

Melody Courlander's Diary



Melody's diary begins like any teen-age debutante's diary. She's very proud that she's "figured out how to play the piano", and compares not playing it to being "lost in darkness". She's learning all of the songs in the family missal because she doesn't feel she's ready to play. The diary unexpectedly darkens in the autumn of 1897. One moment she's talking about the view of the garden from her window in September, then a few weeks later she discovers her fiancé is dead. She begins keeping her diary in 1894 when her

sister marries John Alegar of Aletown. She dotes on her nephew, Meril Alegar and at the same time she's jealous of her twin sister, whom the boy was named after. Why can't Melody be a boy's name too?

In the spring of 1896—May 3—she notes in passing that her father is worried about the night trolls crossing the Leather Road. On May 29, she writes that some goblins are attacking from the west. Her father is very busy, organizing the town and neighboring towns to fight the creatures.

Her mother's nephew Alan arrives in July, for on July 8 Melody writes that he is uncouth and annoying. Alan is a volunteer soldier from Brightwood Crossing (which had been overrun by night trolls) in her father's regiment and he often stays in Lisport Manor. Melody's attitude

changes over the next few months, however, and on February 17, 1897, they are engaged to be married.

There are battles near Lisport throughout the summer and autumn, and her father's army is victorious. She writes that her father keeps regular council with his lieutenants, and at other times with her mother and her aunt. In these, Alan sometimes takes part.

In the spring of 1897, after a decisive victory around March 31, her father takes his regiments down to the Leather Road to assist the other regiments that have formed throughout Highland. She thinks he's going to try to retake Brightwood Crossing, and restore the Mardels and Courlanders who fled the goblin hordes. Alan is going, and she's worried.

Alan leaves on April 27, 1897. Most of her diary afterwards is about her sisters, her young nephew, and her mother and aunt. Her aunt is often gone, and during July leaves for over a week to travel north. When she asks her mother about

it, her mother tells her to pray for her aunt. So she does.

In late September she becomes sick, and stays often in her bedroom. During this period she gains a friend named Robin, whom she speaks to late into the night. Robin sympathizes with her about her fiancé's absence. Robin fears that maybe her father doesn't approve of the marriage.

In late October she discovers that Alan died a month earlier. Her entries begin to be more incoherent at this time, and even worse after her father returns in December. She writes that he hates her, that he deliberately killed Alan just like in the bible. Her mother is always taking his side, and she's afraid for her life.

The last entry is on December 25. She writes that Christmas is dead to her, followed by some undated incoherent ramblings about spiders, her father, Alan, and "this stupid war". The last page repeats "a spider" several times, and finally "why, Melody?"