

THE CHILD WOUND IN GOLD

THE CHRONICLES OF MAGGIE TRENT

MEGAN O'RUSSELL



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*T*he thickness of the shadows left every horror open to her imagination. Screams pounded through the heavy, wooden trap door, whether from animal or person, Rena didn't know.

Caws and shrieks carried over the chaos. The rammoc always made its presence known, announcing to the world she'd come to destroy the village again.

The dug pit where Rena and her family lay smelled of damp and terror, as though the dirt had absorbed the horror of years of hiding in the dark, waiting to find out the worst. The stench turned Rena's stomach. Worse than wondering if they'd have any livestock left, worse than not knowing if the other villagers were dead or alive, the reek of helplessness made her ill.

Rena shut her eyes against the dark, wishing she could at least hum to cover the sounds of the screaming. But noise was a luxury they couldn't afford. The door to their hiding place was thick, but nothing in the world save magicians could stop a hungry rammoc.

Issy fidgeted by Rena's feet, crushing her sister's toes as she squirmed around. Rena swallowed her frustration at Issy's

inability to hold still. Issy had just learned how to tie her boots properly. Asking her to lie still while terrified was too much.

At least she has the sense to stay quiet.

A vision of pitch-black claws drove itself unbidden into Rena's mind. Her heart quickened as she remembered the great bird with scarlet and black wings, wide enough to stretch over the smaller houses in the village. The beast's razor-sharp beak had dripped with blood a shade darker than its red breast feathers, painting a picture of horror on its chest like Death's own coat of arms.

She'd been near enough to smell the stench of decay on the monster's breath. To see its deep black eyes searching for the best place to tear her apart. If a terrified cow hadn't run too close to the monster, Rena would have died that afternoon. But the well-fed cow made for a better meal than a skinny girl, so the poor animal was torn to pieces and Rena given the chance to run away, the horrible image of the monster seared permanently into her mind.

Crunch.

Pounding shook the floor above, sending cascades of dirt upon them. A low cough sounded from the far end of the crawlspace where Rena's father took the place closest to the door.

Digging her fingers deep into the earth, Rena willed herself not to scream as the *crack* of boards breaking shook the air.

She won't come down for you. The bird wants the sky, and you've buried yourself in the dirt. You're safe. Your family is safe.

She repeated the empty words of comfort over and over until the clawing stopped.

Whether the rammoc had lost interest in tearing apart their home, or another, meatier prize had wandered into the monster's claws, Rena didn't know.

Her heart slowed as the sounds of terror drifted off into the distance. It would be a long time before they could leave the

safety of the pit. Even if the rammoc had moved on, it could scent from a mile away.

Issy stopped shifting in the dirt. Rena tried to follow her into sleep. Once her father opened the hatch, it would be a desperate scramble for everyone in the village as they sorted through what might be salvaged.

*A little knock taps on the door,
A little girl hiding under the floor,
The safety of the dirt shall build her bed,
While the monster rammoc flies overhead.*

“We’d best join the others,” Father said as murmurs and crying carried down from the streets.

Rena squinted against the light that poured in from above as Father shouldered open the trap door.

Too much light.

“Father?” Issy crawled toward the door as their father climbed out of the pit. “Father, is the house still up?”

“Part of it,” Father said. “We’ve got a bit of roof left.”

“Is there a stove?” Issy scrambled up. “I’m hungry if there’s anything left to eat. We didn’t have breakfast before we had to hide.”

Rena chewed her lips as she crawled through the pit, steeling herself to be brave no matter what the damage might be.

Your family is alive. There’s still a bit of roof. You should count yourself lucky whatever else awaits.

Spots danced in front of Rena’s eyes as sunlight poured through the missing patch of roof and shredded wall. The full kitchen had been ruined, and there was nothing but sky above. The stove lay on its side, but it didn’t look as though the metal had cracked.

Long claw marks marred the floor, cutting two inches down into the thick door of the pit.

Rena's heart skittered at the thought of the rammoc's claws shredding their home mere inches from her father's flesh. The deep gash cut around the tipped over table, leading all the way to a shattered trunk in the corner.

"No!" Rena ran to the trunk, fighting with the broken hinges to throw the remains of the lid open.

"Rena, are you all right?" Father ran in from the yard.

"Mother's veil." Rena heaved the lid of the trunk aside. "If that monster hurt her veil..."

The contents of the top layer of the trunk had been torn by the rammoc's talons. The blanket both Rena and Issy had used as babies had been reduced to scraps, as had the handkerchief that held Rena's mother's initials.

