MEGAN AND THE MAYORESS

A SPIRIT GUIDE, A GHOST TIGER, AND ONE SCARY MOTHER!



WENJONES



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by

OWEN JONES

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Megan and The Mayoress

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

- 1 Megan and The Mayoress
- 2 The End of Term Ball
- 3 The Mayoral Election
- 4 Friendship Blossoms
- 5 Wacinhinsha

Glossary

The Disallowed

1 MEGAN AND THE MAYORESS

Sam Jones' article in the local paper, 'The Herald', about how Megan had found the mayoress' cat, caused quite a stir in the local community, although Megan was only aware of it in as much as it affected her at school on the Friday following its publication on Thursday afternoon.

Sam had reported honestly what Megan had said, so she didn't have a problem with that, but she was glad that it came out at the end of the week, so that she had all weekend to work out how to deal with her new-found particular form of fame, although no-one had said anything bad about her or the article so far.

Her close friends were all mellow with the situation because she had been talking to most of them about her beliefs and supernatural powers for six or seven years already. Some had even said that they were capable of them too, although none of them had proved any ability to Megan, not that she thought any the worse of them for it.

She realised even at that tender age of thirteen that some people had to conform and that some that may have had a glimmer, might have had it knocked out of them as her mother and grandmother had tried to knock it out of her.

She did not condemn her friends for that, but she did feel sorry for them despite Wacinhinsha having said that all is Karma, so pity was irrelevant.

None of the teachers mentioned the article either and nor did her mother when she got home from school, although she could see that she had read it, because the paper was lying on the table open to the article.

She was glad that Fate had taken a hand in outing her as a psychic person, she was not ashamed of it, quite the contrary.

Her mother's face looked as if the world had caved in, but she was battling with inner demons of her own making, or possibly of her own mother's making, but obviously she had not been strong enough to stand up for herself.

Megan had though, and still had to. Even at thirteen she knew what she believed in and she knew that none of her friends, family or school teachers thought the same way. She was beginning to realise that it might not be a good idea to tell everyone what she believed in straight away, but on the other hand she was not ashamed of it either.

Her main problem was that she had no Earthly friends that she could talk to about her beliefs, although her dead friends were taking up the slack admirably.

She had no fear of people who might ridicule her because she had already had that all her life from her mother and grandmother. Megan was actually excited about having her father know about her, because at least he seemed interested in a positive way and so did the mayoress for that matter.

In fact, within the land of the corporeal, Mrs. Williams was her closest ally and Megan was looking forward to getting to know her better. She was not in awe of the mayoress" station in life after meeting her, because she had been such a friendly, kind lady. She was like the grandmother that she had never had.

Her father's parents were very good to her, but she rarely saw them as they lived a fair distance away in West Wales, near St. David's. Not only that, but she had no idea what their beliefs were. She could see from her father's Aura that he was open to the suggestion of Spirit and perhaps even more than that, and he may have got that from his parents.

He had defended her since the time she had outed herself to the mayoress and thenceforth to the town and possibly even the world.

Her father read the article at the tea table while Megan was sitting opposite him, but Suzanne was still in the kitchen.

"It is a fascinating story, Megan, could we have a chat about it later? What say we do a spot of gardening after tea?"

"Yes, Dad, that would be fun, I haven't helped you in the garden for ages, have I?"

After tea, Megan helped her mother clear the table and put things away, while her father changed his office clothes for his gardening gear. When he came back down, he said:

"I think I'll do an hour of gardening, Suz. Now that the Spring is really here, there are a few things to do to give the garden a good start. Do you fancy giving me a hand, Megan, when you've finished helping your mother?"

"Sure, Dad, if Mam has nothing else for me to do."

"No, I just want to put my feet up and watch some TV. You go ahead."

Megan and her father went to the garden shed where they exchanged their shoes for Wellington boots.

"Have you read the article yourself, Megan?"

