

# *The Death Tree (Twisted Fairy Tales)*

## **Chapter 1**

At midnight on the first of January, a crow with frosted wings glided over the blackened, curled branches of the Death Tree. Everyone calls it so because whenever someone comes across it, they die within the day. The creatures that live inside the Death Tree are not mice, birds or squirrels. They are fairies. Fairies with soot-black, ragged wings, fairies with hate covering every inch of their bodies. They wear grimy rags that flutter as flags of death in the wind.

The beings in the Death Tree thrive under the bark. No humans know that it's not the tree itself that causes death but the unknown, unseen fairies of horrid fate that lie in wait for unsuspecting humans to blunder into their territory, trying to cut down their home.

## **Chapter 2**

Onya, the fairy leader, called for silence in the depths of the Death Tree.

"Today some of us will go on a mighty quest to plant more trees further into the Lands of the Unknown. Then others, once the trees grow, will migrate to them." She looked around at the expectant fairies surrounding her.

"As you all know, when the trees are fully grown, they will be very much visible to humans. Those of you who migrate to them cannot curse or kill any humans during the first five days of being there, for it is against Fairy Law.

Those of you who would like to migrate, please put your names here," she waved a brown hand and a piece of yellowing paper materialised. A dozen of the gathered fairies swished their hands and their minuscule signatures appeared on the paper.

"The fairies I have assigned the job of planting trees are as follows: Opal, Heath, Patterson and Catcher. You four shall plant a Death Tree each and then watch over them as they grow. Opal, Heath, over here please, Patterson, Catcher, gather supplies. Everyone else, disperse to your quarters and, children, revise your curses."

Onya turned to the fairy girls. "Here, take these" was all she said before she twitched her hand and vanished.

"These must be the seeds for the trees," said Heath, the cleverest of the four.

"But wait," whispered Opal, "look, there's something wrong with them..."

*By Martha Year 5*