

What Water Reveals



Last summer as I considered what to write for *Loughshore Lines*, I was reading Katherine Howe's *The House of Velvet and Glass*. The novel explores a woman's obsession with scrying, using a reflective object or surface such as a crystal ball or the surface of water to attempt to see the past or foretell the future. In the novel, Sybil Allston is desperate to connect with her mother and sister who perished on the Titanic. Her desire to know what happened to them in their last hours drives her to repeatedly attempt scrying. I found scrying a fascinating topic and it was in the back of my mind as I sought a story to write.

I've written several novellas set in Second World War Fermanagh, and have done a lot of research into the construction and operation of the American and British military bases at Ely Lodge and Castle Archdale. As I thought about how I could use my knowledge of the war era to write something relevant to the Erne waterway, an image came to me of an aircraft crossing neutral Ireland from the Atlantic Ocean, following the route of the Erne River along what was known as the Donegal Corridor to the flying boat base at Castle Archdale, County Fermanagh. I let my mind wander, toying with the image, while I wondered what might happen if someone attempted to see the future by gazing into Lough Erne. By merging the image and my musing, the story was born.

Once I had the story I needed a setting for it. I had visited Magho Cliffs viewpoint to get a 'bird's eye view' of Castle Archdale and Lough Erne when I was researching my novellas, so when the plot came together for this short story. I knew that the perfect place for the main character to be would be standing on Magho Cliffs.

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