

## The Cove by DM Denton

She wandered away from a dream—not to escape the music but the baking sun and choking dust—down to where psychics delighted and deceived, and a glassblower entertained like a charlatan too. Just beyond was a clearing as lonely as she was looking for, grass still dewy and air cooled by the cove nearby, sloping towards a small pavilion gradually withdrawing its shadow from the few benches in front of it. She sat a while to watch a young juggler whose clothes were too big and smile too shy, until she noticed an arm-in-arm couple looking for privacy too. They settled for being inconsequentially observed, laying a blanket on the ground and laughing as they embraced the amusement that love could be.

The boy stopped juggling, his eyes laughing too, embarrassing her because he knew what she was missing. He had been there at the top of the fair with flute and harp and fiddle and viol, the wind in the leaves and the charm in a voice that had fooled them all.

She picked up the trail of her skirt, running and stooping to disappear into willowy branches, ignoring any sign of what was off-limits except as she stepped slower down a mossy bank, leaning forward—like the trees along the inlet—for a glimpse of wisdom.

She threw in her heart and as it sank there was hardly a ripple.