

The Complete Written & Oral Histories of the Wandering Mistress

Assembled by Archivist Leilatha Brightwing

Forward:

I first heard of the Wandering Mistress aboard the ship *The Dawn Chaser*. As the vessel began to set sail, the crew rhythmically set about their duties by singing "Take Us Home"; a shanty about a crew being guided to safety first by dolphins then by the Lady herself.

"I thought to spend my early years across the open sea
With not a care but finding all the wealth that I could keep
Our ship she stood tall with 26 sails, a sight for all to see
Not 3 weeks in she took a good knock that sent her right down to the deep

And as the sky went dim I saw several fins guide myself and the company
To a port in the storm with an inn who's sign bore a star adorned in leaves

When the night is long and we're all full of dread
Oh where am I to go
For we're all good and lost and we're missing our beds
Oh lady oh take us home!
When we've run through our stores and our taking is high
And we've nowhere left to roam
Oh we'll keep our chins up and we'll look to the sky
Oh lady oh take us home!

When I went to go pay the landlady my share
I was struck by the sheen of her copper red hair
And she wouldn't take our money but pointed us where
We could find the main land so we hauled a boat there

When the night is long and we're all full of dread
Oh where am I to go
For we're all good and lost and we're missing our beds
Oh lady oh take us home!
When we've run through our stores and our taking is high
And we've nowhere left to roam
Oh we'll keep our chins up and we'll look to the sky
Oh lady oh take us home!

When we'd found a new vessel, no more than a year
On the bow didn't we see that same lady appear
When our cook stepped before her, a compass in hand
And she lead us to where we could get back to land

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When we've run through our stores and our taking is high
And we've nowhere left to roam
Oh we'll keep our chins up and we'll look to the sky
Oh lady oh take us home!

I, like anyone would, assumed it to be yet another sailing tall tale until I heard yet another mention of a "star adorned in leaves". This had been on land and what I presumed was a local deity of the tribe I was studying but it stuck with me enough that upon returning home, I immediately headed to the archives to find any other similar narrative. The following is a compilation of what I have come to know as *The Wandering Mistress*.



Sketch of The Wandering Mistress by Elaine Ryan

Leilatha Brightwing's Notes

My research into this "goddess" has been through almost entirely oral recollections and very few written stories attributed to her. This is, to my knowledge, the first assembled lore of her existence & I am honored to add her history into the archives.

Mostly worshipped by nomads and sailors, the Wandering Mistress is also a favorite of those seeking to explore the uncharted. Her symbol is a bright star sprouting leaves. She is said to take the form of an unexpected guide for those who are lost and may take the form of an animal, person, or star. She is also the patron goddess of cartographers, guiding their hands to create masterful maps with mystical arcane abilities.

She is considered the goddess of travel, exploration, compassion, & adventure though we have no known pantheon that claims her specifically.

Known to appear to those lost at sea or in nature as an animal (dolphin/sparrow) or guide (human/humanoid form) and will lead them to a safe place in exchange for small markers placed along paths so that others can find their way.

Not just a guide, the Wandering Mistress is an oasis, an unexpected shelter from the elements, a port in the storm, or an inviting inn along an otherwise abandoned road. She is comfort to a weary traveler, a song to pass the time, a sea shanty, or a glorious sunset to make your travels that much more enjoyable.

Appearance: As an animal, she most often takes the form of a dolphin at sea or a sparrow on land. In her human-type form, she wears long flowing robes that give the impression of a rolling landscape. Her skin is deep bronze and her hair is copper colored with vines and pearls as a "crown". Her eyes are the color of "teal waters" shifting from green to blue.

She is associated with two constellations:

The Aurora Dragon Constellation: The Wandering Mistress is often depicted as holding a glowing compass star. That star is the eye of the Aurora Dragon Constellation, whose "wings" light up in the aurora during special times of the year and is seen as an auspicious holiday to her followers. Entire festivals are planned around this event in tiny, remote mountain villages where her presence seems to be the strongest, or in icy regions where the landscape tends to blend into itself, making basic navigation difficult.

The Crystal Ship Constellation: The vessel of the Mistress, it leaves a trail of stardust in its wake as it travels across the night sky. It's depicted as a single mast ship floating on a river of stars with several "fish" constellations below it.