"Yes, Dad."

"What did you think of it?"

"It is what happened. It's what I told Sam, the reporter, so it is accurate."

"I see. Has your mother or anyone else spoken to you about it yet?"

"No, Dad, but it only came out this afternoon, didn't it, so no-one at school had read it, as far as I know. I don't know about now though. Maybe I have a few messages, although I'm not expecting much. All my friends know what I'm like and have done for years."

"Yes, I suppose so, but have you ever thought about the consequences of telling everyone what you are capable of?"

"No, Dad, I can't say that I have ever given it much thought. I have known for years that Mam was not happy with it, and I suppose that I just carried on, but stopped telling her about what I was doing."

"Yes, but now that you are a little older, aren't you at all worried that people will laugh at you or think that you are, er, strange?"

"No, Dad. I may be, or appear to be different from most people, but that is only because I talk about it. Lots of people can do what I can do and everyone is capable of it. Many people can do a lot more too.

"A lot of it is just a question of practice, and the confidence that people won't laugh at you."

"You say that a lot of people can do what you can do, but how many do you know? Name one."

"Mmm, well, no-one you know, Dad."

"Kids at school?"

"Some used to say that they could, but I'm not sure. They don't mention it any more."

"So, who then? Not, er, dead people, eh?"

"Yes, dead people, but 'dead' is one of those words that means different things to different people, isn't it? It is not a very helpful word, unless you define it every time you use it.

"It's like 'too' as in 'don't eat too many toffees'. How many? Three, four, twenty? The word 'dead' to me, means 'without a solid body', but the spirit is still alive. I'm not sure what 'dead' means to you or Mam, but despite what she says, I think that Mam believes the same as I do.

"What do you believe, Dad?"

"I'm not quite sure, Megan, to be perfectly honest with you, but perhaps I think like you do too. As you know, my parents used to have a farm. It

was miles from anywhere and although they were brought up Catholics, they are not your typical Catholics. They became Protestant.

"Many country people are not typical in that sense. Country folk tend to have more, er, traditional beliefs, shall we say. They tend to be more superstitious as well. I suppose I often heard my parents talking about such things as you believe in when I was a child, but I seem to have grown out of it."

"Maybe that was Mam's influence. She has been trying to silence me for ten years too... and her mother tried to as well."

"You could be right there, your Mam definitely does not like to talk about that sort of thing, does she? How do you mean, she tried to silence you?"

"I just knew that she didn't like talking about it. She would tell me not to be silly and that sort of thing..." Megan half-lied.

"Yes, I know what you mean, but you mustn't be too hard on her, Megan, she had a very strict Catholic upbringing from her mother, although her father was a lovely, quiet man. I don't think he was brought up a Catholic, but he was made to convert before Grandma was allowed to marry him. That's how it used to be in their day.

"They, or she, your mother's mother, tried to get me to convert too, but I refused. It's not so important these days.

"So, don't think too harshly of her, Megan, she's afraid, that's all."

"I don't think harshly of her, Dad. I have lived with this all my life and I have been conscious of what they have thought for eight or ten years. I don't have a problem with what Mam believes and never have had really, although I admit that it was a lot more difficult in the beginning, because I just couldn't understand why she was behaving like that.

"I thought that everyone was like me, and so it seemed strange that she would try to shut me up. Then, a few years ago, I sensed her fear and I began to feel sorry for her."

"Well done, Megan, one question though, why didn't you ever come to me, talk to me about what was happening to you?"

"I think I tried to once or twice, Dad, although nowhere near as often as I tried to with Mam. I don't know why..." She thought for a few seconds, "No, I don't know why. I suppose it's just that I spend much more time with Mam and thought that if she wasn't interested then neither would you be."