Hands shaking, Rena moved the tattered fabric aside. A faint glimmer of gold showed beneath. Rena held her breath as she pulled out the veil. White lace with magician's gold woven into each thread. The rammoc had destroyed everything around it, but the lace remained perfect.

Tears filled Rena's eyes. "It's all right. The veil is all right."

Father lifted the fabric from her hands, trailing his fingers over the delicate pattern. "There are more important things than memories, Rena. Come help me see to the fields. Memories won't save the starving."

"I hate starving." Issy seized her sister's hand, dragging her through the spot that used to be their door.

Years of training taught Rena to scan the sky before going outside. No sign of death cut across the bright blue. The green mountains that surrounded their valley were untouched by the bird.

The rammoc hadn't been so kind to the village. The dirt road outside their door had been torn twice as deep as the wood of the house, cutting great ruts into the earth. Red filled in the lines, making ruby rivers like the sky had rained blood while they hid. It might as well have been true. Something had been killed on the

dirt. The bones were thick and heavy, more like a cow's than a person's. Though losing a cow could lead to death as sure as a rammoc's claws. Starving to death only took longer.

All the houses in view had been hit as badly as theirs. Roofs cracked and crumbling, walls torn completely off. Bits of gore-covered fabric clung to the limbs of a tree right across from the house. Someone from the village hadn't made it to safety in time.

I should cover Issy's eyes. Hide her from the horror.

There was no point. Her little sister had seen as much and worse before.

"We should get to the barn." Issy dragged her sister around the back of the house without so much as a tremble in her voice.

She can't even manage to cry for death.

The worn path to the field behind the house hadn't been marked by the attack. Neither had the solid, windowless wall of the back of their home.

The growth of the field hadn't fared as well. Father walked quickly through the field, as though the waste of his work was too painful to dwell upon. Wide swatches of crop stalks were bent and broken from the battering force of the rammoc's wings. They'd have something to harvest, but not nearly enough to make it through winter.

"Do you think we can salvage much?" Issy asked as they cut through the field toward the barn behind.

"We'll save what we can and find a way from there." Rena kept her voice bright. The crops had barely had time to grow, and now most would die from breaking.

The front of the barn came into view. The rolling door had been torn away, and the broken pieces lay scattered across the ground.

"Looks like most of the barn is still here at least," Father called. "Only a bit of blood inside, so there might still be some livestock hiding somewhere. Better head out and see what I can find." Father's hand rested on the knife at his hip.

A knife that will do no good against monsters.

"You girls get something together for the barn door. We'll need to keep in whatever I can find."

"Yes, Father," the sisters chorused.

Rena turned to the wood scattered on the ground, unable to watch her father walk away.



Specks of blood stained Rena's dirt-streaked dress by the time she and Issy had cobbled together a crude door for the barn. The planks were far heavier than two young ones should be lifting alone, but the sisters were used to carpentry. Being able to build quickly from less-than-ideal materials was a vital skill for survival in rammoc country. There hadn't been enough lumber to make a whole door, so Rena had gathered all the rope on the farm, weaving a net to cover the gaps. The rope wouldn't keep a rammoc out any more than the door had, but it would keep any livestock Father found in and that was the best to be hoped for.

Issy slept with her head on her sister's lap on the remains of the tiny front porch of their home. Rena had spent an hour gathering enough nearly-edible beans from the ruined field to fill her sister's belly. She ignored the rumbling of her own stomach as she petted her sister's hair.

The overwhelming list of what needed to be done cycled endlessly through her mind. Fix the roof, fix the wall, save the food.

Find a way out.

It was a useless dream. There was nowhere for purra like her family to go. The magicians controlled the country. There was no leaving the valley without their permission. No living in the valley with the rammoc.

We're stuck.

Rena held her hands out in front of her, willing a spark to appear, or a flower to grow. Even if the rest of their house caught on fire, it would be an incredible gift. If she had only an ounce of magic in her, the magicians would take her, and her family would be provided for. Taken to live in one of the magician's cities where rammocs were nothing more than scary stories.

Tears burned Rena's eyes. She wasn't a magician. She was a farmer's daughter in a valley of terror. They'd made it through this time, but what about when the rammoc got hungry and came back to the village? What if they starved to death first? What if her father never came back from looking for the animals?

Rena swallowed her sob, leaning her head back against the remnants of the wall.

The dull *thump* of hooves on the road brushed aside all thoughts of crying.