A Sailor's Patron - Oral Record by Brisbane Threespirit of the *Night's Eye* merchant vessel

[Notations & translations by Leilatha Brightwing]

"We were several days out to sea when a blistery [bad storm] came on us out of the blue! She was a-wailing and a-screeching something frightful! 'Course our captain did his best and when we came out the other side, we found ourselves in uncharted waters. We sailed for days towards the setting sun but the longer we sailed, the more we worried we were truly lost.

Then our cook, Ottale, started talking about this 'lady guide' and had a strange medallion in his hand...like a compass from a map made out of metal. He flipped it in his hand over and over while muttering something...prayer like, like asking for guidance or something, but nothing happened and we just all sort of chalked it up to him being not-right and all. But later that night, damned if all of us on deck weren't scared something awful! This...woman just appeared at the head of the ship, glowing...somehow. There were tiny lights, like stars, dancing about her hair; and her hair! It was like looking into a setting sun! She stood there silently, her finger pointing out to sea sort of to the north-northwest. Her dress...moved. No, parts of it moved...like...like her sleeves were flowing over a stone-like skirt. I couldn't really see the front of her except for when she would turn her head in profile but...her eyes...were sea-green and bright as you please.

The cook was the only one brave enough to approach her. He just walked right up and stood next to her like a groom to his bride; all dandy-like. If they spoke, we couldn't hear anything. The captain took the helm and turned the *Night's Eye* [vessel] to where the lady was pointing. For two whole days, Ottale stood there with her and the captain followed her arm which never seemed to tire. Towards the end of the second day...land.

We were singing her praises when the captain finally worked up the nerve to approach her. She turned to him and without a word, gave him a medallion just like Ottale's. Then she smiled at us all so brilliantly before she just... vanished into light, like the sun dipping behind the horizon. Since then, we've all been true believers of the Wandering Mistress."

The Wandering Mistress as recounted by Mykan Myles - A letter

To the attention of one Leilatha Brightwing -

First, please forgive any errors made on the page. Writing by firelight as I travel isn't the simplest of tasks but upon learning through whispers that you were collecting stories of the Wandering Mistress I felt compelled to write to you with my own tales. My hope is this might prove as enlightening as it might be academic.

Now being one who has read since I was a young girl I have often looked at tales of truth with a cynical eye. Stories told as fact are often inclined one way or another depending on those telling them and so I understand if you have the same reaction to the words included here.

I do swear what follows is the truth. I also do not intend to bore you with my history but felt I needed to include some in my telling of events in order to give you the full scope.

My first experience with the Wandering Mistress was one that I learned of much later but to keep my tale chronological I shall tell it first.

Reading has been my most loyal friend since I was quite small and my passion for it made a path towards learning an easy one for my mother to choose for me. I was captivated by everything from tales of far off wars to journey's taken by magical beings. No matter the form it came in, I always found something within the pages worth absorbing.

At some point during my studies the words no longer held my attention. I found I wanted to experience life for myself and so setting out, escaping if you will, from higher education is when my life truly began. I had taken my leave of school, with but a bag of belongings on my shoulder. Now, do not feel too sorry for me as the bag was of holding, a gift from my mother when I had left our home to learn, so it was well stocked with all I felt I needed.

It was terrifying and exciting at the same time and the moment I was over the walls it was like the night sky was applauding me. The fault in my plan, if you could call it that, was having no destination in mind. I merely walked in whatever direction I wished while taking in the sounds, smells, and energy of the world. There was no timeline, no path, no map. If I wished to spend an hour reading under a tree I did or if I wished to spend an entire day walking I could. I slept under the stars and had much time to myself. I forged for food, tried to hunt but proved better at fishing and even aided some travelers along the way. That gained me thanks and coin, the later of which I didn't entirely need.

At close to the three week mark, the weather took a turn and being in such miserable conditions I grew weary. When the storm finally passed, I recall looking to the sky, the stars twinkling, and wondering if I might soon find a warm bed and a meal cooked by someone who was not me.

The following afternoon, as I continued walking to my destination "unknown", I came across a small village which had not more than a handful of buildings, some farmland in the distance, and a small trading post. It was while exchanging some bits and bobbles for spices and cured meats that I learned the tiny village actually had a small Inn. The trader warned me that the amenities were not anything more than passable but that the proprietor was a kindly old halfling woman who took care of her guests and insisted on having decent drinks on hand and hearty meals available. It sounded a perfect way to reinvigorate.

