

Edition #3

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The Hovan Narratives Newsletter

#3 - October 1, 2025

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Welcome to the third edition of The Hovan Narratives Newsletter!

*A man, haunted by the reoccurring nightmare of the loss of his wife,
attempts to change his saturnine outlook with a change of scenery.*

The wizard, using his magic, moves to Earth.

He is followed.

Or preceded?

*Trouble erupts on Earth and at home. Danger that he is uniquely
positioned to confront.*

*This good man, capable of violence, now must protect this magically
vulnerable planet.*

Someone has to.

So much for escaping the memories.

Welcome!

This is edition three of the Hovan Narratives Newsletter. I hope to publish one edition of this newsletter per month as the book launch approaches. The first two books are written: Forestton and Shetteca. I am focused on book one titled 'Forestton The Hovan Narratives'. If you wish to read the earlier editions of the newsletter, you can go to my website Christopheriolaire.com and click on the past newsletters page.

Hopefully, book one, Forestton, will be published early next year. After receiving suggestions and guidance from the developmental editor, I added over 17,000 words to the manuscript. These additions hopefully cleared up some issues with POV (point of view) and let the reader inside the thoughts of some of the characters. Obviously, the main character is Hovan and the story is most often told from his POV. The story now offers

the reader a more in depth understanding of his thoughts and actions while allowing the reader to experience his emotions.

Sometime towards the end of this month, I should receive the report from the copy editor. No updates from him yet. That is a good thing? Of course, it is. I'm an optimist. After making any necessary additions and corrections suggested in his report, the manuscript heads off to the proofreader. Once the manuscript is finalized and letter perfect, then it is formatted. Then?

I am still working on the book marketing. It has been more of a project, enjoyable as it is, to get the book to the publishing phase. What a thrill it would be if people bought and enjoyed it. So the plan is to get it out as best I can and get reviews. Reviews drive sales, it seems. If you buy and like it, please give me a great review on Amazon and Goodreads.

I have also looked at the second book, Shetteca, a few times, partly as a break, partly because I am excited to keep the process rolling. In addition, I am floating ideas for book three, though I have not formally started working on that yet.

You can find me on Facebook at Christopher Iolaire and on Instagram at @chrisopher_iolaire. Those of you who receive these newsletters can also help get the story noticed. Spread the word! Thank you for that.

OK, for reading to the end, you get the next scene from the book. The scenes in the first two editions of the newsletter are the opening scenes of the book. In this scene, Julian and Melissa are still in Boston. Again, if you click on past newsletters at Christopheriolaire.com, you can re-read the previous scenes, if you wish.

Take care,

Chris Iolaire



Julian followed Melissa down the hallway towards her brother's apartment. She was texting, no doubt letting Tom know they were here. He stood next to her, holding her backpack as she knocked on the door. As the door opened, Melissa threw her arms around Julian's neck and slumped against his chest. Instinctively, Julian grabbed her around the waist to steady her.

"No, Julian," Melissa whined. "I am not going back to your hotel room. Stop asking. I'm not sleeping with you. And no more wine. No, no, no."

Julian braced Melissa against his body and looked at Tom standing in the doorway.

"No more wine." Melissa rolled her head back and forth across Julian's chest.

Tom stood straight, equal in height to the man holding up his sister.

Julian saw Tom's lips press thin, and his eyes begin to squint. Julian hoped Tom realized Melissa's act was a joke before Tom hit him.

Laughter exploded from Tom's wife, peaking around her husband.

Melissa stood up and grinned at her brother. "Got you!"

Cathy continued to laugh next to Tom.

"May we come in?" Melissa asked, still smiling.

Cathy moved her husband out of the way. "Yes. Come in."

Melissa stepped inside and hugged Cathy.

Julian followed. "I swear only two glasses of wine. It was a joke."

Tom nodded and finally slipped into a smile. "Thanks for getting her from the train station."

Melissa opened her backpack. "Look. He bought me a stuffed penguin from the gift shop."

"He's cute," said Cathy. "Now that you have delivered her, can I get you something to drink?"

"No more wine," complained Melissa in whiny exaggeration.

"I will pass." Julian said. "I have to drive to a hotel."

