

© 2007 by Melody Carlson

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission from NavPress, P.O. Box 35001, Colorado Springs, CO 80935.  
www.navpress.com

THINK Books is an imprint of NavPress. THINK is a registered trademark of NavPress. Absence of ® in connection with marks of NavPress or other parties does not indicate an absence of registration of those marks.

ISBN 1-57683-951-6

Cover design by studiogearbox.com

Cover photo by Trinette Reed / PhotoDisc

Creative Team: Nicci Hubert, Arvid Wallen, Erin Healy, Darla Hightower, Kathy Guist

This is a work of fiction. The characters, incidents, and dialogues are products of the author's imagination and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual events or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Published in association with the literary agency of Sara A. Fortenberry.

Carlson, Melody.

Moon white : color me enchanted / Melody Carlson.

p. cm. -- (Truecolors series ; bk. 11)

Summary: When, at her stepmother's urging, Heather explores Wiccan spirituality, she not only becomes isolated from her Christian friends, she falls deeper and deeper into the occult and faces shocking betrayals and threats to her very life.

ISBN 1-57683-951-6

[1. Wiccans--Fiction. 2. Occultism--Fiction. 3. Spirituality--Fiction. 4. Stepfamilies--Fiction. 5. High schools--Fiction. 6. Schools--Fiction. 7. Christian life--Fiction.]

I. Title.

PZ7.C216637Moo 2007

[Fic]--dc22

2006033180

Printed in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 / 10 09 08 07

FOR A FREE CATALOG OF NAVPRESS BOOKS & BIBLE STUDIES,  
CALL 1-800-366-7788 (USA) OR 1-800-839-4769 (CANADA)

# one

"I AM NOT EVIL," I SAY QUIETLY, TRYING TO KEEP MY VOICE CALM FOR THE SAKE of those listening to what should have remained a private conversation. We're sitting in the cafeteria with about five hundred other kids at the moment, and I do not get why my *best* friend wants to go here right now.

"How can you say that, Heather?" she persists. "*You want to become a witch!*"

I try not to glare at her. "Come on, Lucy," I say in a light voice. "Don't show off your ignorance to everyone."

"You're calling *me* ignorant? You're the one who decided to become a witch."

"Lighten up," I tell her. "And quit going on about the witch stuff, okay?"

"Fine. What would you call it then?"

I smile at Chelsea Klein. She's sitting next to Lucy and actually seems fairly interested in the strange twist our conversation just took. "I simply mentioned that I'm reading a book about Wicca," I say to Lucy. "No big deal, okay? That does not mean I'm becoming a witch."

Chelsea nods. "Yeah, lighten up, Lucy."

Lucy turns and glares at Chelsea now. "So are you saying that

you think it's okay if Heather does become a witch?"

Chelsea just laughs.

"I'm serious," says Lucy. "I mean, you're a Christian too, Chelsea. At least I thought you were. Anyway, you used to go to youth group." Lucy frowns now, as if she's not sure what she's stepped into.

"What's your point?" asks Chelsea.

"My point is, do you think it's okay for Heather to be dabbling in witchcraft?"

"*Dabbling in witchcraft?*" I repeat. "Lucy, why are you making this into something that it's not?"

"Because I'm seriously worried about you, Heather." She shakes her head like she thinks I'm totally hopeless. "I mean, you spend a couple of weeks in the British Isles, you start letting your stepmom read her tarot cards to you, and then you start doing all these strange things."

"What strange things?" I ask.

"Well, how about this whole vegan thing?" Lucy rolls her eyes. "Like just a couple months ago, your favorite food was pepperoni pizza, and now you won't even touch a milkshake. What's up with that?"

"So now you want to tell me what I should and shouldn't eat?"

"That's not what I mean." She frowns and looks frustrated. "I've been trying to act like I'm cool with it, although I really don't get what your problem with dairy products is. I mean we're talking about milk, right?"

"I already tried to explain to you about how I'm concerned with the inhumane treatment of dairy cows, but you wouldn't even—"

"Whatever!" Lucy holds up her hands.

"You should be a little more tolerant, Lucy," says Chelsea.

"Yeah," agrees Kendall, pointing to her brown-bag lunch. "I

happen to be a vegetarian myself. And I've been thinking about converting over to vegan too. You have a problem with that, Lucy?"

"Maybe you want to make yourself captain of the food police," teases Chelsea between bites of chicken Caesar salad. "The CFP."

"I wasn't even talking about food to start with," Lucy protests. "I mean, seriously, I don't care what you guys eat. I think that was just Heather's little smoke screen. I was talking about Wicca and *witchcraft* and the disturbing fact that Heather is becoming a witch."

