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## Maeves & Morgans

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My name is Maevis Morgan, but you can call me Maeve, and I'm here to tell you a story. I guess I'm probably here for other things, but I'm here to tell you a story too. You might be wondering what the story is. I'm sort of wondering that also. I mean, I just learned pretty recently that I had to tell it. I was told that if I didn't, well, who would? The voice had a fair point, I suppose.

I'm almost twenty-four right now, but by the time you read this, I'll probably be older. I don't believe in time travel, so unless I'm wrong about that, I'm older now, when you're reading this. Not younger, and not the same age. You might believe me or not believe me. About time travel not being possible. That's ok, I understand.

I'm about a fourth of the way through my life, if my math is right. Maybe a solid fifth. With advances in medicine, I might be wrong about that too. I think I'm going to live a long time, anyway. I have a hunch. I think it's because I was created for a purpose, and then told that. That I had a destiny, I mean. My destiny involves getting a chance to be pretty old, I think, so I think I'm going to be pretty old someday. Maybe that day's already arrived, when you're reading this. I hope I'm aging gracefully then. I just mean I hope I'm doing OK. I don't say maths because I'm not from England or some other places where they say maths. I say math. Sometimes I'm good at math, but I didn't always get great grades in Math.

I can't say for certain how much I've changed, since I was a kid, so far. I still feel like me. I've gotten taller, I know I've had more life experiences, and I know that I believe some different things than I once did. But still, I really feel like the same person too.

This might be how other people feel, I don't know. I haven't asked too many other people, but I have asked a few other people. I think they feel the same way I do. They are sort of the same, and sort of different. They're each telling a different story than I am. Most of the details are different, but the conclusions... well, some of them are the same, too.

Right now, I've been told that if I tell my story and can make it really interesting, it might make some other people better, somehow. I'm not sure I understand that, or really, why I would go to all the trouble to tell a good story, just so somebody else can have a better life. Hey, I'm not being selfish, but I'm busy like most people. I have my own problems. Right now, for example, I'm under-employed. I mean, I'm unemployed. Kind of the same thing.

I wouldn't mind if my own life got better, if I went to the trouble of making the story about it interesting enough. Doesn't that seem fair? I think it does. What do you think? That's what they call a rhetorical question, of course. I can't hear you answer me at the same time I'm recording this. I don't believe in time travel. I might hear your answer afterward, I don't really know. But not right now.

Anyway, I suppose you'd like me to explain what the voice is that I'm talking about, or maybe where I grew up, or why I'm under-employed at the moment, or any of those sorts of things. Keep calm, I'll do my best. I'll start at the beginning, almost.

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I was born on a Wednesday, and my mother's name was Ani Esther Morgan. I was an only child, and I still am, I guess. My mother's name is also still Ani Esther Morgan. Some things don't change.

Sometimes I call my Mom just Mom, sometimes I call her Ani, and sometimes I call her Mother Ani. If you hear me talking about any of these people, they're all the same person. Don't get confused, this is how people sometimes talk about other people. We go by more than one thing.

I guess I cried a lot at first, then sort of gave up on the crying. That's how Mom describes it. She said, one day you wouldn't shut up with the crying, then the next day, you decided you had enough of that, and I haven't really heard you cry since. That's more-or-less what Mom told me once or twice, and I suppose I believe her. I don't really remember crying about anything. I'm not always happy, but I keep the waterworks in check around other people, including me. Other people have enough problems, just like I do.

Mother Ani didn't have a husband or a boyfriend when I was born. The man who got her pregnant was named either Denny or Floyd. That's one thing I know about my parents: their names are Ani, and either Denny or Floyd.

I don't really think about Denny or Floyd at all, really. They're not in my life, and they chose it that way, and I guess I had to be OK with that, and so I am, I guess. I wish them well I but don't seem to miss them, since they don't seem to miss me. Does that make me sad? I mean, isn't that a sad way to be, not caring about half the people who made you, or two-thirds, sort of, in my case? I don't know, that's just my backstory, regarding parents.

I've met good examples of parents. My Mom, for instance, was a pretty good example, so I know a thing or two about how that can be a lucky

thing, for a kid to have - one or even two good parents. I mean, two pretty good parents are what you're hoping for, right? But a lot of us only have one. Some don't have any. That would be really hard. And then some had one or two who were the opposite of good. I got off pretty lucky, when you think about it. Denny or Floyd might not have wanted a daughter enough to stick around, but they never went out of their way to be mean about it, either.

Anyway, that's enough about Denny or Floyd. Like I said, I don't really think about them. I'm just giving you my backstory, because you'd probably wonder at some point, hey what about Maeve's dad? Where's he in all of this story? I wish I could give Denny or Floyd different names, but those are the names they came with, and I didn't really have any say in that. If your name is Denny or Floyd, I hope I didn't just hurt your feelings. They're just not my favourite names. I guess maybe I have an excuse, so excuse me.