Approaching the building, I noticed a small sparrow perched a top a chair. Normally such a sight wouldn't have been a detail I recalled but the unusual part was the bird never once stirred from it's place on the wooden back. It sat there watching as I moved closer with what seemed a curiosity behind it's dark eyes and as I passed it to enter the Inn, the fearless bird's eyes merely turned my way.

The trader had been correct, there was not much to the place but the owner was kind and took great care. I remained under her roof for forty five days, spending my time helping where I could, completing tasks around the inn and eventually the small village itself. If I didn't know how to assist someone I asked and learned new skills. The villagers seemed grateful for the quiet traveling woman with the willingness to

do what was needed. From time to time, as I came and went from the door of the inn, I would catch the sparrow on the chair watching.

Eventually I grew restless and felt the urge to move on but knew not where to go. While struggling with the idea of beginning another direction "unknown", a small traveling band of, I suppose the term would be bards, found themselves staying at the Inn. There were five in all and they were loud and jovial and brought an energy to the place that I had never experienced in my life. They sang of heroism, adventure, lost love, and triumph. Not since childhood had I been so invested in such tales.

At quite a late hour, I decided to thank them for being so entertaining because, after all, they were performing for what amounted to an audience of only two, myself and the Inn's proprietor. I purchased a round of ale and brought it to their table along with some coin for their pockets. They thanked me for my offerings and one of them, the human of the group, urged me to sit with her a while.

There seemed no harm in joining and she proved amusing and charming. We spoke for a long time and I opened up to her in a way I was not accustomed to doing. After our second ale was finished she told me a story of open water and starry skies and she sang me a song that haunted my dreams that night. Now when I say haunted I do not mean in a horrific way but something I simply could not shake. It stayed with me as I had breakfast the following morning. I had, of course, read stories of life on the seas but something in her telling, in her song, I felt this need to search it out and so after breakfast I packed up my belongings, said my good-byes, and set out.

I only knew I needed to head south. As I left the Inn, the sparrow, sitting on its usual perch, chirped at me. I turned to it wondering if it was saying goodbye and then started on my way. Before long I caught sight of the bird about twenty feet ahead of me. Reaching it, I explained that I was moving on and wished it well. It took to the air, hovered before me a moment, and then flew in a slightly more south easterly direction all while staying within eye shot. This back and forth went on for about a half hour until I figured why not follow the direction the bird was going. The sparrow seemed appeased and didn't hover near me again until I set up camp for the night. Right before I drifted off to sleep the sparrow gave me a few more chirps and then took to the sky. For the rest of my journey, in a South Easterly direction, it did not return.

After thirty some days of travel, I eventually located the coast line. I had come across a seaside city where ships floated in and out to restock and the crews populated the streets in order to blow off steam. Finding a suitable Inn to stay, I then set out exploring and quickly learned this wasn't an organized bustling trading port but one where lawlessness won out more often than not. I, of course, did not know this as I entered its borders, having only followed the sight of water and the smell of salt but on my third night I found myself running through the streets of the city, escaping those who only wished to do me harm. It was just after dusk, and after darting my way down alleys for a long while, I was fairly confident I had gotten away from my pursuers with manageable injuries.

My hope was that staying hidden on unfamiliar streets would keep me safe. There was no way I was going back to the Inn, as they could have easily been lying in wait, and for this reason I was grateful my bag was something I always kept over my shoulder.

After a couple hours of resting and wandering, I stumbled upon the wooden docks lined

with ships and an idea crossed my mind. Many of the vessels in port didn't have their planks down but one, at the very end, did.

Did I dare?

Carefully, I strolled my way towards the ship, my heart racing, very aware of the potential dangers lurking on a nearly pitch dark pier. As I reached it, two things stood out. First, there seemed to be no one watching the giant vessel, it's crew probably enjoying the cities seeder offerings. Secondly, right next to the ship, sitting on a barrel, was a sparrow looking at my curiously. The sight of the bird stopped me in my tracks. I stared at it. It chirped at me.