"And I told you that's not what's going on," I say, still trying to maintain some composure here. I just don't get why Lucy is acting like this. Why can't she just chill for once? Just because I go to church with her occasionally doesn't mean I believe the exact same things that she does. Can't she accept that? "For like the tenth time, reading about Wicca does *not* make me a witch."

"Look, Heather." Lucy sounds really irritated now. "Pastor Hamilton says if it *walks* like a duck and *talks* like a duck, you can be pretty sure that it's a duck. Okay?"

This actually makes me laugh. "Fine, Lucy," I tell her. "I can walk like a duck and I can talk like a duck, but that still does not make me a duck. *Okay?*"

Lucy looks slightly stumped now, and Chelsea and Kendall both applaud. "Well said," says Kendall.

"Thank you," I say, grinning over my little victory. But Lucy looks like she's about to explode, or maybe implode. And despite myself, I feel a little sorry for her. I wish I could make her understand. After all, she is my best friend. And she's always there for me when I need her. Or rather she used to be. Suddenly I'm not so sure. I wonder if it's possible to outgrow some friends. Maybe the time comes when you have to cut your losses and move on. Still, I really

do like Lucy. We've been friends since seventh grade, back when my mom got sick and died. Lucy reached out to me when I felt totally lost and alone. And I really don't want to lose her friendship. Maybe I just need to help her understand that Wicca is no big deal. Still, I hadn't planned on having a conversation like this in public.

"Listen, Lucy." I use my most patient voice. "I think the problem is that you don't really understand what Wicca is and what it's not—"

"I know that it's witchcraft, Heather. And Pastor Hamilton taught a class about the occult last year, and Wicca was part of that, and I know that people who are into Wicca also worship Satan and practice magic and—"

"That's not true," I protest. "Wiccans don't even *believe* in Satan. How could we worship something we don't believe in?"

"So you do admit that you're a Wiccan then?" says Lucy with a triumphant look in her eye, like she's caught me in the act.

"Maybe I am," I tell her, ready to give up. Have it her way. What's the point?

She looks at Chelsea then Kendall. "See, I told you she's becoming a witch."

I just sigh and start packing up the remains of my barely touched lunch.

"Well, she's a nice witch," says Chelsea sympathetically.

"Hey, can you put a spell on Marcus Abrams for me?" teases Kendall. "Or maybe just whip me up some kind of love potion that I can sneak into his Snapple?"

"Yeah, right." Why do I even try? "You guys just really don't get it."

"Then explain it to us," says Kendall, leaning forward like she's really interested.

"I would," I tell her, glancing at Lucy, "if I could manage to get out a complete sentence without being interrupted."

"Fine," says Lucy. "Explain away. I'll keep my mouth shut."

I study her for a moment, still trying to figure out why she seems so angry at me. "Well," I begin slowly, "for one thing Wicca has a lot to do with nature and the seasons and the sun and the moon and the stars. It actually makes a lot of sense when you think about it. And it's about doing good, not evil, and it's a very ancient religion. It's been around for about 30,000 years—"

"How can anyone know that?" challenges Lucy. "There's no recorded history that far back."

"I don't know," I admit. "But I read that there have been archaeological findings related to Wicca that go back that far."

"I don't believe it," she snaps.

"Obviously," I say.

"You said you were going to keep your mouth shut," Kendall reminds Lucy.

Lucy stands up now, slinging a strap of her bag over her shoulder. "Well, sometimes we need to speak out. And as a Christian, I can't just sit here and listen to my best friend talk about some Satanic religion and how it's so great." She looks down at me, then sighs. "I just don't know how you got so off track, Heather. But I still love you and I'll be praying for you." Then she picks up her tray, turns away, and walks off. And, okay, I realize that it's just Lucy's immaturity speaking, combined with her inability to accept change, and I shouldn't even react to her, but I feel like I've just been slapped.



## two

AS I GO INSIDE MY HOUSE, IT OCCURS TO ME THAT A LOT HAS CHANGED AROUND here since Dad married Augustine last June. And I have to admit that most of the changes are for the better. Augustine is an artist, and not only did she bring some of her own paintings into our home, but she also brought along a pretty nice collection of items from her artist friends too. But before she hung anything on the walls, she did some repainting. At first I wasn't too sure about her color selections, like the pomegranate red in the kitchen or the deep purple in the hallway, but after she finished the painting and then carefully arranged the art, I could see how dramatic and interesting it made what would otherwise be a fairly white-bread house. She obviously knew just what she was doing. Still, it catches me by surprise sometimes. Like today. And I do wonder what my mother would say if she were here to see it. She was a firm believer in neutrals.