"Are the cows back?" Issy mumbled, rubbing her eyes with her filthy hands.

"I don't think so." Rena stood, dragging Issy to her feet as the sound of angry voices carried from down the road. "No one would be mad about cows coming back."

Issy held tight to Rena's hand as they walked down the lane.

They'd barely made it past six homesteads before the hooved animal came into view. A man in magician's robes sat atop a towering black horse. A crowd of villagers had gathered around him. All filthy with faces pale from worry, but the defeated slump in their shoulders had been replaced by tense anger.

"They killed Merel." Onya's voice shook with rage. "He was old and slow and didn't make it inside before the rammoc came. The monster tore him apart."

"I am sorry for the loss of your neighbor." The magician held up a hand to silence Onya. A ring with a bright green jewel sparkled on his forefinger.

"He was more than a neighbor," Simsing growled. "You think we stand around calling each other neighbor while hoping we

can all survive? You magicians must be a cold bunch if you think we're any less than family who help each other when the rammoc comes."

"I am sorry for the loss of your kin." The magician bowed, though his face showed no sign of remorse.

"Then help us," Onya said. "You've got magic. You can stop the rammoc. We've seen you catch, even kill the beasts before. Go after the nest and get rid of them all."

"That is why I am here," the magician said. "I have been sent by the Convocation to offer my assistance."

Rena's heart skipped up into her throat as a murmur of hope swept through the villagers.

"What's the trade?" Sims'in's voice cut over the crowd.

"An offering to the Convocation," the magician said.

Rena's heart crashed back into her stomach.

"What do you expect us to offer?" an angry voice shouted from the far side of the crowd. "Our homes are destroyed every few weeks, we've barely enough food—"

"The Convocation understands the rammoc attacks have been severe in this valley," the magician said.

"Then help us!" Onya shouted.

"For nothing?" For a split second, the shadow of a smile touched the magician's lips. "Would you work for nothing? Catching a rammoc is no easy task. The magic required is difficult and dangerous. Would you risk your life for nothing?"

"Would you leave a child in a burning house?" the words flew from Rena's mouth.

The magician and the villagers all turned to stare at her.

Rena swallowed, waiting for her mouth to go utterly dry and render her mute. But anger had replaced fear. "If you heard a child screaming inside a burning house, would you just ride by on your pretty horse and never lift a finger to help? How could the babe's parents pay for your work in saving it if everything they own is going up in flames?"

“Little girl—”

“Little girl?” Rena spat, cutting across the magician’s words. “If I’m such a little girl, how can you not care that there’s blood seeped into the road in front of my house? If I’m a child, how can you not care if I starve? This village is the house burning down, and we are all the child begging for help.”

Issy sniffled her tears and clung to Rena’s skirt.

“You are a child,” the magician said, “and it is a terrible day when any child comes to harm. But what harm would I be doing by helping you when you have nothing with which to pay the Convocation? Would you expect our help with the next rammoc and the next? Would you want us to ride out and use our magic to save your crops when they fail? What would that do to the next generation of magical children? It would leave them as nothing better than slaves to purra. I am sorry you suffer because of the rammoc, but I will not see my people enslaved to help yours.”

“What do you want from us?” Onya asked.

“I am willing to negotiate.” The magician gave a sanctimonious bow.

Rena dug her nails into her palms

“We don’t have any gold left.”

“We’ve barely enough food to survive!”

Shouts of protest filled the air.

The magician sat patiently on his horse until the crowd silenced itself.

“There are more things to trade than gold and food,” the magician said. “If you are as desperate as you say, I’m sure you’ll find something to suffice. I will wait for twenty minutes while you decide what safety is worth to you.”

For a long moment, none of the villagers moved. The entire pack of them stood frozen, staring up at the magician.

“Maybe I’ll dig up a tree root for you.” Simsin walked back toward his home.

Issy pulled on Rena's hand. "We have to go. We have to find something to bring."

"We don't need to find it." The words grated Rena's throat like she'd been breathing in smoke.

Rena ran home, Issy's hand clutched tightly in hers.

She didn't speak as she pulled the veil from its place in the shattered trunk. The feel of the fine threads between her fingers stole her breath away.

"Rena, no!"

Rena held the veil over her head as Issy tried to snatch it from her.

"We can't give up mother's veil!"

Rena walked out the hole in the wall, not looking back as her sister's cries worsened.

"Father will be furious! I'll bet he feeds you to the rammoc if you give that to the magician. Rena, it's the only thing we have left of mother."

