

# Moon lit Heart Aches

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CHAPTER 1

*"PLEASE, take her! It's not safe for her to stay here!" the woman pleaded.*

*She was standing in the shadows of a dark alley, carrying her last hope in her arms. She only got the reply*

*"But what am I to do with a baby? Surely you don't mean for me to take her?" she waved her arms. "No! Please don't make me take her. I'll have to give up so much..." her words faded as she saw the fear, grief, and hope in the mother's eyes. It then turned to anger.*

*The first woman turned her head in anger and frustration. She turned back around, reluctantly thrusting her beautiful baby in the other woman's arms. She tried to convince herself that she'd left the only hope for survival of their world in the right hands.*

*She ran. Tears were streaming, streaming down her face. She turned the corner then looked both ways in confusion. "This world is strange, how is one supposed to know which way to go? No matter," the woman turned right and continued running. She stopped abruptly, noticing something foul in the air.*

*"He's here," she whispered. Only a minute after did he come, walking, like it was a casual evening, not the end of the world. As foggy as it was, she could see the face of malice appear softly in the mist.*

*"My dear, dear Elizabeth- come to me," he whispered. "You can't hide her from me, not forever anyway. You know that," he chuckled. Elizabeth stood still. "Elizabeth, I said COME!" he screamed. Elizabeth willed her hardest to stay in her*

place, for running was no longer an option. A pain shot through her body from her neck, violently throwing her to her knees. She wept. "I may die, I know that. But my baby's in good hands." she thought.

"That's what you think, Elizabeth. If you won't come to me, and join me, you will die." he said smirking. There was an evil grin in his maliciously cold black eyes.

"Damn you, you MONSTER!" she screamed. The smile slid immediately from his face. There was a flash of light. Elizabeth fell to the cold dirt ground and died.

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BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Isabelle jumped up in bed. She slammed her alarm clock that was shining in bright green, 7:00. Her face was covered in sweat. She groaned, remembering her dream.

"Ugh! For how long?! It's been what- a month? And it's always the same old dream with the same old people, with same old stupid lady who dies."

She slipped out of bed and ran straight into the shower to wash off the clammy feeling of death off her skin. As she washed and brushed she began to more coherently interpret her dream, once again. Only this time, Isabelle, while putting on her clothes and brushing her silky black hair, fell into more intense thoughts concerning her dream. She even carried out this mood as she padded quietly down the stairs for breakfast.

She greeted her mother with an absentminded "morning" and sat down to start eating. She got back the reply she no less expected.

"Hurry UP, girl! You're late, AGAIN! Not that it's any different from every other day-" she stopped and turned to look at Belle with an annoyingly questionable expression on her face. "The girl had not yet made one snappy comeback all morning."

"What's wrong with you, girl? Not feeling like being a complete PRAT today? Well," she sighed happily "all the better for me, right?" Belle's mother turned back to the stove to cook eggs and bacon- not for Belle, of course.

Isabelle only responded by looking up from her untouched cereal to give her mother a cold, icy stare. She backed up her chair, still staring at her and picked up her knapsack and left. She had lost her appetite. "Can't she not be a bitch for ONE DAY?! God, I would be happy." Belle thought.

Her mother stared after her in confusion...and yet satisfaction. "I am going to win all the battles, and the war, Belle." she thought. She continued staring at the door before dishing herself some eggs. She was going to watch Belle. She was up to something.

CHAPTER 2

Belle angrily slammed the door behind her. She looked up only to see her bus- the back of her bus really. It hadn't even stopped by her house, and now it was riding away past her stop again without a care in the world.

Belle had had this happen to her so many times it no longer bothered her. She had stopped running after buses around October. Now it was June 2nd, and the last day of school. Just then realizing this, Belle jumped up in pure happiness, a great joy swelled inside her. No more stories and whispers behind her back. No more taunting and rumors. She took a deep breath and shrugged. She began walking. Her cargo pants rustled noisily as she walked, but that wasn't the only thing she heard. There was a sound of muffled footsteps somewhere

nearby. It continued for about three minutes. <br />

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"Someone's following me. I know it. I can hear him. I can feel him. It's weird, and it's disturbing. This has never happened to me before. Maybe I can surprise him. No, I'll check my shadow. If there's a second shadow..." she glanced sideways at her shadow but it was normal. There was no second shadow. "Why am I so positive that it's a 'he'?" And how is this person following me...and why?" Belle looked at her watch. 7:55. "OH crap. I have 5 minutes to get to a place that's 15 minutes away. I'm going to have to screw this person, and run."<br />

Belle ran. She ran as fast as she could. Although, as she ran, she couldn't help but ask herself why the hell she cared about getting to school on time on the last day of school. As her mind dwelled on this, she realized how close she was to school. She had past the grocery store and the police station. "There goes the grocery store... and there the police station?". She was at school. Belle cursed colorfully in shock as she glanced at her watch again. It was 7:59. "I got to get this stupid shit fixed." Belle's spectacular eyes gave the watch one last glance before entering the dreaded school building.<br />

She walked in the building, ignoring the cruel sideways glances that were thrown at her. She walked to a hallway clock to reset her watch. It was the same time her watch. "Whatever. I'll fix it later. She wondered why so many people were still in the halls. "Most of them should have been in class 10 minutes ago." "But", she grinned, "it's the last day of school." Belle skillfully swerved her combination, and opened her locker to hear the cheerful squeaks of her mouse, Olive.<br />

