinned a white-toothed grin. “See, Chief, that’s what I been talkin’ ’bout! Let’s boogie.”

The chief heaved a loud sigh. “Southern people.”

* * *

The two riders switch backed down the mountain. Horses scooting on their haunches were sliding and picking their way carefully over loose rock. “Say, Chief, do you have a real name?”

The chief’s eyes cut back toward Bluesy. “Horace. But don’t call me that.”

Bluesy gave him a look and continued on. “Okay. Maybe you should tell me exactly what’s going on.”

“It started when one of my wives...” The chief raised an eyebrow and waited.

“One of your wives?”

“Hey, here on the res we practice the no ask, no tell rule just like they do in the military.”

“Hmm.” Bluesy frowned.

“Okay. Problems started with my second and youngest wife who is Navajo. Her name is Magpie. A good name, because she never shut up. My first wife thought the new wife would do the cleaning and cooking, but Magpie had manicured, painted nails and did not want to ruin them. At first Magpie cried a lot and then she left.” The chief waved his hand in the direction of the northern horizon.

Bluesy tilted his head. “One wife is okay, Chief, but two--”

“It was a cold winter!” the chief shot back.

“That’s not a good reason for two wives. Not that I’ve had personal experience with that, but I’ve always found one woman complicated. Two women could be trouble.”

The chief reined his horse around a sharp rock outcropping. The horse tossed his head and blew. “One wife on each side was very warm.” He grinned. Then his face sobered. “Number one wife suggested that I sleep with the dog. The dog had fleas. It was a lousy winter. And spring was worse because the water dried up. After that, all things dried up.” He shook his head. “Bad luck.”

Bluesy held up his hand. “Are you Navajo too, Chief?”

“Naw. I’m Apache.” He tilted his head in thought. “I thought it wise to import a new wife from another tribe for diversification.”

Bluesy sat back in his saddle and frowned. “I hear the United States government is checkin’ out imports real close on account of product defects. Maybe you should have checked out your import a little closer, too.”

The chief turned in his saddle and frowned at Bluesy. “My new wife cast a spell. Between some Navajo who have the gift this practice Yeenaaldlooshii, means ‘those who go forth on all fours’. It creates a half- man, half-beast creature, Skinwalker. Skinwalkers can bring death to a tribe. I think now I must have married a Navajo witch and she put a curse on our people. I thought when she left home things would get back to normal, but then the rain stopped and the well dried up.”

“Oh, Lordy,” Bluesy sighed.

They crossed the Salt River, Bluesy hanging onto the saddle horn as the bony horse fought its way through the shallows and up the steep bank behind the brilliant white horse. The terrain changed from high desert salt cedar, greasewood, and cacti to cypress and scrub piñon. The air smelled of mint and the deep valley moisture swept away, the air thinning and the sky turning brilliantly clear. Two hawks wheeled above them, then dove down.

“Yeeii!” the chief screamed and headed for cover beneath a clump of juniper. He watched as the birds landed on each of the old man’s shoulders. Bluesy’s horse never lost stride and continued up the faint trail. The old man was saying something to the birds, but the chief could not make out the words. And then the old man shook open a cloth pouch and sprinkled something on top of each of the bird’s backs. The chief, though mesmerized, stayed behind. In a great flap of wings, the red-tailed hawks took flight.

“They say your people are waiting for us, Chief. In case you’re wondering, the birds are off to clear the way.”

The surprised chief managed an, “Uh huh.”

An hour later a pack of coyote skittered through the trees ahead of the two riders. They stopped and cast yellow eyes on them. “Hey, boys!” Bluesy called. “See you later, then!” The old man laughed. “They’re out for a bite of lunch but, they’re with us, too.”

“The witch has sent them,” the chief grumbled.

“Naw. No such-a-thing. They’re friends,” Bluesy said and kicked the sharp ribs of his horse. “We need to step this ride up a bit. I got me a schedule to keep...” *...before the next sunrise and before that stretch Lincoln leaves without me, if I can find the dern thing.*

“In the Old Peoples stories of long ago, a witch would come in the form of a coyote,” the chief said.

Bluesy turned in his saddle and said, “A bad spirit can be in anything, Chief.”

The eerie glints in the old man’s eyes made the chief sit back in his saddle and clamp his mouth shut.