"I have you." Rena rounded on her sister. "You have me. Father has both of us. What good will a silly veil do if the rammoc comes to eat us all?"

Memories won't save the starving.

Tears streamed down Issy's face. Guilt spun in Rena's stomach.

"We have nothing else left to offer," Rena said. "We're giving it to the magician, and that's final."

Rena seized Issy's hand, steering her over the rutted ground as Issy sobbed.

Most of the village had beaten them back. They crowded around the magician and his horse, offering everything from bent cook pots to a tarnished sword.

Rena pushed her way to the front of the crowd, dragging Issy with one hand and holding the veil high with the other.

"I've no use for cookware," the magician sneered, "and I don't know what you think I would do with a ragged sword."

"I have a veil," Rena said. "It's magician made."

The magician leaned down to look at the gauzy fabric.

"Where did a girl from the valley get a magician-made veil?"

The magician ran his fingers over the veil, sending shivers of revulsion up Rena's spine.

"It was a wedding gift from my mother's family." Rena stared straight into the magician's eyes.

"Hmm." The magician looked from Rena to Issy, who trembled by her side. "If your mother's relatives still exist, beg them to send something of worth for you to trade." He dropped the veil into the dirt.

Issy snatched it up, clutching the now muddy veil to her chest as she wailed.

"I will not risk my life for a pile of scraps and rubbish. When you have something of value to offer, contact the Convocation. Until then, good luck." The magician kicked his horse to move, but the crowd didn't open a path.

"You can't just leave us here to die!"

"We won't let you ride away!"

"You're nothing better than a murderer."

Rena grabbed Issy around the waist, carrying her crying sister away. There was never any good to be gained in begging a monster for mercy.

No matter if the monster's magician or ram moc.

"Make him stay," Issy coughed through her tears. "Rena, make him stay."

"Clear a path at once!" the magician bellowed.

Rena broke through the back of the crowd as a crackling *zap* sounded behind her.

The heat of the spell hit her before the force of the magic knocked her to the ground. Rena twisted, trying to protect Issy with her own body, but there wasn't time.

A bright light flashed. Screams of fright mixed with the thudding of hooves as the magician's horse charged away.

"Issy." Rena pushed herself up on shaking arms. "Issy!"

"I w-want F-Father." Issy crawled to her sister, the veil thrown over her shoulders and head like a cape. Issy sobbed but seemed oblivious to the horrible burning of the spell.

"You're all right." The skin on Rena's hands had turned bright red and tightened with the heat of the spell as though she'd held her hands too close to a fire.

But Issy huddled in her sister's arms unharmed—her dress muddy, her face red and shining with tears, but untouched by the magician's cruel spell.

"We have to find s-something else to p-pay him with," Issy hiccupped. "M-make him come back."

"He isn't coming back." Rena's back ached in protest as she lifted her sister. "We're on our own, Issy. The magicians won't help us anymore."



Rena sat at the cracked table in the kitchen. They'd set the stove back up well enough to not smoke them out or catch the remaining walls on fire, though the night air drifting freely through the house stole most of the heat away.

Issy slept curled in a filthy ball by the stove. Rena couldn't allow herself the escape of sleep. Not with the wall open enough to allow talons to reach through and grab them without warning. Not when Father still hadn't come home.

I should have made her sleep in the pit. Better to be a little cruel than to leave her so vulnerable.

Rena stared down at her sister, trying to find the strength to wake her.

Issy's mud-covered dress had dried by the fire. The material of it was filthy but not singed. Her skin showed no signs of the aching burns that covered Rena. If she were clean, she could have been a child asleep after a normal day of running outside.

Rena looked down at her own sleeves. The material was brittle and tinged black from the magician's spell. Even Rena's hair had crusted. Running her fingers gently over the tangles sent a cascade of singed hair falling to the floor. There was no pretending the magician's spell hadn't touched her.

It could have been worse. He could have killed you all. He could have hurt Issy.

There was no reason for the spell to have dodged around her little sister. The magician wouldn't have shown pity to one little girl while condemning the rest of the village.

It was the veil.

There could be no other explanation.

Those closest to the spell had been blistered. Even the houses showed signs of the terrible heat. Only Issy, covered by the lace of the veil, had come out unharmed.

Issy slept with the veil by her side. Rena crept over, avoiding the creaks in the half-torn-through floorboards, lifted the veil slowly away, and tiptoed to the other side of the room.