"Hello, Olive! Don't worry, I have your food right here." Belle reached into her knapsack. "You know what today is? That's right. Today is the day we go home! We can't-" Belle paused. She stopped feeding her mouse corn flakes and looked up to see Blair King walking leisurely, but confidently down the hallway and talking to her friends. Blair was the school's most popular bitch. Even the seniors adored her. She was co-captain of the cheerleading squad, and president of so many clubs Belle had lost count. Ugh, she hated her. Blair only looked at her like she was diseased with leprosy. As if no one had bothered to make sure no one would catch it.<br />

She looked back at Blair with equal disgust. "Slut." she thought. And she truly was one. Blair's outfits and boy friend reputation put strippers to shame. And yet, she always manages to remain under the dress code and never gets into trouble. She's probably slept with 50% of the school's male population. Belle said bye to her mouse, and slammed her locker. She gathered her books and began walking. Someone "accidentally" elbowed Belle hard in her side, and she dropped her pencil case and everything fell out.<br />

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"Crap." <br />

On top of that, people kept on kicking them everywhere. There were so many of them Belle couldn't possibly give them all evil looks. The hallway cleared out slowly as the bell rang for first period. Now the hallway was empty except for a few people. "One of them including James." Belle thought. He was talking to what Belle had guessed were his friends and didn't even cast a glance towards her. Not to mention helping her. Belle walked in about seven minutes late, glancing at her watch, then at the classroom clock. She ignored everyone's stares- she was used to it. She glanced at the clock again and frowned, "Today started out pretty weird, but now, things are getting plain creepy... Whatever."<br />

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Since it was the last day of school, every class was free-for-all. Everyone flirted, talked, and gossiped in groups, but in each class, Belle took her favorite seat in the back of the class room to draw. Belle took every spare moment of her free time to draw. Drawing was Belle's passion, her dream, and most definitely an outlet. "Without my journal, I don't think I would have ever survived all the hell I've been through in my life." She knew drawing would be a large part in her future, but did not want to be a professional- selling what she created. She knew it'd be much more than a hobby, but not quite a career. <br />

It was fifth period and she was now drawing a woman. She was incredibly beautiful, at least compared to her usual drawings. Belle didn't like to draw women too beautiful, or men too handsome. She always got carried away and it made her long for things she knew she couldn't have, things she would treasure most. Things like a real mother, a real friend, things like that. <br />

Belle sighed and continued drawing. The woman she was drawing had very long black hair and a deep gray color of eyes. Her face was sculpted almost perfectly. Belle didn't make her perfect because habit had kicked in. Belle's bangs fell into her eyes. With her head tilted a little bit sideways, and her tongue sticking out a bit, Belle began to shade her, and her body in all the right places. "Hmm... I think," <br />

"Psss!" <br />

Belle looked up and immediately blushed. Who had seen her? She looked around but it looked like no one was calling her. "Who would anyway?" she went back to drawing her mysteriously beautiful lady. "She looks so familiar... where have I seen her before? Wait- what am I talking about? I've never seen anyone like this! I swear, first someone is supposedly following me just because I can feel it. Then I get to school, which is supposed to take me 15 minutes, in 2 minutes, then I start hearing voices, now" <br />

"Psss! Over here!!!" <br />

"Ok, I am not going crazy," she looked up around the room to see James Matlock- he was passing her a note. Belle looked at him quizzically. "What the hell is James doing, passing a note to me? Wait what am I doing just staring at him" <br />

James Matlock had never dared to talk anyone like Belle. She knew he was handsome but hated the way girls fawned over him; like he was a damn Zeus. He was not that cute. She took the note, and curiously undid its folds. It said: <br />

Meet me outside by the bleachers after <br />

school. Don't tell anyone, and don't stand <br />  
me up. <br />

James Matlock <br />

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Belle scoffed, and looked up only to see him flirting once again with Blair King. They were known to Belle as the moron club captains. James was captain, and Blair was co-captain, at his side whenever the hell she wanted to be. They flirted and dated on and off, not that she cared. It was true, because they were morons, and Blair was always cheating on James. That was why Belle had called her a slut. <br />

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Belle realized she was staring and blushed. "God! I guess I'm staying after school. But he better not pull any shit on me," Belle was not small. She could fight. She had always wondered where this special gift had come from. Although this blessing was also a

curse. Along with other strange features, Belle's fighting skills caused her to have no friends. Many called her a freak, but she had had time to adjust to it, for no one ever defended her. That's how Belle became so independent, she never relied on anyone for anything. She never trusted anyone, wouldn't let anyone in. Belle had made walls of steel. She had an ice fortress.

The class bell rang. Belle went to her next class, and her next, and her next. Now it was 2:50, and she was more than ready to bounce out of this hell-hole normal freaks called school. Belle was drawing again. "One more minute" the bell rang "yes!! No more school! I'm going home with Olive as soon" she remembered James' note. "oh yeah, James. He is such a butt crack. Why does he even expect me to show up? He has witnessed and taken part of so much of the suffering I had to go through my high school years. I really don't have to go, but you know what- I think I'm just going to go for the hell of it... just for the kicks..."

So at the end of school, Belle carried Olive's cage and her knapsack, as she went to meet the moron club captain.

"This might actually be fun...."

