Conversation with Magic Stones

Inspired by Conversation with Magic Stones, 1973
Dame Barbara Hepworth

Start here:
It was late and Angus was tired.

He decided to stop and rest.

He leaned against one of the stones in the old stone circle.
Illustration of Barbara Hepworth standing stones plus someone leaning against
He felt odd and the air became filled with the strong smell of the earth, the trees and the grass.

Sound vibrated all around him.

He thought he could hear the roar of a bear.
He sat up and looked all around.

There was nothing there.

He leaned against the stone again and this time the sound vibrations were louder, but when he looked around again there was nothing there.
Soon his eyes began to close. This time the stone spoke in a low soft voice.

‘Don’t close your eyes, don’t go to sleep, for if you do you may forever weep.’
DONT CLOSE YOUR EYES...
Suddenly, a magpie flew onto the stone beside him.

He felt uneasy; it had grown cold and darkness began to fall.

He leaned against the stone again.
As he did, an image appeared faintly before him.

He rubbed his eyes.

The image grew stronger and stronger until before him stood a woman wearing a bearskin hat.
Angus froze with fright.

He rubbed his eyes again.

He must be dreaming.

He opened his eyes, but she was still there.

She smiled at him.

‘Don’t be afraid ‘she said. ‘I will not harm you‘.
‘My name is Artio and I am the goddess of nature and wildlife.

I’m here to warn you not to fall asleep among the stones as fairy magic fills the air tonight’.

Angus laughed, ‘Fairy magic? I don’t believe you!’
‘Yes, fairy magic. It’s the annual fairy gathering, and they’re looking to take a human back to fairyland tonight, they will be here with the coming of the moon...’
She continued, ‘... Legend says that a young man called Tam Lin was out hunting with his grandfather when he fell from his horse and was taken away by the Queen of the fairies herself.

She made Tam Lin a knight and his job was to guard the forest.’
Illustration of Tam Lin as a knight guarding the forest.
Angus kept listening to Artio’s words: ‘... In the village there lived a young girl called Janet.

One day she was walking in the woods and saw a beautiful, milk-white horse standing beside a well.
HORSE BESIDE WELL NEXT TO ROSE BUSH
She was drawn to the unusual horse and walked towards it, plucking a rose from the bush that grew by the well, as she walked.

As quick as a flash, the knight Tam Lin appeared.
‘Come, come and dance with me!’, sang Tam Lin.

Janet fell under his spell and she danced with him for hours.

For three days Janet returned to the well in the woods and they danced ‘til the sun set, and the autumn moon shone brightly in the sky.
10. B dancing by the moonlight.
'Where are you from', Janet asked.

Tam Lin told her that he had been stolen by the fairy Queen but now he was worried that he would never escape.

‘I’ll help’ said Janet, ‘let’s make a plan!’
Tam Lin told her that at midnight the fairy folk ride past the well and that she could rescue him by pulling him off his white horse and holding on to him tightly.
At midnight Janet took her place in the thorn hedge on the edge of the wood.

Soon she heard the fairy bells and she knew the fairy troop were heading her way.

Her heart thumped as the sound grew louder.
Soon the troop came into view and she saw the fairy Queen seated on her coal-black horse.
Tam Lin’s horse approached and Janet rushed from the bushes and grabbed the bridle. With all her strength, she pulled Tam Lin from the horse.
Immediately the fairy Queen’s black horse reared up as she brought it to a halt.

‘Tam Lin’s away!’, she cried.

Janet held Tam Lin tightly as the fairy Queen threw spell upon spell at Tam Lin.

She turned him into a lizard, then a snake but Janet didn’t give up, she held Tam Lin tightly and wouldn’t let him go.
Snake tail and lizards tail merged into each other
At last the fairy Queen gave up as she knew she had lost Tam Lin.

She cried out in anger, ‘I’ve lost the fairest knight in all my kingdom and if I’d known, I would have turned your heart to STONE.’

With those words the fairy riders vanished into the night.
Heart of stone
All went quiet again and Angus looked around. He was alone in the circle of stones.

Just as he was leaving to go home, he heard a voice say.

‘If you hear the fairy bells, don’t go to sleep or you may forever weep’ and he knew he had just had a conversation with magic stones.
Circle of stones like...
The End
We hope you enjoyed this sensory story about the Conversation with Magic Stones.

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