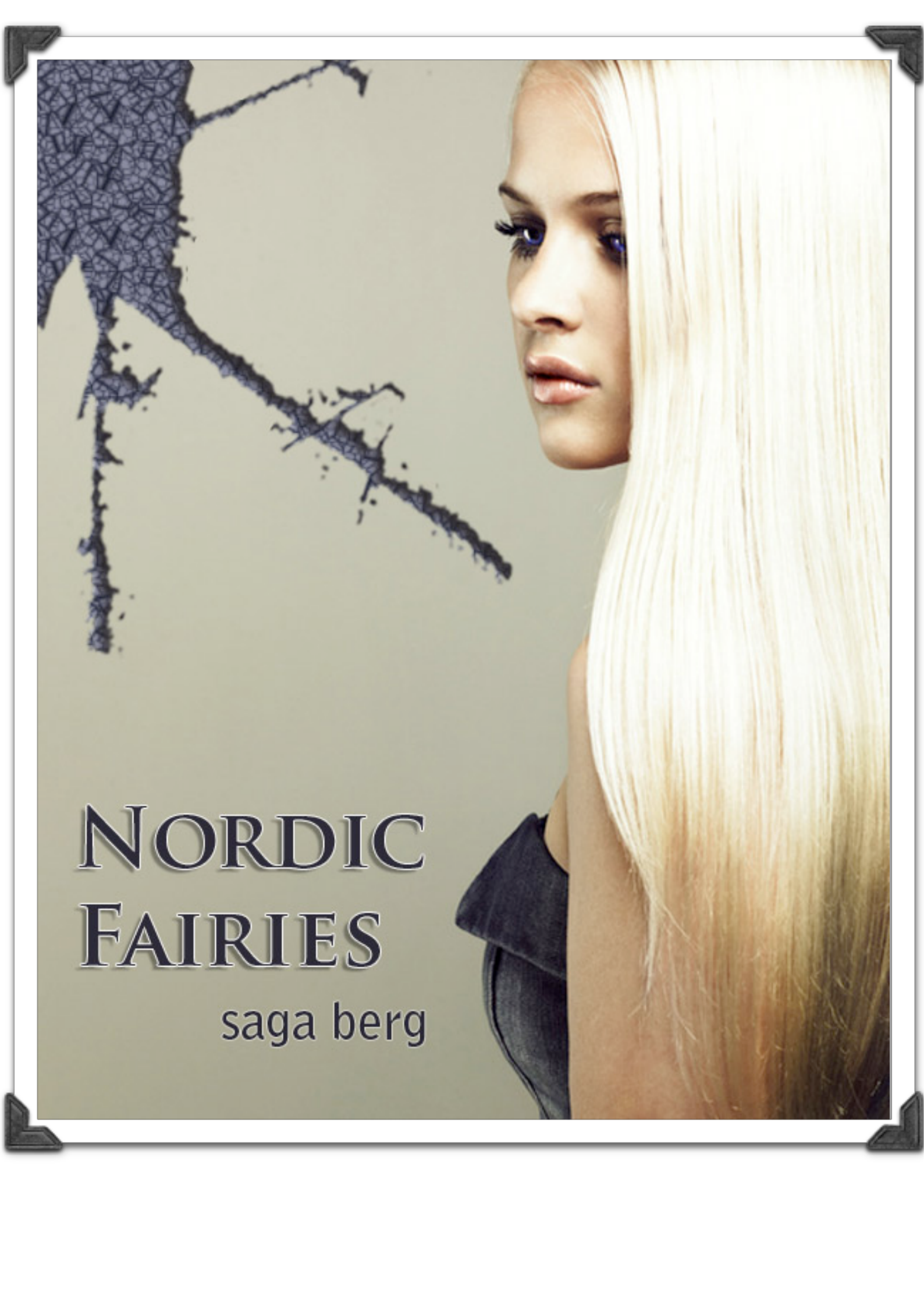




NORDIC FAIRIES

saga berg

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By Saga Berg

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Chapter 1

"I can't believe we finally get to meet Viggo Storm." Megan shifted her feet and glanced past the crowd. "Do you think they'll throw me out if I try to kiss him?"

"So worth it if they do," said Sarah with a mischievous smile.

At his movie premiere the night before, Viggo Storm had been surrounded by security and journalists, impossible to get close to. One girl tried. She managed to get past two dark suits, but the third stopped her and threw her out of the theater. After her stunt, no one dared to do anything of the sort. Not even Svala, though the threat of being thrown out by security had not been her main concern.

"Oh God, there he is!" Sarah clasped the glossy promotional picture in her hand so hard it wrinkled. For a moment, she looked like she would pass out.

Jen and Megan gasped at the sight of him. Svala froze. This was it.

Viggo sat between his co-stars, behind a desk at the end of the mall. The line of fans waiting to get their pictures autographed stretched so far it would take hours to reach him.

Svala clutched her picture with both hands, no longer sure she wanted to know what she had come to find out. She took a big risk being here.

Around them, adults shoved past the crowd to get to the stores. Stressed out and annoyed, they walked past the excited teenagers waiting in line to meet their idol. Some of the by-passers stopped to see what was going on, but the majority hurried along, muttering under their breaths.

"Come on." Megan grabbed Svala's arm and dragged her toward the end of the line.

Hidden behind a herd of teenage girls, Svala observed the front table. Viggo's female co-star, Amanda Jones, was beautiful. His male co-star with his crew-cut anonymous hair color and predictable good looks

made no lasting impression next to Viggo. Then again, it wasn't a fair comparison; the boy was undoubtedly a mortal.