CHAPTER 3

Belle walked up to the bleachers. There was no one there. "I guess this was their idea of an "end of the year laugh- a joke". How could I have played myself the way I did?" she continued to curse herself as she turned to start walking home.

"Wait!" someone called. To Belle's shock, James crawled out from underneath the bleachers. Belle backed away, definitely ready to jump this dump that they called a joke because it was not funny.

"Please! Wait, you don't understand!"

"Shut the hell up! I totally understand. This is just another one of the stupid jokes you pull on people you think are below you. You think you are better than everyone, and it's really sickening." Belle was yelling now, and Olive's cage was rattling back and forth. He dusted himself off as he walked quickly to her. "Please, don't go. You really don't understand. You have to come with me. Quickly!" he laid his hand on her arm. Belle flinched.

"Don't touch me. I don't know what kind of shit your trying to pull on me, but it isn't going to work."

When James realized she was reluctant, he tightened his grip on her arm, and said "Just come

with me. I know you've been going through some hard times, but I can help you. Just... come...with ...me!!" James was straining his hardest to pull her, but realized the strength of the girl. <br />

"It's incredible. Her strength has developed immensely since the last time- but if I can't get her now, when will I? She'll go home now, but I will," James thought as a sharp pain swept through his left arm. <br />

"Aaahhh! My arm!" James cried. Belle had had enough! No one was going to force her to do anything. Least of all that dickhead, James. She had in one swift movement of fury, twisted James' left arm behind his back in a painful stance. <br />

She stepped back, breathing heavily. Only, she wasn't finished. "If you EVER TOUCH ME AGAIN JAMES MATLOCK, I SWEAR TO YOUR VERY OWN DAMN GRAVE, THAT YOU WILL REGRET IT!" and with that, Belle picked up her knapsack, and Olive and ran home.<br />  
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Belle slammed her door with her back to it. She was breathing heavily. "Oh my god... At least Olive's okay. What hell was his deal?" A million unanswered questions were racing through her mind. "At least I won't see him again for another 3 months. He is way creepier than I thought. And he's totally left the position as moron Captain, to moron club Sergeant." <br />

Belle was beat. She ran upstairs to her room with Olive, and her knapsack. She locked her door, dropped Olive's cage down gently on her dresser then collapsed straight onto her twin bed. She fell asleep immediately. Her last thought was, "if I ever see that bastard again..." before she drifted into a now, quite familiar dream. <br />

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Belle tossed and turned in her sleep. She had her same dream once again. This disturbed Belle. "Even when I take stupid cat naps," Belle thought as she was awakened by her mother pounding on her door. She had been trying to get into her room. <br />

"Wake- (pound, pound) wake up you stupid little rat! Yes, finally. Get up. Someone's here to see you." she then muttered aloud, "But I don't know how the hell someone as cute as him knows someone as hideous as you." now she had Belle's attention. "Someone cute? Oh god, I'm so shallow. But I mean I never talk to, well anyone-" she gasped. "Someone cute- James Matlock, someone here to see me- James Matlock. Oh God..." <br />

Belle had decided to put on a little show for James. She wasn't angry as much with him anymore. Although she wasn't going to let him get away with trying to manhandle her.<br />

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Belle was washed and clean before she went down to meet the Captain. She saw him on the sofa. He was sleeping. This left Belle in a state of puzzlement. Then she realized how long it had been since her mother announced his arrival. She immediately forgot her evil scheme to humiliate him, and walked over to gently wake him up. Belle walked a bit shyly for some odd reason, but stopped midway to touching him because she had noticed something "He really is cute when he's resting. He has this sort of calm over him, it's probably the only time he looks like this though." <br />

Belle's fingertips brushed his cheek gently. She didn't want to wake him up. She wanted to watch him sleep. She felt like she could do it forever and never get tired of it.

"What's wrong with me. I should NOT feel this way," she gave him a small smile and said softly "Look at what your doing to me. If you think you going to shatter my walls of armor, think," -Belle didn't finish her sentence. <br />

James popped open one eye sleepily, then the other. Belle gasped. "He had been awake when she was talking, and touching him. She blushed furiously. This made the freckles on her cheeks more evident than ever. She hated this, it was so embarrassing." <br />

She bounced off the couch immediately to gather her composure and said "Well? What are you still doing in my house? You'd think you'd know when to end a stupid prank, James. And, in case you haven't noticed, I'm not having a slumber party now, or anytime soon, so I'll show you the door." or she would've said that if James hadn't - before she could fully stand up- pulled her back onto the sofa. <br />

"Please. I am not the bad guy here. If you would just listen to me for a minute, without interruptions, you would see that quite clearly." he said wearily. James had to get her out this place before she got in real danger. Belle, shocked at what James had just done, "and the fact that his arm is still around my waist" she thought, and just goggled at him. <br /> "Uh, um, just go ahead. But first," she peeled his arm away from her waist. "I mean come on now, this is a dude who has never before today made any- as in way shape or form- contact with me. Not even a sideways glance if she had bumped into him." "Okay, continue. I am all ears." she put her hands in her lap in a listening position. Belle actually wanted to hear what the Captain was going to say. <br />

"Okay, er, first you're going to have to come with me. Wait, please. I know I promised you an explanation, but it'll be easier to believe if we go now. But I can tell you one thing now. You are in danger. You must believe me. Please don't look so skeptical. Arhhgg!! This isn't working. Ok, if you want to play it like that Belle, wait here one moment." James dashed upstairs and turned left into Belle's room. <br />