* * *

As they rode into a brown valley, surrounded by majestic pine, the chief’s village came into view and sprawled before them like the tiny mountain town that it was. A thin dirt road snaked ahead, weaving a dusty ribbon toward fields of dying corn. Scattered compact houses smoke rising from their chimneys looked forlorn, surrounded by scattered cars in different states of decay. A small gang of kids scurried after a soccer ball, their laughter reaching Bluesy’s ears.

The children came running when they saw the approaching riders. They called the chief’s name and giggled. When Bluesy tried to swing a leg off of the scarecrow horse, it hung in mid-air, stuck. The children laughed and gathered around him. Grabbing his hands and his stuck leg, they helped him down.

As soon as his feet were on the ground, Bluesy saw tiny grains of sand bouncing and scattering off his new Tony Lama boots. He frowned, staring with rapt attention at the dirt under him, thinking. When he looked up again at the black-haired, back-eyed children he smiled and said, "Thank ya." The children tittered behind dirty hands that hid their mouths. Bluesy again shook the pouch from his back pocket, but instead of potion he produced sticks of licorice--as many sticks of licorice as there were children--and handed them out.

"Okay, now go," the Chief said to the children shooing them away. The chief moved closer to Bluesy. "Where did you get that licorice?"

But Bluesy only smiled, then tilted his head and stared down at the ground again.

"What do you see down there?" The chief pointed.

Bluesy said, "I'm not rightly sure."

The Chief asked, "Is it the evil spirit?"

Bluesy shook his head. "Naw. Time will tell."

"Why don't you know now?"

"I'm only a hired hand. I don't know everything. The truth will come. Be patient."

"I am already patient. I am way past patient." He snorted. "Now we must meet with the tribal council in the sweat lodge."

"Sweat lodge? Tribal council? I need to move about, Chief and get the feel of the land."

But the chief only shook his head and they walked toward a small low-slung lodge, a line of large men began entering in front of them. A bear of a man turned and scowled at Bluesy.

"Need a man with eyes of eagle." The bear stuck out his bronze face and sneered, "This is an old man."

Bluesy turned to the chief. “I don’t have time for sweating. I’m not used to tribal rituals and I don’t have time to argue my case. I’m in a hurry to help you out and get home. I got to be responsible with time.”

“Time?”

“Time is elusive. Everyone knows that. And I only have a limited amount of it.”

“We must cleanse our spirits to help us find water,” the chief said in exasperation.

But Bluesy had had enough. He was saddle-sore and wanted to get his job done. He was missing precious shuteye. “There is nothing wrong with the spirit I got, Chief.”

“You black people have hard heads.”

Bluesy rolled his eyes. “We need to stick to business.”

They drove out of the village in an old Ford pickup following a narrow, rutted road, deeply trenched from years of use. They came to an alcove at a tight corner in the bend of what had been a natural water flow, but was now dry. They squeaked to a stop and Bluesy and the chief got out. Bluesy looked around at the lava rock stained and eroded smooth by eons of wind and water. They walked off at a brisk pace and crossed the baked and cracked ground, then stopped next to a dry lake bed about two acres in size.

“Gone,” the chief snorted. “Now haul we water from Hannagan’s Meadow, twenty miles from here.” He frowned. “Lucky for us we use outhouses. This saves a ton of water.”

Bluesy was deep in thought, his eyes searching for any clue as to where the water had gone. It was possible that a drought had used it up, but the lake had obviously been here for hundreds, maybe thousands of years. With a flash of his pointed finger, Bluesy shot a streak of

fire to a spot in the center of the dry lakebed. The explosion showered them with dried dirt and rock chips.

“Holy cow pies!” the chief said.

They walked to the hole and peered into the crumbling darkness.

“Magic!” the Chief said. “But—no water. This must be the curse of a witch.”

Bluesy’s eyes lost focus and he blinked in wonder. “Hey, did you feel that, Chief?”

He looked up at a wavering sky, colors now running and crawling beyond the mountain ridges. He felt the colors would come pouring down on them and though he knew it, Bluesy didn’t say that this was a sign of a tortured spirit. Who knew if he would be able to free this soul? As he took each step he chanted silent words. His lips moving, he plucked a blade of wild grass from the earth, then took soil from the dry lake bed. The sky turned blood red.