I had a dog once too, who was like a brother. He was there when Mom brought me home. He was there when I left home too, to live on my own for the first time. You can imagine how much I loved that dog. By now, you're maybe doing the math, or maths, I don't know where you live, and figuring out that he's probably dead, by the time I'm writing this. Dogs don't live as long as they should. It's sad, how that goes. Not OK.

Turtles live a long time, and so do parrots. I've never met a parrot, but I had a turtle once. Her name was Norm. She went to live with my Uncle, a few years ago. My uncle's name is Norm too. There's a connection there, it's not a coincidence. Both Norms, since I last checked, which was yesterday, are still alive and kicking. But I've never met a parrot.

My point went sideways, there. That happens. My point was, dogs should live at least as long as turtles, parrots, and people. It really doesn't make any sense that the best ones barely make it to fifteen, sometimes. Fifteen. What the hell, Nature. I don't get how that's right. Anyhow, that dog's name was Dooley. I sometimes called him other names, like Dools, and Drools, and Whippley-pup and Puppernut and Mellowhead, and Sir Dooley Doolerson. I had tons of names for Dooley, but his actual name was just Dooley.

I think I'll skip ahead and not tell you about all my growing-up stuff at once. It's kind of straightforward really, nothing too exciting. Mother Ani and I travelled around a lot, with Dooley and Norm, I mean Turtle Norm, not Uncle Norm, having adventures without Denny or Floyd, and we never really lived in one place very long, because Ani was still looking for her Calling. I get it. I'm doing that now too. At the time though, I didn't understand why we had to keep moving so much, and I got shouty sometimes, and sometimes I acted out, and sometimes I hung onto doorjams, and sometimes I tried to run away, and things weren't totally smooth between us, but we survived and things are OK now, although I haven't talked to her since Bee died.

I don't want to give you any spoilers, but Mom and I are OK now, even though she hasn't talked to me since Bee died.

Here's what I can tell you about the voice. I heard it the first time before I was born, and I've heard it five times in all. It's pretty specific, kind of gravelly but not unfriendly or mean or anything. Just haggard, like whoever's voice it is has been doing voices for a long, long time, and is way over the novelty, and is getting a bit hoarse, and maybe has a bunch of people to talk to still and so doesn't pop by very often, but when it does, you kind of feel like you're the most important person in the room, but the voice isn't going to let you know that, just by the sound of its voice. I'm not sure I explained that very well.

Anyway, the voice showed up before I was born, and told me I was about to be maybe-born, and then asked me if I was OK with that. I wasn't really sure whether I was OK with that, to be honest. I had just gotten there. I didn't even know where there was, or what being born meant, or what I was, or how to know if I was actually ready for anything anyway... but somehow I still understood the question. Somehow. Do you know what I mean? I'm not sure you know what I mean, but then I think you might imagine what I mean, at least.

What I mean is, I was hanging out somewhere even before I existed, and I had a choice, and that choice was real, and it was my choice. The choice was this. Was I going to be, or not be?

When I first heard that line in Shakespeare when I was a bit older, I really thought my mind would explode right then. That was exactly the question I had been asked, almost, back before I was born. The very same one, almost. The one that I answered by saying, OK sure, I'll bite, I'll be.

Later, I tried to find anything on the Internet about Shakespeare writing about his own life and maybe having been asked if he was OK with being born, or if anybody had asked him if he had wanted to be born, even before he was born... but I guess they didn't really do interviews back then, because all I found were the stories he made up, and nothing about his life or what he thought about it.

Now you might be wondering, wait, is this a science fiction story? Because I just told you something that's not really normal, which was that I remember the time just before I was born. I know some people believe in past lives, but I'm telling you I had a time before that, or maybe in-between those, I don't know, where I was outside of all of it, and I had a choice to come in, and I did.

Anyhow I think you get it. I'm not saying you should be mind-blown. I mean, it's not that big of a deal, really. It's just that it's true, and I think you probably should know that about me, because I think that's probably partly why I ended up being the way I am. I walk around like everybody else in the world walks around most days, but what's different about me is that I always remember, at the back of my mind, that I came here because I really wanted to come here. Not just because I was curious, or because it happened by accident. I chose it. I had a reason, too. It was a pretty good one. I remember thinking about being or not being, and then, I thought of the reason, and I was like, ohhh, well, then. Of course, now I have to be born. Yes, please. Let's do this. I'm ready.