"You are welcome to crash on the couch," said Cathy. "Save you a few bucks."

"Too late to cancel. I need to finish up some writing and give you guys space for family time. You both have work tomorrow." Turning to Melissa, he added, "You have to get ready for an important interview."

"Are you sure?" asked Tom.

Julian nodded. "See you Saturday."

Melissa gave Julian a hug. "Thank you, Julian." She took her backpack from him.

"Text me tomorrow to let me know how it went."

"Of course."

Julian exited the building into the cold Boston night and pulled his scarf tight against his neck. He walked towards his car on the quiet street alone, but satisfied that he had held himself to his decision not to intrude on the mini family reunion. He began to estimate how long it had been since he had last seen his mother; how long since she had crossed over. His father was even longer.

Melissa had texted Julian that she thought the interview went well, adding that she expected him for breakfast Saturday morning.

As instructed, Julian knocked on the apartment door shortly before 9 am.

Tom answered, poking his head out, checking the hallway. "No woman falling all over you this time?"

"She is inside."

Tom chuckled. "So is breakfast."

Julian sat at the table, not interrupting Cathy and Melissa, who were busy making plans for their Saturday trip around Boston.

"Morning, handsome," said Melissa. "What to come tour Boston with us today? Oh wait, you have to spend the day stuck in the apartment working with my brother. Bummer."

Julian saw her smile and accepted her gentle teasing. "I have to earn money somehow."

"Dinner later?"

"Yes."

When the door closed behind Cathy and Melissa, Julian pulled his laptop from his backpack and set it up in the space vacated by the breakfast dishes.

Julian handed Tom a flash drive. "Another 15,000 words. I have written through the 14th chapter. Here."

"Awesome! I've revised and expanded the first 28,000 words. Got a few ideas to run past you and a cover idea. Read through the changes and let me know what you think."

"There are all good. My English is not good enough to correct your corrections."

"Too bad you can't write with your accent. It makes everything sound more interesting."

"Melissa liked the way I said penguins. Not sure if I was pronouncing it wrong or just ... interesting."

"She likes a lot more about you than just your accent."

"Being with her is fun and ..." Julian rolled his hands in front of himself, trying to come up with a better word. "healing." He waved for Tom to give him words.

"Therapeutic, restorative, curative."

"I guess. Those sound better."

"You are a good friend, Julian, but I don't want you dating Melissa."

The blunt statement took Julian by surprise. He was not looking to further the relationship with Melissa, but hearing such a straightforward assertion upset him.

"Melissa knows nothing about you and wouldn't believe a word of it if you told her. She doesn't even know how old you are. She thinks you are only a little older than me."

"I know that. I am not looking to get romantic with her. But being around her outgoing, positive, smiling personality is ... restorative. She is a tonic for my soul, without knowing it."

"I don't want her to get hurt."

Julian nodded. "I will keep her priorities above mine."

"I would appreciate that." Tom plugged the flash drive into his computer.

"Any updates on the trouble in Forestton?"

"Prince Ti'ek does not think it is serious. His father is getting more concerned. I may have to go back early." Julian paused. "Hope to avoid that. I walk into the house, and memories of Suzhanee smack me in the face. I know it has been a few years, but I can not shake the pain."

"You should go back to work."

"My work got her killed. Not exactly a safe haven from memories."

Tom rested his elbows on the table and stared at Julian. "It will give you something positive to do. Charge a reduced fee if it makes you feel

philanthropic. Helping people will make you feel better and give you a purpose again. Few can do what you do." Tom laughed. "No one here."

"It is time for us to focus on the writing."

"Go back to work at home! Get out among people. Stop moping around. I know that sounds cruel. Do what made you you! Be around people. Help them. Do good things! But don't drag Melissa into it!"

Julian returned Tom's stare, torn between being irritated at being told what to do and the recognition that Tom was a friend trying to help.

"You have never seen me be me."

"Resilience is a skill," said Tom. "You must practice it. Now, let's focus on this novel so you have time to get back to your calling."

Julian followed Tom into the noisy restaurant. The tables were filling up. They probably would not get a table without a wait if they came much later on Saturday night.

