

Skye sat with her hands fisted in her shirttails so she wouldn't throttle her well-meaning yet clueless Aunt Mary. The smoking cauldron on the stove erupted into another hiss, and the smell made her stomach curdle.

Aunt Mary muttered to herself as she gathered the necessary ingredients for the love spell from various places in the ancient farmhouse.

Skye tried not to cringe when her aunt walked too close to a knife sitting on the edge of the table. Clearing her throat, Skye mustered enough courage to ask, "Is this thing supposed to be turning black and smelling like rotten eggs?"

"Oh my, yes, dearie," Aunt Mary said as she bustled around the kitchen.

Skye blew out a deep breath and tried to keep calm as she watched her aunt stir something that looked suspiciously like toad legs in the cauldron. *Yuck. I swear, some days it's almost too much to bear, with Mary's new found interest in New Age-isms and spells that do everything but what they're supposed to.* Skye looked at the clock and sighed, knowing she wasn't going to get on the road back to Dayton any sooner than when her aunt deemed it necessary.

Skye tried not to feel dejected, but that wasn't easy after her disastrous Valentine date. The whole time, her date had just talked and talked about his life and career. She felt lost on the planes of life. With each day going by, it was almost too much to bear as she watched friends and family fall for their true loves. This latest strategy was extreme, to her thinking, but her aunt was determined to get the sparkle back in her eyes, or so she said the first night she was here. It was enough to make Skye cringe in horror, but she couldn't say anything mean to the one person who loved her more than anything. Flipping her hair off her face, she breathed a sigh of relief as she watched her aunt finish whatever she was doing to the brew. Then Mary turned around with a bottle of the foul-smelling stuff.

"Here you go, dear. All finished and ready for you to imbibe! All you need to do is say three times, "I wish for my true love to find me," and then within seven days, according to the spell book I got from a used book store, your true love will find you and steal your heart away." Aunt Mary gazed fondly at Skye, who was trying to look happy but failing to hide the sadness in her eyes.

Skye took the bottle and peered at it, grimacing. It was blackish-blue in color, with something that looked like lightning bugs shining in it, winking here and there. For a moment it was like watching a kaleidoscope of colors, enough to make her eyes cross.

Uncorking the bottle, Skye tried to shield her expression from Mary, but a shudder ran through her. Again she thought of the men who got away or chose someone else and firmed her resolve to find a love of her own. A pleasant licorice scent wafted from the brew, and though Skye was skeptical, she had to admit it smelled better than it looked. Muttering, "Let's hope it tastes as pleasant as it smells or I am going to throw up chunks," Skye leaned back and gulped the liquid. As she finished the last drop, she put down the bottle and recited the words her aunt told her to say:

"I wish for my true love to find me."

"I wish for my true love to find me."

"I wish for my true love to find me."

Skye turned to the window and prayed this drink didn't make her sick when she caught a glimpse of a face looking at her. It was enough to cause her to gasp quietly and take a step back. Those moss-green eyes seemed to call to her, longing for something, and Skye had to wonder if she was losing her mind. She looked away, thinking it was a figment of her imagination, but the face still stared at her. Those chiseled cheeks and full, round lips made her long to feel them over her own, and those cheekbones would give a model envy. Skye felt her body take notice, and her panties got moist with her racing desire. Soon the face faded, though it felt like time stopped and only Skye could see what was there. Shaking her head, she said, "It was nothing. Just a figment of your imagination or a trick with the light. He isn't real at all."

*But why does my heart and mind tell me otherwise? Is he The One I've been searching for?* Skye wondered as she got ready to leave for home.