It wasn't the truth, but she hoped that it sounded convincing. The truth was that she was frightened that if she had gone to her father, the whole truth would have come out about the coal cellar and the name-calling, and that that might have led to fights and possibly even divorce. She had not wanted to have separated parents, because her mother would have had custody of her and she didn't want to live alone with her mother. God only knew what that would have been like, but surely far worse than what she had had to put up with as it was.

"So, what are your plans now then, Megan?"

"I don't have any, Dad, but I hope that we will be going to the 'Mayoress' End of Term Ball' on Saturday, that's all. I suppose I'll post the article to my friends and put it on my blog too, if that's all right by you."

"It's all right by me, Megan, but I wouldn't bother telling your mother about it, if I were you. It might sound like you are rubbing her nose in it."

"No, I hadn't planned on doing that."

"Good, lets go in now. It has been a very useful chat. We should do it more often and if we had, perhaps this whole situation would never have arisen and that is my fault, not yours. I apologise for that, Megan, my only excuse is that one day you were a child and it seemed that the next day you were not. I took my eye off the ball and didn't realise. It won't happen again though, I promise."

"Don't worry about it, Dad. I'm not complaining, but it has been really nice talking to you like this."

"And don't you worry either, Cinders, you will go to the ball. Between you and me, your mother wouldn't miss it for the world and neither would I."

"It was almost dark when they went in. Suzanne either was, or was pretending to be, asleep on the couch in front of the TV, so Robert sat down in one of the armchairs and Megan went up to her room on the pretext of having homework to complete, but the real reason was that she was dying to send the newspaper article to Rod and her school friends.

2 THE END OF TERM BALL

On Saturday morning, the day of the 'Mayoress' End of Term Ball', Megan started receiving lots of messages about the article – the scan of Sam's newspaper piece – that she had posted to her blog. She was particularly pleased that she had not had a single negative comment from anyone that she knew, although there were a few 'silly' comments from strangers calling her a witch, a liar and a freak. However, name-calling like that didn't bother her in the slightest. She didn't know them and they didn't know her, so as far as she was concerned, they had no right to be so rude.

Rod had replied to her call to read the article and had 'liked' it, which she found disappointing, but he later sent a message saying that he had found her 'New Age' beliefs 'very interesting'. She had not been too thrilled with that either, but she remembered what Wacinhinsha and even her father had said about Gramps and Grandma.

She understood that Rod did not have to have the same beliefs as she did, just because she liked him, but she felt disappointed, nevertheless. She decided to ask Wacinhinsha whether it would be all right to post some articles on her spiritual beliefs, in the hope that Rod would read them and see the sense of what she was talking about.

However, deep down she knew that Rod, and everyone else, was on his own as far as his spiritual development was concerned and that, until he realised it for himself, saying that he agreed meant nothing.

She still wanted him to realise it soon though.

Megan was woken out of her reverie by a knock on her door.

"We're leaving in five minutes, if you're still coming with us." It was her mother. They still hadn't really spoken since the previous Tuesday, when she had given Sam the press interview, but Megan could feel that her mother's attitude was softening.

On the Monday and the Tuesday, there had been a lot of anger - a lot of grey and black - in Suzanne's Aura, but the yellow of love was winning, even if it was still tinged with too much pride to admit that she was wrong.

"I'm coming now, Mam, won't be a sec," she called back, then she put her shoes on and went downstairs.

Megan usually went on the Saturday morning shopping expeditions, but this one was special, because it was the last chance to get everything they needed for the ball. They had been given free tickets, otherwise they would have cost twenty-five pounds each. All seats at the 'Mayoress' End of Term Ball' were by invitation only, but usually people had to pay for the privilege of having been invited.

Because of Megan's friendship with her ladyship though, the Evans' were given complimentary tickets. Due to the bad atmosphere in the house, Robert had told Suzanne that she could have the seventy-five they had saved for a new dress, if she wanted and Suzanne had jumped at the offer, although she was still pretty grumpy.

