With the passing of the Yuletide season and the winter's solstice, sunlight had steadily grown stronger. Another season of reveling in folklore was over. The holiday décor of holly and candles had been taken down. The stories of elves sneaking into homes, big and bright, and tales of Old Man Winter surrendering to the infant New Year, had been told for the last time. The days of work and play had resumed their normal routines, yet the night sky held an impending surprise. Soon, the magic of the earth would return, if but for a moment.

As stars twinkled upon the canvas of that special night, little ones were tucked into their tiny beds of soft green moss and brown leaves, gathered during the Mabon celebrations. Elders had fallen asleep by their stoked hearths, chins resting upon the delicately woven blankets that had warmed generations of faeries. Since the very young and the very old are unfettered by either responsibilities or concerns, sleep visited them as naturally as sun set and moon rise.

Watchmen made their nightly rounds along the edge of the copse of pines and oaks the woodland fay call home, circling back frequently to warm themselves by the campfire. Though they knew what the cold night would bring, for the newest in their ranks, the beginning of the lunar eclipse was still disquieting.

Mother Earth slowly cast her shadow upon the moon goddess, tinting the orb with a blood red hue. Sirius began to shine more brilliantly in the deepening sapphire of the midnight sky. Orion's Belt gleamed as though polished. Leo, heady and fierce ruler of the summer season, blazed as though afire.

Wrapped in a warm coat, my feet covered in slippers, I carefully stepped outside to bear witness to a world of shadow. The cold night, soft and silent, pressed against me but my senses were sharp. I stood motionless for several minutes, a mere mortal soaking in the majesty of the heavens.

A breeze began high within the tree branches, swooshing down to cross the forest floor before flitting across my face. It sounded as though numerous tiny feet were prancing across the dried leaves of autumn. I thought to myself, “The faeries must be rushing to gather at the border between their world and mine.” Just before totality, when only a sliver of silver remained above, I imagined young parents finally emerging from their homes. Swaddled children clasped within their arms, they were eager to absorb the positive effects of the celestial event, as was I. The elders, feeling the tug of the shifting energy, surely had arisen from their chairs and meandered towards their doorways. Their eyesight must have been too poor to notice me.

The moon’s cover slowly eased away. Stars dimmed, as if saddened by the end of the cosmic parade. I glimpsed over my shoulder before returning to the warm comfort of my home and I knew I was not alone.

Did the fay?