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"Hey! That's my room he's going into- wait- how the? She ran off after him. Up the stairs, and into her room she saw James, he had a bag- "where'd that come from?" -on his right arm, and was putting random stuff in it slowly with his left. His left arm moved a little slow because of the bruise that stretched all across it. She smiled a tiny smile of an apology. "WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!!! IS THAT MY UNDERWEAR??? HEY! DON'T TOUCH THAT!!!" Belle began yelling at the top of her lungs until her mother told her quite loudly also to shut up. But James just ignored Belle, and continued packing. Belle was fed up. She walked over to James and tried her mightiest to hit him and punch him, but he was relentless. Twenty minutes later, with her knuckles sore, Belle only followed James down the steps, through the kitchen, and out the door, as angry and puzzled than ever. <br />

"What's going on?" she asked breathlessly. "Why is he doing this to me? I never did anything to him. I never talked to him, or looked at him, or anything." she whined. "You know, a prank isn't really funny without someone to enjoy it with. Where are all of your buddies? Don't they want a laugh too? It would be a great-" she didn't finish because James cut her off. <br />

"Could you please be quiet? This is not a joke. There are no buddies to share the not-joke with, and yes, as a matter of fact you have looked at me and said stuff to me- or about me rather, and God knows you've thought some evil thoughts about me. I know I have a lot to explain but... you're going to have to wait a bit." Belle looked at him in angry bewilderment. "I never said anything aloud about that stuff!" <br />

They began to walk, and walk. Soon, two hours had passed and Belle thought they were in the middle of nowhere. Belle's fuse was dangerously low. Although she wondered why she never noticed how close to a forest she had lived near to for almost a quarter of her life. But she didn't complain because she had been through situations worse than this.

"Although I don't think I ever recall having first some dope trying to manhandle

me. Then having him stalk me, and follow me to my house. Then barging into my room, stealing-like- all of my stuff~&rsquo;<br />

"Hey! I did not steal all of your stuff. And for your damn information, I&rsquo;m bloody well saving your life! Here I am trying to help you and your just...just..." he stopped and sighed, realizing what he said. "Mistake."<br />

Belle had halted in shock when the words had tumbled from his mouth. &lsquo;What the hell have I gotten myself into?&rsquo; she thought. &lsquo;I&rsquo;m walking with a stranger away from home, when I could be doing normal stuff. I don&rsquo;t know where I am, where I&rsquo;m going, or why I&rsquo;m going to where ever the hell I&rsquo;m going! Have I finally lost it? I&rsquo;m following Captain-&lsquo;<br />

"Will you stop calling me Captain?! I am NOT a moron, nor an idiot. I told you I would explain everything when we get where we&rsquo;re going..." his words weakened as Belle turned around with a hand to her forehead, murmuring to herself. She was trying to go home. Things were getting too out of hand. He shouted as he tried desperately to catch up. "Please! Stop! Ok! I&rsquo;ll explain." this did nothing for Belle kept on walking. "I said PLEASE Belle! I&rsquo;ll EXPLAIN EVERYTHING!!" she slowed to a stop and turned around. <br />

"Everything?"<br />

"Everything." James sighed in relief. It was dark now, so it made sense to rest. They would have to camp. Thirty minutes later Belle walked over to him, and also sighed. &lsquo;I guess I&rsquo;m not going home any time soon.&rsquo;<br />

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"You got that right." James said. He cleared his throat. "Sorry. Umm, ok. My name is Ramel, and" <br />

"What?!?! Your name is Ramel? Nooo, your name is James. What the HELL HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO? I don&rsquo;t think I can handle this. Please take me home then leave me alone, James. Maybe all of this will turn out to be a dream if I&rsquo;m lucky." <br />

"-You are going to have to listen without interruptions." he continued. He pulled her down when she stood up again. He finally got her to sit next to him near a small fire he had made from dry leaves and sticks. &lsquo;This is unbelievable. I&rsquo;m out camping with a dude who can read people&rsquo;s thoughts, steal people&rsquo;s underwear-&lsquo; <br />

"I did not STEAL YOUR UNDERWEAR!!!" Ramel yelled. "If you would please just listen? I&rsquo;m not taking you home, and you need to hear the explanation I&rsquo;m about to tell you." she had tried to stand up again, but Ramel only pulled her down. She landed into his lap. Belle gasped, then blushed deeply. &lsquo;What the hell is the matter with me?&rsquo; she thought. "There&rsquo;s nothing the matter with you," he started, but Belle realizing that he did that creepy, and invasive thing again, struggled to stand up. "I swear to God I will wring your neck if you do that again. And... and." her words faltered as she saw an unexplainably tired look in Ramel&rsquo;s deep blue eyes. "Don&rsquo;t you pull that one on me. I know all about you. You are a shallow idiot who just wants girls, and popularity. No! Don&rsquo;t even say anything. I&rsquo;m not like you. I don&rsquo;t why you&rsquo;ve taken such sudden and creepy interest in me." she said.<br />

"Please. Let me EXPLAIN! I&rsquo;ve been trying to, but you wouldn&rsquo;t let me. Now I won&rsquo;t have time to explain everything. I can only answer a few of your questions now. Besides, you&rsquo;re not going anywhere today so you might as well just sit down and LISTEN."<br />

Belle sat down. "Fine." she said grudgingly. Ramel smiled thankfully and began. <br />