With one shake, all the dirt fell away, leaving the white lace woven through with gold looking as though the horrible day hadn't happened at all.

Rena laid the veil out on the table and grabbed the largest knife from the wall.

Mother, forgive me.

With as much force as she could muster, Rena dragged the blade across the lace. Her heart caught in her throat as she waited for the threads to tear. But the white and gold stayed strong, not even fraying at the touch of the blade.

Forgetting to be quiet, Rena ran to the stove, flinging open the metal door.

"Rena," Issy grumbled as Rena knelt in front of the fire.
"Rena, no!"

Rena stuck the edge of the lace into the flames.

One, two, three...

"Rena, stop it!"

...eight, nine, ten.

"Rena, you'll burn it."

"No, I won't." Rena pulled the fabric from the flames. It was perfect. Unmarked by soot, undamaged by fire. Rena touched the bit of the veil that had lain in the flames only seconds before. The fabric was as cool as the night itself.

"How did you do that?" Issy squeezed the veil in her hands.

"I didn't do it," Rena said. "It's just how the veil was made."

"The magicians made it like that?"

"They must have." Rena closed her eyes as her fingers searched the edges of the veil, feeling for the tiny imperfection of the knot that held the threads together. "They made the veil so it couldn't be torn."

"Why didn't the magician want it then?" Issy asked.

"Because the Convocation can make more."

A tiny nub in the lace at the bottom corner stopped her fingers.

"But if it can't be burned, then he should have told us." Issy's forehead wrinkled. "He should have told us that it's more than something pretty mother left us."

"And risk us knowing what the Convocation had accidentally given us?" Rena grabbed the knife from the table, digging the point into the center of the knot, slowly working the delicate thread.

"What are you doing?" Issy asked as the knot loosened, freeing an end of the thread.

"I'm going to do what they won't do for us." Rena pulled the thread, wrapping it around her fingers as it came loose, swallowing her tears as the pattern began to disappear. "I'm going to save us."



*T*he blood seeping from her hands didn't bother her. Choosing to bleed had freed her from fear. The cuts the ropes had left on her palms were marks of her work, of all their work.

"She'll scent you," Father begged. "You need to get into the pit."

"I'm not going." Rena spoke softly, her head cocked to the side as she listened for the sound of massive wings. "I built it, I'm staying with it. Besides, we want her to come."

Her creation didn't look like much in the fading sunlight. A wide web hung fifteen feet in the air, the thin traces of golden thread impossible to see as it wound around the thick ropes.

"Your blood on the ropes will be enough." Father took her arm. "We can't leave Issy alone in the pit. What if she can't muscle the door up on her own?"

"Then go to her," Rena said. "I'm staying."

A screeching *caw* split the air.

"Rena—"

"Father, you go. I'll be fine."

Her father stood in the tattered field behind their house, looking from his older daughter to the barely standing house that hid the younger. "I'm not leaving."

The braying of animals carried from a field just out of sight. Their screams sent tingling energy through Rena's fingers. Her father ran to her side, betting his life on his child's work.

For all the world, it looked like they stood unprotected in a field, waiting to die. The thin pattern of ropes crisscrossing overhead was nothing more than a spider web to a rammoc.

"We're here," Rena's words came out barely louder than a whisper. "We're here!"

A roaring *caw* answered Rena's shout.

Great gusts of wind shook the tops of the trees as the rammoc came into view.

"Down here!" Father waved his arms over his head. "Do your worst, you murderous beast!"

The rammoc circled high above, keeping its beetle black eyes on them.

"Come on, you coward!" The taunt felt foolish on Rena's tongue.

Beak open in a *screech* of rage, the rammoc dove toward them.

We should have hung the net higher. I should have made Father go to Issy.

There was no time to fix any mistakes that might have been made. The rammoc tucked in its wings, diving toward its prey with a speed neither purra nor magician could match.

The net bowed as the beast's beak struck the web, bringing the ropes around its tail. The great bird fell to the ground ten feet in front of Rena, screaming its rage.

Giant, black wings pinned to the rammoc's sides, its scarlet tail feathers pinched in the tight loop at the top of the net. The beast barely had room to wiggle, but still it fought against the ropes.

Rena's father took her shoulders, pulling her away as the rammoc's talons tore at the net. Her lungs froze as the monster's jaws clamped down on the rope and she shook her head with enough force to tear a person in two.

A minute passed, then another as the rammoc thrashed on the ground, trying to break free of the net, desperate to spread its wings.

