

AELFTHRYTH by Sarah Clark

The never-ending, darkening sky that stretched Wicken Fen into sunset brought with it the promise of another cold autumnal night. The rooks were beginning to quieten, the harvest mice scurried back to their nests and the scent of ripening onions filled the air. A murmuration of starlings dived and curled above, heading towards the reedbeds.

There was no soul about, except Agamede.

Agamede crept quietly through the long grass, looking around her anxiously as she headed towards Monk's Lode. She carried with her a basket in which she was concealing her salvation. Small bundles of Herb of Grace and Pennyroyal and a handful of ripe Juniper berries underneath a selection of autumn fruits; ripe plums, sweet apples and plump blackberries. She could not be seen here. She looked around, warily, crunching the long grass and feeling the give of the marshy ground as she trod.

She felt her belly. It was beginning to swell and if anyone had stared at her for too long they would be able to see the outline of her shame against the material of her dress. She did not