I have never been one to believe in coincidences and so I, in a move that wasn't at all like me, winked at the bird and silently made my way onboard.

The technical term for the beginning of my journey was as a stowaway. Being rather good at moving about I remained undetected for a very long while until I made the choice to reveal myself by stepping in to assist during a horrific storm.

The details of my actions that night aren't important for the information you wish to document. I will merely say, to make a long story hopefully shorter, I was accepted into the crew and eventually taken under the wing of the ship's Captain. We grew close and I eventually shared her bed. She was captivating, brilliant and in our private moments, kind.

As a Captain, Zoe was very firm, pragmatic, and demanded hard work from the crew of the Mermaid's Delight. She was a fair Captain but not one to be disobeyed. Three years quickly passed while seeing the world, having many adventures and all with the woman I grew to love.

My most treasured moments on board were at night by her side. The evening would begin with her at the wheel of the ship. I would sit listening to her explain what was looking down at us from the stars above and how those stars guided her. Zoe's favorite Constellation to point out quickly became mine as well. She called it the Crystal Ship. Now I'm not certain that is what the collection of stars is called officially but it certainly looked to be a magnificent vessel sailing along with a school of fish traveling below it.

My introduction to the ship in the sky eventually lead to more stories, often told while wrapped together in Captain Zoe's bed. She beguiled me with tales and eventually introducing me to the Goddess to exploration, adventure, and compassion. The Wandering Mistress, was an entity that Zoe's father had dutifully, but quietly, followed during his lifetime and so his daughter had as well. She had carried on the belief, even wearing a chain around her neck that held a medallion honoring the Goddess. The front of the piece was plain with no hint of what was crafted onto the other side. Turning it over, one found a rather rudimentary looking star sprouting leaves. It was a simple iron work but somehow the simple medallion was as beautiful as the woman who wore it. She would light up every time she would tell me the stories. Her eyes would grow softer and her voice peaceful. I couldn't help but be swept up in her completely authentic belief in the Wandering Mistress especially considering how generally pragmatic she was about everything else. She believed in the Goddess as strongly as she believed in the water below and the stars above.

What happened next on the Mermaid's Delight I do not wish to recount in its entirety. My heart still aches too much to fully share my grief but let me say that after being dragged from our locked quarters and forced to watch my love's lifeless body thrown over into a watery grave I was then shoved into a small row boat.

I was allowed to bring my bag, which no one on board knew could squirrel away quite a lot and so I had grabbed all I could from the cabin. In a surprising act of obligation, compassion, or perhaps guilt, I was also given a small crate of rations. What really mattered to me more than food or the belongings in the bag was on my person. I now held in my pocket a ring I took from Zoe's finger, a small rock I plucked from her pocket, and from around Zoe's neck the Medallion on the chain.

As I sat in the small row boat, in the middle of the sea, I watched as the Mermaid's Delight moved away into the darkness, the sound of boisterous revelry echoing well after I lost sight of the ship. I wanted to murder every last one aboard though I knew it impossible so I sat there, in the moonless night, frozen in my grieve and anger.

This stillness remained for two whole days; sleeping some, screaming some, weeping some, eating very little but drinking quite a lot the row boat just bouncing with the waves. On the second night, a completely clear sky emerged and I caught site of the Crystal Ship above. Without any thought, and despite my heart's objection, my arms began to row.

Somehow I managed to get my small boat to land fairly close to a bustling shipping city that believed in law and order, in structure. Broken in every sense of the word, structure had appeal. So I made the city my home.

Many a day I wandered from the Inn I stayed in to odd jobs. It seemed my unique and varied skills had use. Inside I was empty, heartbroken, and alone in a way I never knew possible, my love of stories gone from me, never a smile on my face, and my reflection always showing tired, dead eyes. I remained polite to people, never cross or dismissive, but kept everyone at a distance.

Then a vivid dream came to me after an especially reckless night. I awoke the next morning having formed an idea.

If others have not conveyed to you, there are actually two Constellations that carry the weight and grace of the Wandering Mistress. One is the Crystal Ship and the other Zoe called the Aurora Dragon. As she told it to me, the eye of the Dragon is the star the Goddess holds. In some places there are celebrations in her honor when the Dragon appears in the sky. This, I was told, happens in remote areas of the world and so I knew it would never happen in a port city such as where I found myself residing.