"Okay, er, you are probably wondering why I&rsquo;m all of a sudden paying attention to you, but" <br />

"Oh, why don&rsquo;t you just protrude my mind again, huh? That would solve your problem,

don't you think? I mean" she scoffed "you never cared about my privacy before." she said, thinking about her underwear. Ramel sighed in frustration. "Why must she be so difficult!?" he thought. <br />

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"Oh please, Belle! Everything I've done lately was for a reason." she snorted in disbelief. "It's TRUE! You know what? Just be quiet so I can explain this to you. God! Okay, the reason I had to ignore you was because if I had made contact with you in any way... bad things would have happened. I can't tell you now- you wouldn't believe me. I am not, however, a shallow idiot, but your guardian. I know, I know, but don't look at me like that." He took a deep breath. "And also, you know that you are adopted?" he knew this was a deep plunge and soon regretted his question, but for only a minute though. From the look on her face he could tell she hadn't. But suddenly a fresh wave of relief swept through Belle. Ramel smiled to himself sympathetically. <br />

"Well, now that you know that, things should be easier to explain. I chose the name James Matlock as a cover." he smiled then looked deep into Belle's eyes very seriously. "You do have enemies Belle." Ramel looked to the sky, the moon was shining brightly, and the moonlight had lit up Belle's face- making it glow in absolute radiance. Ramel cleared his throat and said, <br />

"We should get some sleep, we're going to need it for tomorrow." he was going to continue, but Belle said "Wait! Um, how... why... h-how do you read" <br />

"People's minds?" he finished. "Well I suppose I owe her that much." he thought. "Er... well, it was a gift. You have it too, but it won't acknowledge you in your present state. We really should get some sleep. We wake before dawn." Ramel stood, motioned her to stay seated, and went a little deeper into the woods. He came back about a minute later, and then motioned for her to follow and to bring her belongings. <br />

Belle regretfully followed him wondering where he had gone. She had to push and hold branches so they wouldn't hit or scratch her. When she finally got through the bushes she saw one small tent, a lamp inside with two sleeping bags. <br />

"HEY!! You didn't bring this stuff! Where'd you get them from? Hey Jam- I mean Ramel, don't you walk away from me. Tell me where you got this stuff!" Ramel got to the tent, crouched down to crawl into it. But Belle wasn't finished. <br />

"Where's MY tent? That is so selfish, I knew IT! All you think about is yourself! God. I am stranded with a selfish, psychic, meanie, and I have NO food." she muttered to herself.

James' head popped out from the tent with a tired expression on his face. He shook his head wearily and said, "This tent was for the BOTH OF US! WILL YOU PLEASE STOP YOUR COMPLAINING FOR one SECOND? I SWEAR, I'D BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL!" he breathed deeply, trying to calm himself before talking again "There is enough room in here for the both of us. You obviously don't know what waking up before dawn means. Come and sleep. For YOUR sake, if not for mine." and with that, his head once more disappeared into the tent. Five minutes later, Belle heard snoring. <br />

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Belle had shuddered purposely when Ramel had mentioned that they would be sleeping in the same tent. "That tent had better be bigger than it looks." she thought. Belle ducked her head under the tent's flap and what she saw made her pop her head right back out and gasp. "It's a damn Taj Mahal in there." Ramel was about five feet away from her sleeping bag. She goggled at the space in there. She heard his snoring loud and clear then rolled her eyes. "Is this really and truly happening? I am sleeping, or going to if I can, in the same tent as James- I mean Ramel that was once the most popular dude in school and who is now posing as my protector? And from whom? And I had always known- or

*hoped secretly that mom, wasn't actually my mother.' Belle shifted into a comfortable position in her sleeping bag 'which is extremely comfortable. I could fall straight to slee-...' Belle drifted to sleep. <br />*

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*CHAPTER 4<br />*

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*In what seemed like five minutes later, she was being shaken gently awake. Belle in a state of confusion, shot up and tried to hit whoever was trying to wake her.<br />*

*"No!! Go AWAY! It's time to sleep!" she cried. She slid her body deeper into the comfortable sleeping bag to hide her face from the sun that was just peeking from above the ground. Where had the tent gone? <br />*

*"Hey! Ouch! I let you sleep in. I told you that we were getting up early. No- stop! Don't hit me! God, Belle, GET UP!" Ramel muttered something under his breath and Belle's sleeping bag disappeared. Her body hit the ground with a soft thud. Belle looked around- 'Where did the tent go? God! What time is it? I hate this idiot.' Belle thought.<br /> "Why are you doing this to me?" Belle said as she rubbed the back of her head and stood up. 'I'm hungry, and I need a shower.'<br />*

*"Sorry, no luxuries. We have to bathe in a stream a little down that path," he pointed to the worn path just near their small camp. "And we'll have to eat what we can catch. No luxuries." He chuckled, and a dimple Belle had never noticed before appeared in his left cheek. She also never noticed how deep blue his eyes were when they danced with amusement. Belle scowled. 'It's the sun. I am losing it. I gotta keep my mind clear of thoughts of he'll just- then stop thinking for now!' she told herself.<br />*

*So, Belle and Ramel walked, and about a half an hour later they were at the stream and Belle had forgotten all about her no thinking rule, and was dwelling deeply on one particular thing.*