Viggo offered the girl in front of him a half-hearted smile and handed her the signed picture. His clear-blue eyes flickered over the mall. Svala ducked behind the girl in front of her while Megan, Jen and Sarah stepped out from the line and tip-toed for a better view. The girl in front of Svala wore eight inch heels and wobbled to the side while attempting to peek over the crowd.

Viggo continued scanning the room. His eyes narrowed, his brows drew together. He peered over the crowd until his male co-star nudged him. Unfocused, he ran a hand through his chestnut-colored hair and forced a smile to the girl standing in front of him. The girl handed him a picture.

Megan consulted her watch. "I'll absolutely die if I don't get up there. I've already practiced what to say. Do you want to hear?"

The girls nodded with enthusiasm and moved forward as the line progressed. Megan presented her speech, and Svala tried to focus on what she said, but her thoughts drifted to the consequences of failure. She glanced at the entrance. There was still time to leave, but if she did, it might be years before she found out what was going on, and by then it might be too late.

"Amanda Jones is so lucky." Sarah studied Viggo's female co-star with a pout. "It's unfair. She's not even that pretty."

"Oh, really?" Megan sneered.

Ahead, two girls turned around with a frown. One of them snorted, then turned to her friend and shook her head. Sarah blushed and lowered her gaze.

"I'm entitled to my opinion, and I don't think she's that pretty." Sarah tried to sound confident but fiddled with her hair, pulling a strand of the blonde bob hair cut behind her ear.

"Viggo seems to think she is," said Megan.

"That's just a rumor. They're pretending to be together. It's a publicity stunt." Sarah rolled her eyes.

Svala glanced up at Amanda Jones. The actress leaned over the table and signed a picture with slow, methodic strokes. Her long, straight, raven-black hair fell over her arm and onto the desk. When she handed back the photo, she tossed her hair and smiled, exposing a row of perfect white teeth. Her delicate features made her look like a doll. She was stunning.

Eight weeks had passed since Svala allegedly won the tickets to the premiere of *Moonlight* in Venice. The movie was a success before it premiered, thanks to Viggo Storm in the leading role as Colin Hunter, the rich heir who falls in love with the wrong girl. Just your standard love story. Suffice to say it wasn't the plot that made teenage girls go into a frenzy every time someone mentioned the movie.

The seventeen-year-old wonder boy, with his intense, blue eyes and contrasting dark hair, appeared out of nowhere. After a small but significant role in a prime-time TV show, his popularity sky-rocketed overnight. Svala couldn't go anywhere without running into his smiling face on the front page of a magazine or up on a billboard. Now he sat in front of them, behind a herd of girls who had come for the sole purpose of meeting him. In that respect, Svala was no exception.

"God, look at him." Sarah gaped. "I didn't think it possible to be that gorgeous."

Svala looked at Viggo in silence. Her heart pounded. Viggo searched the room again and most of the girls stretched and tried to catch his attention. He looked back down, a line crossing his forehead. Svala's heart continued to race, a growing feeling of nausea intensified. Maybe not knowing was better after all.

"I honestly thought they'd tampered with his pictures. I didn't think his eyes were actually that blue. Like, where did he come from?"

"I've read he's Swedish," Megan said.

"He's said that?" Svala blurted.

"Yeah, in an interview ... In Cosmo, I think." Megan frowned.

"Why? Shouldn't he have? You have something against Swedes?"

Svala smirked. "No." What in God's name was he up to? "I just didn't know that."

"Your family is Swedish too, aren't they?" Sarah asked.

"Yeah, way back though," Svala lied. "They immigrated here, like, in the 19th century."

"Maybe you're related then." Megan grinned. "Like a hundred years back in time or so."

"Yeah." Svala looked away. "Maybe."

A hundred years back in time equaled an eternity for her friends. She smiled to herself and glanced at Viggo. The temptation to tell mortals the truth never arose, but she sometimes wondered how they would react if she did.

The line moved again. Her friends inched one step closer to meeting their idol and getting his autograph. Svala envied and pitied them at the same time. It all depended on what would happen at the end of the line.

Chapter 2

Several months earlier, Svala zapped through channels while eating chocolate ice cream straight out of the box. She slouched on her and Trym's living room couch back in Washington and dug her spoon into the almost empty box when Viggo appeared on the screen. At the sight of him she froze and the ice cream slowly slid off the spoon and back into the box.

With her gaze fixed on the screen she shouted in a high pitched, panicked voice, "Trym!"

Trym emerged from the kitchen within seconds. He wore an old apron and clutched two potholders in each hand, his face filled with worry. He opened his mouth to speak, but paused at the sight of Viggo on the screen..The color drained from his face. With caution, he turned around and backed up against the couch until he reached it and sat down with a thud.

Together they watched Viggo in tense silence for over ten minutes.

"My God, what is he doing?" Trym asked.

Svala couldn't tear her gaze from the screen, and her eyes welled up. "I don't understand... what does this mean?"

Trym watched her with concern then turned to the TV where Viggo had taken off his shirt, exposing a tattoo on his left shoulder blade they both recognized.

"I don't know," Trym said. "There could be a number of reasons. I... I don't know."

"Shouldn't we do something?"

The remains of the ice cream had turned into a slow moving liquid at the bottom of the carton. Svala placed it on the coffee table and kept staring at the screen.

"We have to find out what this means." Trym said, a worried frown on his face. "And we have to be very careful."

Author's note

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Best Regards,
Saga Berg