Melissa and Cathy sat at a table with something pale green and probably alcoholic in a wide brimmed glass before each of them. Tom leaned in and kissed his wife. Melissa looked at them and then up at Julian. She raised her palms, asking, 'where is my kiss?'

Julian sat next to her. "And risk the wrath of your brother."

"He's a puppy."

"Only to you and Cathy."

"Scared of Tom?"

"No. But not stupid. Besides, no expectations between us. Keep that perfect smile on your face and enjoy your drink. Whatever that is."

"You have the most positive rejections I have ever heard."

"Not a rejection. An acceptance of what we are."

"I may need this drink to figure out what you just said."

"Shut up and drink."

Melissa smiled. "Sounds like you need a drink." She waved to the waiter.

"Red wine?"

Julian surveyed the restaurant. "This looks more like a cold beer type of place."

When the pint glass of Samuel Adams arrived, Julian asked, "Did you get to the Old North Church?"

"Of course! We skipped the Constitution. It was too far to walk on a cold day."

Julian sipped his beer and watched Melissa tell the story of her day. Her smile never left, and again Julian felt at peace as he listened to her tales of her Boston experience. They leaned close to each other so Julian could hear her over the noisy backdrop of the tavern. Her smell had a hint of perfume.

Julian looked down at an empty pint glass. Melissa was quiet and watching him.

"You have that lost in thought look again."

"Sorry. Problems at home may require me to go back. Thinking about it. Trying to avoid it until I have to return."

"Why do you just let me talk? I must sound like a self-absorbed airhead."

"I like listening to you. Seeing your smile, happy, enjoying life."

"And you are not happy, enjoying life? You rarely smile."

"That reflects my past that I hope not to discuss."

"Maybe I want to know."

"Trying to get me to sleep with you again."

Melissa started laughing.

"Another deflection. Alright ... for now."

They walked down the street a few steps behind Tom and Cathy. Melissa wrapped her arm around Julian's arm.

"I think Cathy is stopping Tom from turning around. He told me he didn't think it was a good idea for us to date."

"Protective older brother. Not a bad thing. I understand his concerns."

Melissa looked up at Julian. "You understand his concerns, but neither of you is going to tell me, are you?"

"My past has some painful parts, as I told. I am still coming to terms with my most recent loss. So, I am not a good candidate for a relationship just yet. I really enjoy being with you, though. Your joyful positivity soaks into me. Helps me. Also, if I told you the story of my life, it would give you pause. I am a good man! But it would give you pause. And you may not choose to continue. So, no expectations. We can walk down the street with you on my arm and enjoy the chilly Boston night."

"Safely kept in my ignorance."

"No offense intended to your intelligence or maturity."

"The most pleasant of rejections."

"Not a rejection. An understanding that I am not ready for you. And our homes are worlds apart."

"You could stay. You don't want to go home anyway."

"But I have to. And I should. You could go."

Julian walked next to Melissa with his arm still holding hers, noting the pause in the conversation.

"Boston seems far enough. I don't even know what language they speak there."

"It is not English. Hence, my accent you like so much."

"It seems my protective, older brother has a point."

Julian's silence was his answer.

Melissa continued. "It seems for now that we will remain the best of friends. I would still would like to hear about you. Let you talk for a change."

"When I am ready."

Julian felt the tug on his arm and turned to look at Melissa. A smile did not accompany her brown eyes.

"What hurt you so bad?"

They took a few more steps as Julian thought about what to say. "Thank you for your concern. When I am ready to talk."

Julian watched Melissa nod, accepting the answer. "My man of mystery."

Julian followed Melissa into Tom's apartment, keeping his coat on while others shed theirs, and picked up his backpack with his laptop safely stored inside.

"You are really leaving tonight?" asked Melissa. "I'll sleep on the couch if that makes it easier."

"Never!" joked Julian. "I have slept in worse places. You have the early Amtrak back to New York. The Berkshires are only a couple of hours drive."

"OK, tall, blonde, and handsome. When am I going to see you again?"

"Not sure. Text and call."

"Please let me know if you leave the country, so I know you are not just leaving me unread. Tom says that there is no cell service in Forestton."

Julian noticed Tom's reaction to the mention of the town. "I told her the name. She asked nicely."

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