

# TWIN CROWNS

BY CATHERINE DOYLE &  
KATHERINE WEBBER



Limited edition uncorrected proof – not for resale or quotation



First published in Great Britain in 2022  
by Electric Monkey, part of Farshore  
An imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers  
1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

[farshore.co.uk](http://farshore.co.uk)

HarperCollinsPublishers  
1st Floor, Watermarque Building, Ringsend Road  
Dublin 4, Ireland

Text copyright © 2022 Katherine Webber and Catherine Doyle  
Proof background cover image © Shutterstock 2021

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

ISBN 978 0 7555 0364 3

Printed and bound in the UK using 100% renewable electricity at CPI Group  
(UK) Ltd

1

Typeset by Avon DataSet Ltd, Alcester, Warwickshire

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher and copyright owner.

Stay safe online. Any website addresses listed in this book are correct at the time of going to print. However, Farshore is not responsible for content hosted by third parties. Please be aware that online content can be subject to change and websites can contain content that is unsuitable for children. We advise that all children are supervised when using the internet.



MIX  
Paper from  
responsible sources  
FSC™ C007454

This book is produced from independently certified FSC™ paper  
to ensure responsible forest management.

For more information visit: [www.harpercollins.co.uk/green](http://www.harpercollins.co.uk/green)

*Fly away safe, little Wren.  
Rose, grow strong and true.*





# CHAPTER 1

## *Wren*

The golden gates of Anadawn Palace glittered in the setting sun, each spike as sharp as a dagger. The sight made Wren Greenrock's stomach churn. Even from a distance, they were taller than she had imagined, their heavy chains clanging faintly in the wind.

She sank into a crouch at the edge of the forest. It was too bright to leave the safety of the trees; she would have to wait for the cover of nightfall to venture any closer. A branch snapped underfoot. Wren winced.

'Careful,' hissed a voice from behind her. Shen-Lo appeared at her side. Dressed all in black, and with his face partially covered, he moved as swiftly and soundlessly as an adder. 'Eyes on your feet, Greenrock. Remember what I taught you.'

'If I keep my eyes on my feet, how will I count all the scary-looking palace guards who will kill us on sight, Shen?'

Shen's dark eyes moved back and forth, tracking the guards. There were twelve in the lower courtyard alone, and six more guarding the gates, all of them dressed in pristine

green uniforms, their swords fastened at their hips. 'I could take them.'

Wren blew out a breath. 'Since we're trying to *avoid* suspicion on our way in, I'd rather not leave eighteen dead bodies behind us.'

'A diversion, then? We could catch an elk and set it loose in the courtyard.'

Wren glanced sidelong at him. 'Remind me why I decided to bring you with me?'

'Because your grandmother told you to,' said Shen, smugly. 'And without me, you would have never made it through the desert.'

Absentmindedly, Wren brushed the sand from her tunic. She was glad to be out of the blistering desert sun, even if her task still lay ahead of her. She inhaled a lungful of crisp air, trying to settle the nerves swilling in her stomach.

In her mind's eye, she pictured her grandmother, Banba, standing stout and sure back on the west coast of Eana, her strong hands squeezing Wren's shoulders.

*'When you break open the stone heart of Anadawn Palace and seize your rightful place on its throne, all the winds of Eana will sing your name. May the courage of the witches go with you, my little bird.'*

Wren set her eyes on the topmost window of the east tower of Anadawn, and tried to summon a morsel of that courage now. But there was only her heart, fluttering like a hummingbird in her chest.

'Does it look like home yet?' said Shen.

She shook her head, grimly. 'It looks like a fortress.'

'Well, you've always loved a challenge.'

'I'm beginning to think I might be getting in over my head with this one,' said Wren, uneasily. But it was Banba who had devised this plan, and they both knew she had to follow it.

Shen sank to the ground and propped himself against a tree. 'When night falls, we'll go south to the river and make our way up through the reeds. The walls are older there; the footholds should be easier. We can slip in between patrols.'

Wren's hand came to the drawstring pouch at her waist. It had been given to Wren by her grandmother on the morning of their departure from Ortha, pressed into Wren's hand like a talisman. '*Keep your magic close at hand, but out of sight. At Anadawn, suspected witches are executed first, and interrogated later.*'

'I can enchant the guards,' said Wren, confidently. 'My sleep spells are lightning-fast now.'

'I know,' said Shen, pointedly. 'Don't forget who you practised on.'

Wren kicked her legs out and leaned against his shoulder. Above the trill of birdsong, they listened for the distant sounds of palace life, watched servants milling to and fro and the guards standing stiff-backed at their posts, while the last of the sun melted from the sky in coral brushstrokes.

Wren's gaze came to rest on a marble statue protruding from the centre of a beautiful rose garden. She curled her lip. It was the famous Protector of Eana, an obsessive man

with ravenous ambition, who had invaded these shores a thousand years ago with the sole intent of stamping out every last vestige of magic. In a brutal war that had left few survivors, the Protector had succeeded in deposing Ortha Starcrest, the last witch queen of Eana, and stealing the kingdom for his own. And even though he had failed to destroy the population of witches entirely – for how can you cut out the beating heart of a kingdom? – the Protector was still worshipped to this day. And his hatred of the witches lived on.

Shen followed her gaze. ‘What will you do with that hideous statue when you become Queen?’ he asked. ‘Smash it into smithereens? Replace it with a statue of me?’

‘I’ll melt it,’ said Wren. ‘And then I’ll feed it to whoever commissioned that eyesore in the first place. One spoonful at a time.’

At that moment she spotted someone wandering among the roses. It was a girl about Wren’s age. Her dark hair was arranged in loose curls that tumbled all the way to her waist, and she was wearing a fine pink dress with a full skirt. Her dainty chin was tipped to the sky, as though she was lost in thought.

Wren stood up without meaning to.

Shen tugged on the end of her cloak. ‘Get down.’

She pointed towards the distant trellises. ‘Do you see that girl?’

Shen squinted. ‘What about her?’

‘That’s her. That’s my sister.’ Wren felt a strange pull in



her heart, like a thread going taut. For a maddening second, she wanted to go barrelling towards those golden gates. 'That's Rose.'

Shen stood up, slowly. 'Princess Rose wandering in her rose garden,' he said, with a low chuckle. 'I'd say that's as sure a sign as any . . . Well, that and the fact she appears to have your face.'

Wren was staring so hard she wasn't blinking. She had grown up knowing she had a twin sister half a world away, but seeing her here in the flesh had rendered her speechless for the first time in her life.

Shen turned to her. 'Don't tell me you're having second thoughts about the plan?'

In the back of Wren's mind, her grandmother's face hardened. '*When you get to Anadawn, leave your heart in the forest. A moment of weakness will set us all to ruin.*'

She set her jaw, her gaze still trained on Rose. 'Never.'