



# October

Once upon a time little summer elf found herself somewhere she had not meant to be. She had spent the last several, wonderful days at the Harvest Festival celebrating the end of summer and all the bounty and beauty of her favorite season. Now, she was ready to go home again when she heard the beautiful song of the seed podlings floating past on the north wind. Unable to help herself, and before she really thought it through, she had climbed on board one of the little ships, and soon found that she was farther away from home than she had ever been before. The seedpods dipped and turned with the breeze so that she had to hold on tight and cover her eyes more than a few times. When she felt the pod stop she peeked out from behind her fingers only to see the most beautiful sight she had ever seen. She knew just where she must be. There before her lay the magical Kingdom of Autumn.

Everywhere she looked the light dazzled little summer elf. She thought that the sun must be much closer to this land than her own for the light and the warmth seemed to come from within everything around. "Maybe this is where the sun goes to bed," she thought, picturing the sun coming home in the evening to be cared for by the beings of this land. Maybe they even sang a sweet lullaby as they pulled a cozy blanket up to her chin.

Under a nearby toadstool little summer elf found the perfect spot to sit and bask in the warm glow. As foreign as this new land was to her she felt mostly safe and warm here, although the longer she sat the more she began to wonder if anyone else was around. "What if I am all alone?" she thought, her brow furrowing. The podlings had disappeared as soon as she was out of the ship and she hadn't seen or heard a twinkle or a peep from anyone since. Stepping out from under the toadstool she said a soft "Hello?" and just like that a hundred little autumn beings peeked, flitted, stepped or hopped out from behind whatever tree, rock, toadstool or pumpkin they had been hiding behind since little summer elf had entered their land. Those who live here are not accustomed to strangers and they were a little frightened until they heard her sweet voice and saw the look on her face and could tell she was frightened as well. Suddenly it was as though little summer elf had a hundred new best friends with everyone hugging and asking her name and leading her down the golden path toward the largest pumpkin in the land. As they reached the end of the path everyone became quiet and looked up at the magnificent pumpkin before them. The door curtains parted and little summer elf saw a beautiful light and sparkling fairy dust swirl out and into the air above. The beings of the land began to sing and little summer elf felt her heart leap with joy at the sound, and then she saw them. The king and queen of autumn stepped from the pumpkin and looked out upon the folk. Smiling kindly, the queen held her hand out to little summer elf and said "Welcome to the Kingdom of Autumn."