Nothing had been promised to Megan, but she didn't need anything and had the reward money anyway. Robert didn't need anything either. Megan thought she might treat herself to some perfume, and was prepared to spend up to twenty-five, if she could find anything she really liked. It was a quarter of the reward money that the mayoress had given her for finding her cat.

At the mall, the security guard said hello and wished them well as he always had done since he had met them, when Megan had helped catch a thief there. He also referred to the article in the paper.

"Well done, Megan, that's a very enviable gift you have there. I wish I had it. It would help me to catch more thieves and maybe get me a promotion."

Megan and her father had smiled and passed friendly comments. They liked the amiable man.

Megan stuck close to her mother and tried to start several conversations, most of which got only one or two word answers. However, when it came to choosing her new dress for the evening's dinner dance, she actually asked Megan for her opinion.

"Which one do you prefer, Megan, this one or that?"

"Can we see them on you, Mam, they are both beautiful and I think you'd look great in either of them, but if it has to be one or the other, we'll need to see you wearing them, won't we, Dad?"

"Oh, definitely. Yes, definitely!"

Suzanne modelled both dresses for them. Megan liked the second one more and Robert had agreed, although Megan had seen that he had liked the first one more really. She knew that he had agreed with her for the sake of unity - – a kind of solidarity.

It had worked too because Suzanne had chosen the second gown and seemed to perk up no end as they left the shop. The proceedings were to

start at seven thirty, so when they got home, they still had five hours to go. It was quite a tense time for the three of them, because it was not the type of function that they were accustomed to attending.

When the time came to leave, the ladies looked beautiful, Suzanne in her new dress and Megan in the dress that she had been given for her thirteenth birthday, a few months earlier. She also wore her dragon brooch and moonstone ring. Robert wore a dinner jacket with a black tie. They decided to take a taxi so that there would be no problem with drinking and driving and booked it to pick them up at twelve fifteen, as the dance finished at midnight, and Robert and Suzanne were always two of the last to leave, since they didn't go out often.

Megan and Suzanne were both quite nervous when they arrived, but Robert's sang-froid gave them confidence, as did Mrs. Williams' sincere and friendly greeting when they entered the hall.

"Good evening, to you, Megan, and to you, Suzanne, so nice to see you again. And you must be Mr. Evans, or may I call you Robert? It is lovely to meet you. Please go with this nice young man who will show you to your table. We'll have a cosy chat later when I've seen everyone in."

Their table was right at the front, just off to the left. The top table was centre in front of them and the dance floor was beyond that next to the stage.

As they sat at their table and looked around, they were surrounded by people they knew, but not socially. There were local politicians, shopkeepers, builders, factory managers and all sorts of local dignitaries - people they knew far better from the newspaper than in person.

Then it occurred to Suzanne that most of these people would have recognised Megan from the newspaper article, but would only be guessing who she and Robert were. Megan was the celebrity at their table and she began to feel proud of her daughter, especially when some people actually nodded to her in recognition.

At seven forty-five, when most of the tables were occupied, the lights dimmed and Mrs. Williams walked out onto the stage.

"Thank you, my friends, for coming to my farewell gala dinner dance. It warms my heart to see so many friends, young and old and in between. Anyway, I am sure that you are all hungry and would rather be eating than listening to me, so I will leave you to it. The food will be brought around very shortly, so enjoy your meal and I will talk to you all later."

Mrs. Williams received a round of applause and some five minutes later, a waiter brought them the first course of soup and a warm bread roll. They had indicated their preferences on the card they had replied with, so it was no surprise what they got to eat, but the quality was far higher than they had expected.

Megan had never had such a meal before and her parents rarely. In fact, Suzanne and Megan were rather worried about making faux pas in etiquette., but no-one would have noticed if they had, since they were sitting at a table on their own. None of the VIP tables at the front of the hall except the top table were 'shared'.

When the six-course meal was over, the lights were raised a little and Mrs. Williams thanked everyone again for coming and said that she hoped that everyone had enjoyed their meal.