*Although before she could utter it, Ramel said "I'm going a little up north the stream to find some breakfast. That'll give you some time to bathe. Everything you'll*

need should be in the bag I packed from your room. No, it's over there." after he pointed the bag out, he turned to start walking. She wasn't the only one to dwell deeply in her thoughts. Ramel walked silently up the dirt trail he was so familiar with. He shook his head in confusion. <br />

"Why does she continually accuse me of being such fowl things? Am I really that bad? It wasn't my fault I got acquainted with her petty high school enemies. They are not really my friends. I just had to keep myself busy from noticing her. Sometimes it worked, but I must admit, I thought about her constantly. Although from what's going on in her head- we were enemies, I am an enemy.... what did I do? I had to ignore her all year, but it was for her sake! I guess she never believed me..." Ramel knelt down to the rushing water. The water was cool to his face. <br />

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He sighed as he pictured Belle's face. Belle was beautiful. "But she sure is a handful." She had long, sleek, jet black hair that was always in a ponytail. Her eyes were a deep, intense green, with gold flecks and she had freckles on her nose which shone evidently when she blushed. She had a radiant smile when she wasn't scowling. What Ramel thought her most attractive trait was that she didn't know how beautiful she was. This was an incredibly rare thing to find in pretty girls. <br />

Ramel had now caught enough fish to last all day. "Now, some firewood." he thought. He began to pick up wood. It was about thirty minutes before Belle saw him again. She had bathed, and set up breakfast. She had caught enough fish to last them most of the day, and she cooked them. "What took you so long? Never mind, I made breakfast. Here." she took a plate and stood to hand it to him. Ramel just stood in shock as the flames flickered before his eyes. And yet he was not so surprised because yesterday morning he saw her rush to school at 40 miles an hour, as if she did that every day, so Ramel wasn't very shocked. The fish smelt wonderful, and he took the plate gladly. <br />

"Thanks." <br />

"No problem. What were you doing that it made you take so long?" Belle said. She was feeling nice at the moment, and offered Ramel more trout. She didn't eat any. This puzzled Ramel so he asked her why she wasn't eating. "I ate already." <br />

He eyed her suspiciously. "You know we'll be walking a long time, and there's no eating until we camp again. You might want to cut the bull, and eat something." all the while he was still shoveling food into his already stuffed mouth. <br />

"Stop, you'll choke!" <br />

"Like you care... we should get going, I can continue my explanation that I had to cut short yesterday." he motioned for her to begin packing as he put away breakfast. Soon afterwards, Belle and Ramel were ready to go and Belle was more than ready to hear the story that was responsible for all of this. <br />

"Well?" she prodded. <br />

"Well one minute! I got make sure I got everything right before I say anything. I like having my facts straight." he paused for about two minutes to ponder over her life story. It was remarkable, in fact, everything Belle had to suffer. He knew where to start. <br />

"Well, we aren't normal." Ramel paused again. <br />

"Speak for yourself please. I will not be categorized 'abnormal' by some stalker who reads minds. Nope. Not me. Oh, sorry, continue." <br />

"Thank- you," he said grinding his teeth in frustration. "You were not born here. You're from another land- um, dimension. Way different from this one. We are going there. We left your home surrounding, a few hours ago-" <br />

"Uh, wait one minute! What exactly do you mean by home surrounding? Do you mean Bowie?-

because that's what it's called. I know you're not normal but to have lived here for~"

"Can you please let me finish ONE sentence without interrupting? Please!"

"Sheesh. Sor-ry." Belle rolled her eyes.

"Thank - you. I know what Bowie is, for one, and two, by home surrounding - I meant earth. But wait- we aren't in space or anything, so chill. It may look like we're still in that jungle from yesterday, but we are nowhere near that place."

"So how did we get from there to here in one day?" Belle snapped. Nothing was making sense, and even if it did- she wouldn't believe any of it.

"I thought you wanted to hear my explanation!"

"I do but... you know what? Just go ahead with your stupid explanation... This is one long nightmare."

Ramel sighed and tried to continue, "Ok, you are from a land called Secrel Dome. As I said before, you need to know that you aren't normal. You aren't like other people. Way before you were born, Dome was a joyous place of prosperity for magical creatures. I know, -Please don't interrupt, Belle." Ramel had silenced her before she could say anything.

"I know that you believe in magical creatures, Belle. I can see it... and you are right. There are so many of them I cannot possibly name them all. You're mother was the daughter of the ruler, Glethendire. Her name was Elizabeth and she was well respected throughout the land. We are on our way to the elves, where she was most respected. We should be there only minutes from now."

They continued walking for about four more hours.

It was past noon and Ramel heard Belle's stomach grumble. Ramel stopped walking suddenly, and Belle almost knocked straight into him.

"Get down, Belle." Ramel whispered as he quietly crouched to his knees. Belle saw his eyes notice something on the ground. His eyes narrowed, but all Belle saw were leaves. His hands were touching and feeling them gently when he knelt down with his face to the dirty ground and all was silent.

"Wait, it's not silent. I hear a thumping- no, more like drumming, a soft but solemn drumming." Belle thought.

"You're right, Belle but you have to be quiet, or else they'll hear us. They think we're intruders. That's what the drumming means." Belle only frowned for he had invaded her mind once again.

Belle heard something else. She couldn't quite make out was because Ramel was still shuffling the leaves. She strained her ears to recognize the increasing noise. At last Belle heard the sound of deep, blood chilling laughter. She tried to tap Ramel on the shoulder- "Ramel," he jerked off her hand.