With a final, visceral cry, the beast lay still, its eyes trained on Rena.

Bound in ropes with a sliver of gold running round the fibers, it was nearly possible to believe the monster wasn't evil. That it hadn't slaughtered so many from their village.

"We should kill it." Father stepped up, knife in hand. "Rammoc meat might be edible."

"Don't," Rena said, staring right into the bird's eyes. "We should keep her alive."

"What for? To see if it can break out and kill us?"

"We'll bring her to the Convocation." A smile touched Rena's lips. "Show them and every other village on the way what we've done."

The animals stirred in the field, scenting the rammoc's stench on the breeze. There was no way to tell them the time for hiding had ended. The time of helpless terror had passed.

"What do you think the Convocation will say when you dump a monster on their doorstep?" Father asked as Issy ran out of the house, covered from head to toe in dirt from the pit.

"I don't care what they say. We don't need them."

Issy darted around the rammoc, leaping into Rena's arms.

"I'm not begging for magicians' help anymore." Rena pressed her cheek to her sister's hair. "We can take care of our own now. We've got everything we need."



*Read on to peek into the adventure of **Girl of Glass**, now available for free download from your favorite online ebook retailer.*

GIRL OF GLASS

Nola dug her fingers into the warm dirt. Around her, the greenhouse smelled of damp earth, mist, and fresh, clean air.

Carefully, she took the tiny seed and placed it at the bottom of the hole her finger had made.

Thump.

Soon the seed would take root. A sprout would break through to the surface.

Thump, bang.

Then the green stem would grow until bean pods sprouted.

Bang, thump!

The food would be harvested and brought to their tables. All of the families would be fed.

“Ahhhhh!” the voice came from the other side of the glass. Nola knew she shouldn’t look, but she couldn’t ignore the sounds any longer.

It was a woman this time, her skin gray with angry, red patches dotting her face. She slammed her fists into the glass, leaving smears of red behind. The woman didn’t seem to care as she banged her bloody hands into the glass over and over.

“Magnolia.”

Nola jumped as Mrs. Pearson placed a hand on her shoulder.

“Don’t pay her any mind,” Mrs. Pearson said. “She can’t get through the glass.”

“But she’s bleeding.” Nola pushed the words past the knot in her throat.

The woman bashed her head against the glass.

“She needs help,” Nola said. The woman stared right at her.

Mrs. Pearson took Nola’s shoulders and turned her back to her plant tray. “That woman is beyond your help, Magnolia. Paying her any attention will only make it worse. There is nothing you can do.”

Nola felt eyes staring at her. Not just the woman on the other side of the glass. The rest of the class was staring at her now, too.

Bang. Thump.

Families. The food she planted would feed the families.

Bang.

Pop.

Nola spun back to the glass. Two guards were outside now. One held his gun high. A thin spike protruded from the woman’s neck. Her eyelids fluttered for a moment before she slid down the glass, leaving a streak of blood behind her.

“See,” Mrs. Pearson said, smoothing Nola’s hair, “they’ll take her where she can’t hurt herself or any of us ever again.”

Nola nodded, turning back to the tray of dirt. Make a hole, plant the seed, grow the food. But the streaks of blood were burned into her mind.

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retailers. Get your free eBook today: [https://
books2read.com/GirlofGlass](https://books2read.com/GirlofGlass)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Megan O’Russell is the author of several Young Adult series that invite readers to escape into worlds of adventure. From *Girl of Glass*, which blends dystopian darkness with the heart-pounding danger of vampires, to *The Chronicles of Maggie Trent*, which opens the gateway to a hundred magical realms.

2019 has led Megan on a new publishing journey, which will see thirteen projects released within the year including the *Girl of Glass* series, *The Tethering* series, *The Chronicles of Maggie Trent*, and *The Tale of Bryant Adams*. To be the first to hear about new releases, free short stories, and giveaways, sign up for Megan’s newsletter [here](#).

Originally from Upstate New York, Megan is a professional musical theatre performer whose work has taken her across North America. Her chronic wanderlust has led her from Alaska to Thailand and many places in between. Wanting to travel has fostered Megan’s love of books that allow her to visit countless new worlds from her favorite reading nook. Megan is also a lyricist and playwright. Information on her theatrical works can be found at [RussellCompositions.com](#).

She would be thrilled to chat with you on Facebook or Twitter @MeganORussell, elated if you’d visit her website [MeganORussell.com](#), and over the moon if you’d like the pictures of her adventures on Instagram @ORussellMegan.

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