I've just forgotten what the reason was. That's been a problem my whole life. I should have written it down, but then who ever gets born with a notepad and notes in their hand anyway? How would that have even worked out? Nobody gets born that way, with some notes they made to themselves about things they didn't want to forget once they got out of their Mom. You're supposed to remember, I guess. I do remember that there was

a reason, and it was a good one. What it was though, I couldn't tell you. Forgot. Oh well.

For a while, when I was younger, I just thought everybody remembered a voice from before they were born too, and that they remembered being asked to choose just like I was, and they all chose yes, like I did. I figure some must have chosen no, right? But then we would never have met any of those people, so it's not like they don't count, but they kind of don't count. The rest of us chose yes, so we all count. That's what I think.

I also thought that some people might have even remembered the reason they chose to be born, and so sometimes when I was really young, I would ask people why they were born, and they would sometimes act confused or think I was kidding or maybe being mean to them... or maybe think I meant, where do babies come from, but that I just asked it in a really weird way.

But I just meant, did they remember what the reason was? Why had they said yes to all this? Could they tell me, maybe? Maybe I would remember then too. I think that might help. Don't you?

Whenever I would ask this question, and somebody would misunderstand or get confused or angry, I would get confused, and think I was the one misunderstanding them. It took me literally years before I finally figured out that most people don't actually remember the time before they were born, like, at all. Not even a bit. They just remember from some time when they were two or three or five or something, or maybe even after that. Not a lot of people even remember being a baby, and nobody I've met yet remembers being in a kind of waiting room with no furniture or walls or time, where they got to choose between being born, or whatever the alternative is.

Anyway. I've gone on a lot about that. But the voice told me to make sure to mention it, when it told me I should tell my story now, so there you are. Now you know. We're all here for a good reason, but beats me what it is. If I find out, I'll let you know.

I said before that I've heard the voice about five times, so I'll save the three middle times for later, and just tell you about the first time, which I just did,

and then this last time, which happened just this past weekend. I had almost kind of forgot what it sounded like, because it had been so long since the last time I had heard it. I've never once doubted that I've heard the voice for real, but I do forget now and then that it's happened at all. But then, the other day, it happened again.

I was in the kitchen in Bee's house on Sisters Island, where I am now. I had done some painting, and I was having some iced tea and shortbread from TooToonies and looking at a college calendar, because I was thinking about going to college, because I was under-employed at the moment.

I had been let go from my job at the electronics store in town, which is called The Gadgetorium, which is across the street from TooToonies, which is in Elders Falls, but I'm going too fast, I think. I had been let go from the Gadgetorium, where I had been under-employed for the past three-and-a-quarter years, selling electronics to people who weren't comfortable yet with buying electronics on the Internet. Kind of a niche market.

This story isn't about my retail career though - I'm pretty sure I'm done with that, I think. I was reading a college calendar, trying to figure out if I could feel excited about going back to school and learning some new career. I was considering taking an Arc Welding Workshop for Beginners, or maybe starting a Career in Information Technology, where I'd specialize in Cryptocurrency or Artificial Intelligence or Web Design - or maybe all three - and would try to make a fortune doing my own cryptocurrency or making websites, or both. Maybe I'd employ artificial intelligences, once they're around and allowed to get jobs, and I'd pay them well but mostly I'd treat them like they were real people, and I'd get excellent ratings on RateMyBoss or whatever because of that. But I wasn't really digging any particular career fantasy I could cook up from the calendar. I tried.

I think you can tell that I'm not sure what I want to do, but I know now that it isn't selling gadgets, and it's probably not even related to Information Technology. I like using Information Technology sometimes, and I have nothing against gadgets, but that's about as far as it goes. Sometimes I just like being outside. I didn't always know this, but now I do.



I was having one of those bland sort of days, where everything is kind of like eating white bread, and you sort of feel full and a bit lazy, like you just want to lie down for a while. Then I heard the voice. The first thing I thought was, oh, I forgot, I hear a voice now and then. How long has it been?

And the voice was a bit chattier this time, and it said Maeve, it's been a while, I haven't forgotten you, I've just been busy. I said, no worries, I'm just here trying to decide what courses to take. I wasn't really talking out loud, but this is how it goes with the voice, it's like a conversation but there's never anybody around who can back you up to say that yes, you were talking to something for real.

The voice said, do you remember why you're here? And I said, well actually I'm glad you asked that, because I forgot why I'm here. I should have written it down. The voice said, don't worry about that, just keep at it. But in the meantime, I need you to do me a favour. It's pretty important. I said what's that, and the voice said, you have to tell your story now. And I said to who, and it said whom, and I said what, and it said don't worry about it. Just tell your story. It doesn't matter how many people hear it, as long as the right one does. You should write this down. Write what down, I asked, did it mean the favour, and it said no, your story. I should write down my story, is what it told me.