A herd of five muley deer skittered off the hillside close to them. The deer stopped upon sighting the men, then shot north like tan bullets, black tails flagging. “Is it the shaking earth that they flee, or do they think it will rain blood on this earth and damn it forever?” the chief asked. “See the sky.” He motioned. “The evil Skinwalker beast has cast a spell.”

Bluesy pushed forward following the old watercourse. “Come on, let’s you and me take us a hike up yonder.” He could only hope to help this lost spirit. He also hoped he could find the lost water. If not, the chief might make him walk all the way back to South Carolina. “The workings of nature,” Bluesy muttered softly as he began following the game trail. The chief grumbled behind him about witches and spells and of course, this young wife. Still, Bluesy knew Mother Nature could do enough damage just being herself without any sort of spell.

The walls of the valley narrowed. Trees grew from sharp crevasses and jutted from slim purchases of earth, reaching toward the sky. All the time Bluesy kept an eye on where he put his needle-toed boots.

The chief began to explain, “The legend of the Skinwalker tells of God giving the gift of transformation to the people to use against their enemies. Over time, some began to abuse this power. Those that practiced evil began to change into something half-beast and half-demon. This brought God to Earth to reclaim the power. Some gave up the power gladly, but others ran and hid with the secrets of the power. This is what has happened,” the chief said. After a long silence, he said, “Damn Navajos.”

Bluesy sighed. Then the dirt around his boots crumbled again and he stooped to feel the unstable ground. “This way,” he said with more confidence as he moved deeper into the canyon. Bluesy noticed the chief eyeing the close hillsides. He figured the Indian was looking for a skinwalker no matter what he told him. Finally, they came upon a large depression of earth now filled with a jumble of dirt, rock and splintered trees. Bluesy stood looking at a mound of rubble. He was catching his breath when boulders beneath him gave way, the ground melting away into a great cavern.

Bluesy’s arm shot out and he grabbed for a skinny tree poking out of the sheer bank: the sapling, now bent in two by his weight, had a limited life. He hung on, his legs dangling above a dark crevice. The chief hung next to him, grasping broken roots.

The Chief puffed, “What happened?”

“Earthquake!” Bluesy squirmed to get a better hold. He blinked. His eyes faded from amber and melted to shades of purple. A cloak of swirling, glittering dust rose and swam around them. They two men shot upward, hovered above solid ground, then smacked back to earth.

The Chief sat up coughing and spitting sand from his mouth. “You have the gift, man,” his words laced with respect, he wiped sweat and dust from his forehead. “You have just saved my life.”

Bluesy patted grit from his face with a hankie he always carried and gave silent thanks. “Heck of a way to save someone. I’m gonna have to speak to the man upstairs about his landin’ technique.” He stood and held out a hand to the chief. He pointed at an impossibly large boulder wedged against the hillside. It flew into shards. A puff of steam escaped and the chief’s eyes widened.

Behind them, a pack of coyote appeared and gathered around the hillside where the boulder had been. They were whining and worrying over something. Bluesy’s chin darted skyward as if in signal to the pack and the wild dogs began digging. As the coyotes dug, steam began to escape. The frenzy grew wilder, dirt and steam shot skyward, thunder erupted across the heavens, and a globular bubble of slime emerged. The coyote’s snuffled and chuffed, their muddy tongues lolling in gaping mouths as they backed away from the thing. Coyote eyes glinted in the sudden darkness and stared down at what seemed to be a living, gyrating ball.

Bluesy said, “Here is a tormented spirit, Chief.”

As Bluesy stepped closer the chief yelled, “No! No—a skinwalker! We need help!”

As if in confirmation of the chief’s words, the coyote melted into the now-dark forest around them.

“We have protection,” Bluesy said and shook the contents of the pouch he held. “But, it ain’t gonna hurt to get a little more. As Bluesy sprinkled, a rustling set up in the brush beside them where a flock of jays began jumping from twig to twig in agitation. Noisy crows descended into the surrounding tree branches and red-tailed hawks dove and swooped overhead.

The chief backed up until he was flat against the jagged stone of the opposite wall. “This is big trouble,” he breathed staring at the gyrating bubble.