Knowing the Dragon's time in the sky was soon, I took it upon myself to form a way to honor the Wandering Mistress, and therefore my Captain, in my own way. I would move about the residential part of the city and leave behind things I had noticed people needed. Small sacks would have food, or coin, or other such items inside along with a simple iron token of a star sprouting leaves. The tokens, a representation of the medallion that I now wore, had been the most complicated piece to acquire but I eventually found a local blacksmith who was gifted enough to complete the secret commission.

After delivering the packages on the night I knew the Dragon could be seen, I looked into the sky and realized that although the city was dark it wasn't as calm a place as I needed to complete my honoring of Zoe's love of the Goddess. So borrowing a horse from someone who owed me a favor, I headed out of the city to spend the night camping under the stars.

I did not have to go far to find what I needed and set up camp. It was warm enough that I would not need to start a fire and safe enough that the horse and I would be able to get a night's rest without any issue. The sky was clear and it took little time, as I sat down with my knees at my chest, to see the Aurora Dragon just above a hilltop off in the distance. I took the deepest breath and without warning the emotional damn broke. Tears streamed down my face, something I had not done since the night Zoe had been murdered by her crew.

I'm not sure how long I sat there weeping at the stars but as a hand touched my shoulder I did not flinch. As I felt a warm glow of light to the side of me I somehow did not stand to flee or fight but accepted whatever fate had in store.

It was then I heard, no heard isn't the right word, felt an overwhelming wash of compassion surround me. I grew brave and turned to where the light came from and standing next to me was a woman in a long robe that in its color and design reminded me of the nature that surrounded me on my journey after I left school. She was beautiful, her skin the same deep bronze color of Zoe's but unlike the Captain's deep green eyes this woman had the most stunning teal blue ones that shown in the light surrounding her. I found myself both certain and doubtful that I knew the identity of this glowing entity before me.

In the time it took me to blink the woman had moved from where she stood at my side to instead being seated beside me. One hand had taken mine in hers and the other was moving to the chain around my neck. I watched as the medallion was removed from under my shirt and into her illuminated hands. She took it in, smiled at it, and then brought her eyes to mine. My breath caught as my doubt disappeared and I felt myself being pulled in for a hug that I did not wish to resist.

Slowly the pain, the loss, all that I was feeling was no longer debilitating. A small smile began to pull at my lips as memories of happy times and quiet intimate moments flooded back. I swore I heard Zoe's voice on the wind. A memory of her explaining why she loved exploring the world and then a whispered 'I love you'. My body grew warmer.

I slowly pulled away from the comforting hug, perhaps in the hopes I would see Zoe, but instead looked into the teal eyes of the woman before me. She smiled, rose a hand to my cheek, placed her lips to my forehead, and I took a deep breath, exhaling as I closed my eyes.

I awoke as the sun came over the horizon. My eyes adjusting to my surrounding I could see the horse grazing nearby and feel the cool breeze on my skin. I took in the moment only briefly as the realization of what had happened gripped me and I jumped to my feet. Looking around I tried to find any sign of my visitor from the night before but I was alone. Without thought my hand frantically moved to my chest where the Medallion was tucked and then quickly my hand scrambled down my shirt to remove it. Turning it in my hand I was relieved it was still there. I took in the sight of it and was taken

aback. Where before the image of the star sprouting leaves was rudimentary and a singular iron color now the image was refined and the star itself was lightly brushed with a hint of gold.

Zoe had once correctly teased that I couldn't call her pragmatic considering my own view of the world but now, with the Medallion glistening in my hand and my pain lessened I realized I wasn't that person any longer. I took another long look at the Medallion and then returned it to inside my shirt. The sunrise a gorgeous punctuation to my new beginning. Rolling up my bedding and collecting my things, I then mounted the horse to head back towards the city.

Less than a mile on my journey, something caught my eye and I stopped the horse's movement. On a large rock, a small bird sat looking at my approach. As we grew closer, it didn't budge and a thought crossed my mind. I climbed off the horse and moved to where it was perched. I studied it, a sparrow.

We stared at one another for a moment or two and when my head moved, it matched the movement. This time the look of the small animal, seemingly kind and I understood.

"Thank you," I said to the sparrow.

