

Goal: Sofia really wants Maerdwyn to keep thinking about her goals.

History: When Sofia was a young girl, her family, farmers near Lake Ilmen, went to a Kolyadki festival in Novgorod. She reveled with everyone else, until it was to go home the next morning in the family's wagon. When finally they came to the crossing at the Volkhov River, Sophia fell from the cart. Though the river had been frozen for months, and the wagon had crossed at just that point two days before, Sofia crashed through and vanished into the icy water. Her parents and siblings could see no sign of her, after a time and much anguish, she was sadly given up for lost.

Under the water, Sofia was chilled, and felt her body stiffen, even as she choked on the icy water. But Sofia lived. She awoke, lying on a bed - still underwater, but no longer cold, and quite comfortable. A young, girl stared happily back at her. She was Derynaya, a kindly Rusalka, and she explained cast a spell upon her that let breathe underwater and survive in the cold. But, the Rusalka told her, the spell wouldn't expire for a year, and that Sofia would have to stay until it was over. Scared, but still quite fascinated, Sofia stayed with Derynaya, who despite being several hundred years old, looked to be about Sofia age, and the two girls became fast friends. Derynaya told her of the faeries and of their magic, and Sofia told Derynaya about the town and life among humans. And always, when Sofia would ask if it was near time to return home, the Rusalka would tell her, "Just a few more months, Sister, but it is not so bad here with me is it?" And so Sophia stayed.

But one day, while mimicking some of the gestures and words that she'd heard and seen Derynaya use, Sofia found she look see what the Rusalka was thinking. She practiced this, peering in at her friend's thoughts and using the knowlege to win game here or play a practical joke there, until one day when Derynaya was sitting and gazing up at the surface of the water, Sofia saw a clear memory in the Rusalka's mind.

She saw her family. They were crossing the Volkov in a wagon, laughing and smiling in memory of the Yule festival. And then there was Derynaya, reaching up and grabbing Sofia's leg, and pulling her down, and pointing a hand at the ice, shattering it for the two of them go past back down into the water. Sofia could feel the memory of the Rusalka's joy at finally having a playmate, of loneliness defeated forever. And Sofia understood that Derynaya would never, ever, let her go.

When the spell ended, Sofia resolved to flee. She waited until that night, when the Rusalka was asleep, and swam away, as far and as fast as she could, until the faery's spell wore off, and she lost the ability to swim and to breathe under water. She struggled to the surface, and, still wet, and now hungry, wandered through wilderness, unsure of where she was, living on berries and moss until she she stumbled into the village below Gormenghast, only hours from death by pneumonia and hypothermia.

Since then, Sofia has entered and completed her apprenticeship as a magus of House Merinitia. She has grown into a confident young woman of great power, but whenever she passes a river, especially a frozen river, she feels a stab of fear at the memory of her childlike captor, wondering if Derynaya still nurses bitterness over Sofia's abandonment.