The bubble grew larger and as Bluesy bent closer he realized what the bubble held. He didn’t want to do this in front of the chief, but there seemed no choice. He glanced over his shoulder at the Indian. “It’s hot as the devil down here, Chief. I’m afraid I see something in this thing. It looks like a creature of some kind—maybe you should just back a little further. Wait down yonder for me.”

The chief frowned. “No. I’ll stay with you, old man.”

Bluesy stood unmoving. Long seconds ticked by. He hated bad news. He hated to deliver bad news. Life was full of tragedy and sadness. This was a part of living and reality could not be reversed. Well—*he* could reverse reality, but sometimes the results were unreliable and worse than before. So he inhaled and exhaled his next words, “Yes, sir.” He shook his head. “But, this ain’t gonna be pretty.” Bluesy leaned even closer to the mass, his thin body hovering over the bubble. He sucked in a giant breath, inhaling the bubble, transforming himself into a grotesque giant human.

The chief shrunk back, hand over his face.

Bluesy spun on the heels of his new Tony Lamas and blew the glob out onto dry ground. Clouds of skittering insects spun off and into the air. A great shrieking arose and swirled up into the red clouds. The covey of birds followed in pursuit. Thunder rolled, and lightning struck the rocks above them.

“Go!” Bluesy shouted at the rising mass. His hands lifted, following the vanishing mist. The chief had whirled toward the massive cloud, the blade of his knife gleaming in hopes of slashing the manifestation. But the thing was gone and rain began to fall in soft splatters.

The men stood silent and lifted their faces skyward. Feeling the blessed rain their eyes went back to the ground where the thing had been. The soil popped like hot grease in the cool water, then shrunk in on itself and finally hissed away.

The chief verified, “skinwalker!”

Bluesy shook his head, gasping in clean air. “You wouldn’t happen to have any Listerine, would you, Chief?”

Bluesy had uncovered tattered buckskin and human bone, the neck draped with a silver and turquoise necklace, a large circle of silver with an engraved eagle was centered over the breast bone.

The chief stood with his mouth down-turned in sadness. “Magpie, third daughter of Navajo Chief John Whitewinterwolf. Young wife,” he confirmed.

Bluesy bowed his head. “I’m sorry, Chief.” The rain was coming harder now as Bluesy went on to explain. “This heat came from a chemical reaction. The fissure was filled with carbon dioxide gas from the acid groundwater moving through limestone below.” Bluesy smiled. “This means good water beneath the surface. Limestone always gives a good cleansing.”

The chief continued to stare at what was left of Magpie. “We will gather up her bones to take to her father.” Magpie’s father is a good man,” he said.

“Yes,” Bluesy agreed, watching as the chief took off his buckskin jacket, arranged it gently on the ground, and gathered the bones of Magpie. When the chief had finished and tied the bundle tight, he stood. Bluesy glanced over his shoulder and nodded toward the pack of coyote returning in silence to gather at the fringe of the forest. “Company’s back, Chief.”

When the men stood away, the coyote began another furious dig until finally their furry legs were covered in nothing but water. The wild dogs turned their dripping muzzles toward them and Bluesy watched as the six retreated back into the darkness.

The Chief stammered, “Thank you, Bluesy Figwater, for coming and finding Magpie.”

“You didn’t do so bad yourself, Chief. We just helped out nature. The water was blocked by—” his words fell away. Bluesy’s eyes brightened. “But, look, the water is clearing.”

SOUTH CAROLINA

A thump woke Bluesy from a sound sleep, the sun glaring bright onto his front porch. “Mornin’, Mr. Figwater!” Archer the Sixth the newspaper boy, yelled to him. Bluesy waved a hand at the local kid, but he was pedaling his bicycle quickly, having no time to linger. Bluesy blinked down at the South Carolina State newspaper printed in Columbia. He leaned over and picked it up, then unfolded it carefully onto his lap.

The headlines read, “Lost Water Source Found on White Mountain Indian Reservation In Arizona.”

“Well, I’ll be derved,” he said and smiled. He folded the newspaper in two and stood, stretching, then, began singing, “*That old black magic has me in its spell—that old black magic that I weave so well, my icy fingers up and down your spine, the same old magic when your eyes meet mine.*” Bluesy gave a tiny jump and clicked his heels together, opened the front door of his bungalow, and disappeared inside.

THE END

PLEASE VISIT: www.billiebierer.com