I thought about that, about why I should tell my story, and then I realized all at once that there was a really good reason that I should, and I understood everything, and so I said, ohh, OK sure, yes that does make a lot of sense, since you put it that way, and so the voice said OK thanks, I know you can do it, just do it, OK? Have fun, OK I'll talk to you later.

And then the voice was gone again. I was still holding the college calendar, and if I had remembered to have a pen or pencil ready, I would have even written the reason down. The reason why I need to tell my story, I mean. It was a really good reason, too. But since I didn't have a pen or pencil, I didn't write it down, and then I forgot again almost right away, while I was distracted looking for where I had put my pencil, and wondering whether I even had pens at all, anymore. I forgot the reason that I was supposed to tell you this damn story of mine. I guess maybe the reason isn't part of the story? I don't know.

I remember though that the reason makes a lot of sense. I just forget what it is. I am starting to think this is how the voice likes things to go down. It will pop out at me when I'm not expecting to have to make a decision, and then I have this decision to make, and there will be this good reason for making it, but I will forget the reason afterward, but still remember that there was one, and that it was a good one, so I shouldn't regret making it.

Now you might be thinking, this sounds like I wasn't really given a choice, then. I mean, maybe I was tricked or something. If the reason was so good, why can't I ever remember it, and why would anybody say no anyway, if the reason was that good? Where's the choice in that?

I get it, I do. Maybe you're wondering about free will. Join the club. But I don't think that's how it works. I'm still here, every day, because I made a choice to be. Right? I make that choice every day, OK? I just forget why. So what. That doesn't make it not a choice. It's still a choice. I know there's a reason, that should be enough. I can't explain it very well, but I think maybe you might understand what I mean.

So now I'm writing my story, and there's a good reason, but don't worry too much about it. Maybe the story was the reason I decided to be born, instead of not deciding to be born. And if that's true, then maybe someday I'll figure out what the reason was that I started telling my story too, once I've kept deciding to get up and tell it every day, out of habit, because I remember that I had a really good reason once, and I just stopped questioning it so much, and just got on with the telling.

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You should know that a lot of my story happened when I was around eleven. I don't mean I didn't have bunches of other things happen to me before that and after that, but the story I feel ready to tell you now is about when I was eleven, and then skipped twelve and went right to having my thirteenth birthday instead. So I'm eleven or thirteen in a lot of this story, and also twelve, but not really. That's when a lot of things for me changed. The same number of minutes happened in that year as any other year, except maybe leap years, but a lot more story happened. That's how it feels, so.

But then I'll probably tell you about times a bit before that and then what I'm doing now, probably, because where I was before and where I am now is part of my story too, which seems obvious to say. So, pay attention, and remember people are going to be younger or older, or maybe even not born yet or else already dead, depending on what part of my story I'm telling you. I'll try not to be confusing, but I'll probably fail a bit at that anyway. Try and keep up.

Also, a lot of this story, I'll warn you, involves Magic. Or something. I don't believe in God, exactly, I believe in Science. Science is newer than God, and that might not make it better, or even more true, but it makes it easier to believe in right now, in a way. That's how I see it. I don't really believe in Magic either, I believe in Science. I think I said that already, right?

Here's the thing. I think God and Magic might just be Science. Think about it. Let's think about lightning. People used to think lightning was God, or it was Magic. Now we know it's electricity. I don't really understand exactly how electricity works, but I did once, when I was in school, for about a week, around exams. I've kind of forgotten the specifics. There's positive and negative particles, and they're attracted to each other, and static cling is a small example, and turning on a light bulb is a medium example, and getting hit by lightning is a really extreme example. Same stuff though. Electricity.

It doesn't matter. My point is electricity is Science now, and not God, and not Magic. Most people know this. So, what you might still call God or Magic or whatever today, is probably just Science, someday which hasn't happened yet. Maybe tomorrow, or next year, or in a thousand years. That's what I believe, anyway, at the moment. So, I think that's called being agnostic.

The voice is Science too. I'm pretty sure that's true. I can't explain it, but people from the future will probably be able to. They might hear this story and say, Oh, that Maeve Morgan, she was describing such-and-such-ology, but she's calling it a 'voice', because the primitive people of her time period thought she was talking about either God or Magic, but it was just Science, all along. Aren't we smarter now, than they were back then? Yes, yes we are. And then they'll pat their own backs, for being so clever.

So, this is sort of a Science book, but it's my story too, so it's, what... a science autobiography. It's not science fiction. I mean, it's an autobiography, but I'm going to talk about Magic and voices, and someday that will all just be plain old science. We won't even capitalize it anymore, that's how normal all of this will be, by then. I don't know whatever-ology it will be yet, that's all. I think you get what I mean, I'm pretty sure.