"Shh."

"But- Ramel!"

Why couldn't he hear it? He only held up his hand to silence her. Belle was getting a little agitated, knowing that the foot- no- hooves were coming closer- the laughing louder. Belle shut her eyes tightly. She had to warn Ramel.

"Ramel, listen" Belle cried. The laughter was now high pitched and bringing pain to Belle. She closed her hands over her ears jerking as she fell to her knees.

"Now is not the time for your questions, Belle. We gotta run." he tried to pull her up while running but she resisted- wait, it wasn't her resisting, someone was pulling her. He turned in shock to see huge ugly, scaly hands pulling Belle by the legs. Belle was screaming at

Ramel for help- loud, powerful shrieks. "This girl doesn't know she's capable of permanently deafening someone with those shrieks?" Ramel pulled his hardest but then a pair of soft arms clasped tightly around his waist and pulled him off the ground forcefully. His gripped slipped; he let go of Belle. <br />

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"Ramel!" Belle screamed as the hands pulled her onto the black horse and rode off unnaturally fast.<br />

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CHAPTER 5<br />

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Ramel hadn't been settled on the horse like Belle. He was carried in one arm, unconscious, with branches scratching his face and rustling his already rustled hair. Before Ramel could fight back at whoever had taken him, a soft, sweet scent flowed through his senses and he went unconscious.<br />

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"Ugh... where am I?" Ramel's eyes remained heavy and closed as he tried to gather information on his surroundings. He couldn't.<br />

"What happened?" Ramel suddenly remembered. "Belle!! Oh God, she tried to tell me. Everything is a mess." Ramel thought.<br />

"It most certainly is mister." said a cheery young voice. Ramel then realized where he was... and what was happening. He opened his eyes. He sat up and felt his head, it was bandaged.<br />

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He saw a young child elf sitting dressed in spider silk dyed green and brown on the dirt ground, watching him. "Why am I here, little boy?" Ramel asked.<br />

"Because you came without being invited. Now you're in trouble." the little elf giggled. He was watching him with curious eyes. Ramel was in what looked like a tree, a really, really big one. "This could only be if... I was in the Elf kingdom... Figures." He sighed and looked around, "This was not the way I wanted to get into this place. There was a small fire a little ways beyond his view, but he could tell it was dark, and he had to get out of this place. Belle's face flashed in his head again and again with tears streaming down her pale cheeks. He strained to get up. He was placed in a little leaf hammock and it seemed impossible to get without falling flat on your face. <br />

"No, no, no, mister. Mama said you gots to stay in bed, or you're going to be hurting all nights, and days." he waved his finger at him. He looked adorable, he looked about four years old. "What's your name, little guy?" Ramel asked. The childlike elf stood and puffed out his chest in pretend toughness and said "I am Lazel, and I'm going to be a warrior one day. Just like Papa." he almost continued but someone had said, "Yes, son, one day. But right now you must sleep." Ramel heard the soft, sultry voice echo from all directions. It seemed to seep from the walls itself.<br />

"But I don't wanna!! Don't wanna. Don't want to." he said crossly. Lazel crossed his arms against his chest and put on the toughest face he could. Although Ramel didn't see anyone besides Lazel, he could smell the scent of a young mother elf. Ramel knew many things of the Elven Kingdom. He knew one thing was to never trespass over elf ground without permission- it meant death. He sniffed the air again, "The same scent that had knocked me out earlier! Oh, shit,<br />

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"Watch your tongue around my son, young witch. You trespassed among the elves and with no welcome. I know how much you know about we elves and we can't risk you leaving, staying or...living." from out of the shadows came a beautifully graceful young elf. She glowed brighter than moonlight and only upon her skin. Her hair, dressings- all beautiful. "But now is no time to dwell on looks," he began to think, but he was interrupted. <br />

"No, it isn't at all, young witch. I have knowledge of your journey; you will never succeed- even if you escape." the mother walked over to him and only then did he realize how tall she was. She bent over the hammock, then over Ramel and picked up her son. Her rose petal scent engulfed his senses once again, almost to unconsciousness. Lazel began to cry for he had tried to hide behind his hammock and yet the mother still found him. Ramel tried to take this time to read the mother's mind. He had concentrated for protruding an elf's mind was way more difficult than Belle's own. <br />

He heard the mother thinking, "This silly child, and always causing trouble. And yet, I love him so-" Ramel cried out in pain. He felt as if his head was about to burst. His plan backfired in too many ways. He was in trouble now. <br />

"If you ever DARE protrude my thoughts again, young witch, you will not get a warning, but a death sentence. It is humiliation of all elves that someone with the likes of you has such a great gift." the mother was yelling now. As she was yelling she was growing taller and taller. Ramel thought, "This was a mistake. But MAN! What is it with chicks, and having me not read their minds? Can't live with, can't live without 'em." he sighed while his head pounded. Ramel was not intimidated by the mother elf. This was only a small dose of temper from the likes of an elf. You should see them when they are really mad.<br />

"I wanna STAY, mama. Please!! Please, can I stay- five more minutes?" Lazel put up four fingers. His mother shrank down to her normal size and looked at her son. He obviously could melt his mother's heart in a matter of minutes with only a cute gesture. Ramel chuckled. The mother picked up her son, who was trying to hide again, and silently took him past a silk curtain. Ramel tumbled clumsily out of his hammock. "Surely elves cannot sleep in these wretched leaves?" he thought angrily. He rubbed his head and got a clearer view of his prison. He had to get out of here. He had to save Belle. His heart contracted at the thought of those scaly hands touching her. His thoughts, however, were interrupted. <br />