This, she said, was her (and every other mayor's) way of thanking her staff, friends and supporters for all their help and donations during the four-year term of her office. It signalled impending local elections and Mrs. Williams said that she hoped that all those there present would assist in her campaign for re-election.

When she had finished her short address, there followed thirty-odd minutes of speeches on local political issues by other officials all basically thanking each other and encouraging the diners to continue their support. Finally, the local party chairman presented Mrs. Williams with a huge bunch of flowers and thanked her for her service to the community. Naturally, Mrs. Williams had to reply to that, but she kept it short and then called for the lights to be lowered and the music to start.

Mrs. Williams danced with the party chairman for about five minutes, but then had to sit down because of her hips.

There was no-one else there of Megan's age or anywhere near it, but she didn't mind one little bit, because she was a little stage-struck by all the posh frocks and smart suits.

After he had had the first dance with his wife, Robert asked Megan for a turn around the floor. She accepted his hand nervously, because she had never been instructed in ballroom dancing, but she was encouraged by Mrs. Williams' silent clapping as she watched her and her father doing the waltz.

Despite feeling very self-conscious, she did enjoy the dance, but was happy to sit the others out, not having the advantage of a few drinks like the other shy people there.

Mrs. Williams was as good as her word and came over to talk to Megan and her parents as soon as she was able to.

"Can I help with the campaign to get you re-elected, Mrs. Williams?"

"I'm not sure of the legality. How old are you, Megan?"

"Thirteen, fourteen next June."

"Ah, that may be a problem. I think you have to be at least fourteen, but I will check on that. I really appreciate your wanting to help.

"I'm sure we can find you something to do, but we will have to be careful, because if my political opponents find out, they might say that I'm using child labour and that would do us no good at all. Still, a little bird tells me that you like writing articles on your blog. Is that true?"

"Yes, Mrs. Williams."

"Yes, I have read your blog – it is very good. Thank for putting that article on it about Smokey too. Perhaps you could write a few pieces for us, you know, from the teenage perspective. We'll have a chat about it again. I don't want to spoil the evening for you with boring political matters.

"I'm sorry that there is no-one of your own age for you to talk to, but it all happened so quickly, as you know. Still, I hope you enjoy yourself. Thank you all for coming, Megan, Suzanne, Mr. Evans."

"Robert, please, you call the others by their first names."

"Yes, sorry, Robert, I forgot and my name is Gail, don't forget."

Mrs. Williams went to the next table, lurching from chair-back to chair-back and putting a brave face on, despite the increasing pain from her worn-out hip joints.

"I do hope she gets in again next time and I want to do all I can to make sure she does. Did you vote for her last time, Dad?"

"It was a secret ballot, but since you ask, yes, I did and so did your mother, didn't you, Suz?"

"Yes, I did and I will do next time as well."

"Megan had a lot of time to herself, because her parents liked to dance and when people came over to talk to them, mostly local shopkeepers, Megan could not hear because the music was fairly loud, but she didn't mind. She had been studying Desmond Morris' 'The Naked Ape' for a week by then and had matched a lot of body language to colours in the Auras, so she just watched people. She found the politicians on the top table particularly interesting. Hardly any of them seemed to be truly enjoying themselves – they looked as if they were just doing their job, which in many ways they were.

They wanted to get back into office and this was an opportunity to shine in front of a captive, partially-inebriated group of people who were already sympathetic to their cause. They mingled, chatted, told jokes and tried to be as pally as possible with people they hardly knew. It was not for nothing, thought Megan, that many of them went from table to table carrying a bottle of wine to share with those seated there.

Megan watched them dong the rounds, telling the same jokes and getting and giving the same reactions, for Megan could lip-read from when she had temporarily lost her hearing a few years before, had been able to see Auras for as long as she could remember and now she was becoming quite adept at reading body language.

There was not much human behaviour that escaped her attention these days.

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