Out of old habit, I start to dump my coat and bag on the island in the kitchen, then stop myself, remembering how this aggravates Augustine. Having been single and childless for so many years, she has this somewhat obsessive tendency to keep everything in its place. It's like every room is supposed to be a work of art and she likes it to look just so. I mean, even the sofa throw pillows, which are beaded and not comfortable enough to actually rest your head



upon, must be arranged in a certain way—asymmetrical with three on one end and two on the other and the colors have to be in a special order too. I've almost got it figured out. Well, except that she likes to change things.

“It’s a seasonal thing,” she explained to me last week. “In the same way that the leaves fall from a tree in the autumn or the buds bloom in the spring, I like the interior of a home to change as well.” And for that reason, we now have a great big ceramic pot full of branches by our front door. Dad stubbed his toe on it a few times when he let Oliver (our cat) in and out, but he never complained once, not about any of this. I think he really does appreciate the color that Augustine brings into our lives, even if things aren’t like they used to be. To be honest, it did get pretty sloppy around here after Mom died. At first I tried to keep it together, but Dad didn’t seem to care one way or another, so eventually I just let it go. I wouldn’t exactly call us slobs, but we were pretty relaxed in our housekeeping.

“Hey, Heather,” says Augustine as she emerges from her studio just off the kitchen. The little room used to be my mom’s office, back when Mom ran her accounting business from our home, before she got sick. But Augustine pretty much gutted the room, put all Mom’s old stuff in the attic, and then had a bunch of floor-to-ceiling windows installed along the south wall. She says the light in there is perfect for painting now. And I have to admit that it was an amazing transformation.

“How’s it going?” I say as I hang my bag and jacket on the metal hooks Augustine installed by the back door, along with a wooden bench and a shelf for dirty boots and shoes.

She kind of frowns as she wipes her hands on the tails of an oversized denim shirt that’s smeared with paint. “Okay, I guess.”

“Just okay?” I ask as I open the fridge.

“Well, I guess I’m feeling uninspired. I’ve been basically staring at a blank canvas all afternoon.”

“Uh-huh.” I take out a pitcher of green tea.

“I think it’s the changing of the season or something. It’s like I’m being blocked by some external forces, you know? Have you heard if there’s a storm coming?”

I glance out the window as I pour my tea. “It’s getting a little cloudy out there. But this is the Oregon coast. Anything could happen.”

She sort of laughs. “Yeah, I’m still getting used to that. My head is sort of like a barometer. I get these sinus headaches when the weather starts to change.”

I nod and take a sip. “That’s too bad. Weather changes a lot around here.”

“So I’ve noticed.”

“Is there anything you can do about it? Take some decongestant or something?”

“Actually, it’s kind of nice having a barometer in your head.” She smiles. “It’s like a warning, you know?”

“A warning?”

“Yeah, our bodies are like that, Heather. They’re designed to keep us in touch with our surroundings and ultimately to protect us. The problem is, we just don’t pay attention like we should. Like you get a gut feeling not to do something, but then you just ignore it and go ahead, then later on you wish you’d paid attention to your instinct.”

“Yeah, I’ve done that before.”

“It’s just such a shame that we have all these great intuitions and psychic abilities, but most of us never even tap into them. Especially

in the States.”

Augustine has lived abroad almost as much as she’s lived in America. She spent a lot of time in the British Isles as well as Spain, France, and Italy. I was pretty impressed with how cosmopolitan she was when I first met her. I guess I still am. So different from my life.

“You seem quiet today,” she says as I place my empty glass in the dishwasher. “Everything okay?”

I shrug. “I guess.”

She pulls out a metal stool and sits at the island just looking at me with that kind of intensity that Augustine is so good at, like she’s getting ready to paint my portrait or something. “Come on, what’s up? I know something’s bugging you. Is it me?”

I pull out a stool across from her and sit down. “No, it’s me.”

“Why’s that?”

“Or maybe it’s Lucy.” I frown, unsure if I want to spill anything. I mean, it’s not like I think of Augustine as a parent. But it’s not like I tell her everything. She might be young and pretty cool, but she is married to my dad.

She just nods without saying anything. “What’s going on with Lucy?”

“Lucy thinks I’m becoming a witch.”

Augustine laughs. “*What?*”

“Because I’ve been reading that book about Wicca.”

She nods with a knowing expression. “Yes, I can understand how that would disturb a girl like Lucy.”