And in response it leaned back some on it's legs and, I swear this with all I know to be true, it winked at me.

I blinked. The sparrow then flapped its wings and took to the sky in the direction of the city and on the wind a song. Was it merely the air whistling through the nearby trees or was it the sparrow trilling the first few notes from the tune I heard at the Inn so many years before?

So there it is, my journey to the Wandering Mistress. I thank you for taking the time to read my words and do hope this endeavor to add her history to the archive proves successful. It is important that her stories be recorded and if I am so lucky to cross paths with her again I promise to write you once more.

With great regard,
Mykan Myles

Safe and True Passage in the Blizzard - Oral Recording by Kaden of Grysbaile [Notations & translations by Hilton Teth of the Amyrest Flyer]

"This was some time ago, it was my first adventure, really. A great winter festival was happenin' in town, and there was news of a caravan having gone missin' in the snows some distance away. I thought this was an opportunity to make a name for myself, so I rallied a few companions to help. A grumpy old veteran Half-Orc with one arm and a Dwarven priest [Paladin] that couldn't refuse [a] call for help. We setup with a wagon and headed out of town just as the winds were picking up.

Overall, we resolved the matter by finding out what happened to the caravan, but that wasn't the most interesting part, it was really a few days into the journey. On the drive we had a few stops and would camp out, but each day the snows got worse until it was beatin' down on us hard. One day while on the road, the priest was talkin' about their wonderful god and whom they served, and the soldier and I would kind of laugh a bit but for different reasons. The soldier had lost family and had a somewhat fallin'

out with belief, and as for me, I was young and stupid and didn't pay much heed to the whims of the gods, always thought I was too small to matter. However, on this day, the snows kicked up so much that the horses could barely maneuver we started scrambling around trying to figure out which way to go and never seemed to make any progress, we couldn't see the road any more cause we couldn't find any markers. We were forced to go off the road into the woods where there was a bit more cover. Suffice-to-say, we got lost, quickly so we were just going through the woods blindly. When we started to question whether or not we'd make it back, since our food was startin' to run low, we panicked. We argued for a bit but then the soldier was stuck by somethin' out in the woods, we all thought to ready our weapons since we dealt with some goblins days earlier and they might be back to take us by surprise, but the soldier told us to stand down. A few moments [later], and this is where it got weird, a woman was approaching our wagon from deep within the trees.

And remember, I said the snows were rough, and even in the woods the snow was coverin' the ground, but where this lady walked it looked like waving spring grass would follow her and then disappear back into the snow, like she was wearing a blanket or a cloak. She also looked like she had been in the sun all day with how warm her skin looked. She didn't say anything, she just smiled at us, turned and pointed into the woods. At this point we had already gone everyone else's direction, so why not? We tossed a bag of our last bit of apples to her and waved, but she was still like a statue. After a while we looked ahead to see where we were going and pop, she was there again! Just pointin' ahead. We thought maybe it was a twin, or somethin, but it would happen again and again. But whenever we'd look back, she'd be gone. This went on for a little while, but we were making good speed, as if this forest had an old forgotten path. And then we saw a clearing through the forest, it was the dag'on road! I turned to look back and saw a glimpse of the lady again, this time she wasn't pointing, but she smiled, and then turned around and disappeared back into the forest. The next odd thing was that when we came upon the next road marker, we were ahead of where we should've been! We made camp that night, the snows had calmed down, and when I went to get our food for cooking, I noticed a small bag. Inside the bag were apples and three medallions.

I'm not certain about what happened to the others, but for me, I still wear mine to this very day. Though my adventuring days are long past gone and I rarely do anything aside from watch the birds on my porch, but this coin has helped me many times and I'd still be lost in the snow if it wasn't for that maiden. Though, I still think she helps me out from time-to-time, I often lose things like my glasses or my cane, but after a moment, pop, it's there again! Maybe one day I'll see her smile again before I walk the path."

For the record, a few days after recording this, Kaden of Grysbale passed. At his memorial he was surrounded by loved ones and friends. It was said he was found on his porch in a rocking chair, smiling. There were two cups of tea on the table.

Epilog

Thus concludes Volume 1 - Should you have any stories to add to the archives, kindly contact Archivist Leilatha Brightwing directly.