“What do you mean?” I’m surprised to feel defensive of my friend. *A girl like Lucy . . .*

She seems to weigh her answer. “Well, I don’t know Lucy that well, but I do like her. She actually has a very deep spirit. I sensed

that the moment I met her. And she has a very good heart and I know she means well, but . . .”

“But what?”

“I think she may be sort of trapped.”

“Uh-huh?” I nod, remembering how I’ve had this exact same feeling about Lucy, although I’m not sure why. “But what’s trapping her?”

“I think she’s gotten stuck in her parents’ belief systems. Lucy hasn’t really come to her own real spirituality yet. She’s like a little girl who’s trying on her mom’s high heels and jewelry and makeup, sort of experimenting with religion. Do you know what I mean, Heather? Almost as if it’s not really her own unique spiritual journey.”

“Yeah, I can kind of see that.”

“I’m sure Lucy *thinks* she has her own beliefs, but they haven’t really been tested by real life yet. So she’s just masquerading around in what she’s been told.”

“Do you think that’s why she’s so upset about me, I mean the whole Wicca thing?”

“I think it threatens her beliefs.”

“So what should I do?”

Augustine just shrugs. “I don’t know, Heather. But I suspect the answer is inside of you.”

“It’s not like I’m really that into Wicca. I mean, I suppose there are some things I like about it. But I could just stop—”

“No,” Augustine says quickly. “You don’t stop your own spiritual exploration just because it makes someone else uncomfortable. I don’t know that much about Wicca myself. Of course, I know their philosophy is compatible to my own eclecticism and pagan beliefs, and I know that Wicca is harmless and not something to be frightened of.”

"I wish Lucy could see it that way."

"Maybe you'll help her to broaden her perspective. I would think she'd respect you for taking your own spirituality seriously and not compromising your own values."

"Yeah, maybe so." Her words are actually encouraging. "Thanks, Augustine. That helps me see things a little more clearly."

"Anytime, sweetie." She looks over her shoulder, back toward her studio, and sighs. "Now, if you could just help me."

"You mean with your art."

"I desperately need some inspiration."

"Why don't you take a walk?" I suggest. "I mean, you're always saying how we need to celebrate the seasons. The leaves are starting to turn colors now. Why don't you go out there and enjoy them?"

She smiles and nods. "Yes. That's a perfect idea. I don't know why I didn't think of that myself."

I look at the clock. "I better get moving too."

"Dance today?"

"Yeah."

"Now that could inspire me as much as a walk. I love watching you dance, Heather."

"Thanks, but maybe you should save that for when the weather's crummy."

"I don't know . . ." she grins. "I can get pretty inspired by bad weather too." She's going for her coat now. "But I think you're right. A walk sounds perfect today."

I run upstairs to my room and quickly change into my tights and leotard, finally pulling on my pale pink legwarmers, then grabbing my shoe bag. Sometimes I wonder why I still take ballet. Oh, I enjoy the discipline of it, and it does keep me in shape for other forms of dance, but it's not like I'm under any big delusions that I'll someday

be a great ballerina. I realize that even though I'm relatively good at dance, I just don't have the kind of drive and dedication that's required to take my skills to the next level. Who knows, maybe I'll quit after the Christmas recital—after I get to dance the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*. It's not a hundred percent sure yet, but Naomi, my dance teacher, all but promised me the part. I've been dreaming of doing it since I was six and Mom started me up in ballet, just a couple of years before she started getting sick. I just wish she could be here to see me do it. I know it would make her happy.

I'm still thinking about Mom as I get into what used to be her car. I was only thirteen when she died from breast cancer, and even though it would be three years before I'd be old enough to drive, I begged Dad not to sell her 1988 Volvo. I insisted that I wanted us to keep it and that I would take care of it and drive it when I turned sixteen. He tried to convince me that I could have a different car, that I wouldn't like this one by the time I was old enough to drive. He actually told me that “no self-respecting teenage girl would want to drive around a twenty-year-old brown Volvo.” But I told him I would prove him wrong.

And, as it turned out, I did. I totally love this car. And when I drive it, it makes me feel closer to my mom. Sometimes I even think I catch a drift of her perfume, Calvin Klein Eternity (it mingles with the aroma of old leather and the faded pine-tree freshener that still hangs from the mirror), but it might just be my imagination. Still, it's a good feeling.

It was especially comforting to have this car after Augustine came into our lives last year. I'd just started to practice driving in it when Dad and she got engaged. And I got my license just a month before the wedding. I think this car was like my little, make that

large, security blanket. And I relied on it a lot after Augustine moved in and started redecorating our entire house. I mean, I'm mostly cool with the changes she's made, but sometimes I look around and I can't see a single trace of my mom. And I guess that scares me.