"It is not a prison that you are in, young witch. What is your name?" the child's mother was behind him, and he jumped. Ramel inhaled before he answered.<br />

"Ramel." he paused. "I will not reveal anymore to you. Will you let me go? That girl, you must have seen when you took me," he didn't get to finish.<br />

"Took you? I saved your life, Ramel. By the time he would've gotten Isabelle on his horse, the demon would have killed you, with a snap of his filthy dead reeked fingers, and you would have been dead. So you now are in debt of the elves, and you have trespassed. You owe me your life." she smiled a wicked smile. "Ramel's journey has finally begun," thought Elkira, queen of elves. Her smile faded a bit, "It's about damn time too."<br />

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Belle groaned, she was in pain. The pain was so sharp everywhere, especially her head. And yet, she lay on an incredibly soft little bed, even though the last thing she could remember was that cold, horrible, haunting high pitched laughter. Her head felt heavy but not so much as her eyes- she had to put effort into lifting them.<br />

*'What the-?' she thought, but stopped because her head pounded only more- it hurt to think, so she didn't even want to think about talking. <br />*

*As she finally opened her eyes very slowly, everything she saw seemed to be a blur of red, and brown... mostly red though. She looked for a door, already trying to plan an escape. As she tried to ignore the pain it brought to her, the doorknob slowly turned and opened to a small girl who looked like a servant. She looked about 12 years old. <br />*

*"Excuse me, Miss, can I get anything for you?" said a soft British- accented voice. Since Belle's vision had cleared some, she could see that the girl was very pretty for her age... The girl shuffled her dirty feet as she waited- she would not meet her eyes. She asked again thinking Belle did not hear.<br />*

*Belle shook her head, no. She didn't know what this place was, or why someone would kidnap her, and she certainly wasn't going to eat or drink anything from here. No matter how deprived of food she felt.<br />*

*"That won't be necessary, Semini, everything she needs has already been injected in her," said a deep, and unfeeling voice. Another person stepped into the room. A strikingly handsome man pushed the little servant girl aside without a moments glance. Semini, as he had called her, almost fell, but regained her balance. She stepped quickly out of his way in fear. His frosty gray eyes bore on Belle as he walked to her beside in three quick steps. "How do you feel, Belle? Are you comfortable? You know, you can-" <br />*

*"Go to hell, you bitch. Why am I here?" Belle was seriously getting some bad vibes on this guy. Not to mention the room. That red stuff on the wall resembled nothing like spilled cranberry juice. The floor was dirt and the room was small with no windows. No escape here. She couldn't let him know how scared she was. He was tall, very handsome, and looked like he had the heart of a snowball. 'I hope to God he's not a serial killer. It really hurts talking to him- my throat is burning, and my voice is raspy.' Belle thought. She touched a hand to her throat, which immediately received a fast pulse, and felt very warm. She scowled, and put on her most unattractive face. <br />*

*The man chuckled. 'She's way too much like her mother. If she has even half her brains, I'm going to have to get more serious here...' he thought, as he listened to her rant, and rave. 'Such colorful language too, I wonder what Father will have to say about that. Probably that I should've taken care her the moment I sensed her power. Well, I'll grant him the indulgence of the possibility that I killed her already... then I can have my own fun.' He chuckled softly now as he watched Belle's face go from a sickly pale to a colorful shade of pink. She was angry with him. He bent down and whispered in her ear, "You know, Belle, I would want to reserve some of that energy. It really might come in handy, particularly with what I have planned for you." If Belle knew how fast she could turn from a weak pink to dead beet red with anger, she'd be astonished. She couldn't speak, and wouldn't let herself because she knew nothing of the things the strange man had in store. Whatever it was, his cold, unfeeling voice could not have made it sound any worse.<br />*

*Daniel lifted his head and gazed down at Belle, wondering how he was going to deal with her attitude, let alone her power. Should he exercise slow torture, or extremely painful torture? She knew of no way to fight him back so, he decided on slow. First, though, she had to eat and sleep. Belle obviously showed more of her mother every minute- especially with not accepting my food. "Well, it's all been injected in her blood anyway." He muttered to himself. <br />*

*Belle's head shot up at the words before she could control herself. She felt like she wanted to throw up. This was ALL Ramel's fault. Every single last bit. As soon as she escaped from this place, she would throttle his neck.<br />*

*"Let... me... go..." croaked Belle. She shot a look for help at Semini who saw, but refused to try*

to communicate, or do anything in fact. She just stood there, watching Belle burn out her lungs, shuffling her feet on the dirt floor. <br />

"Now, now, Belle, why would you want to leave? You just got here, and I have a few little somethings planned for us tomorrow. I&rsquo;d be heart-broken if you just got up and left," he added mockingly. His voice, no matter how cold and hard, seemed entirely too familiar. Where had she heard this voice before? It had the same bottomless cold, the same deep, hard ends. Belle dismissed it, thinking it of unimportance. She sat up a little higher in her bed, and then stopped midway. The look of realization popped into her eyes as she lifted her blankets. Her clothes were gone! Everything! She didn&rsquo;t even have socks. And this guy had been staring at her this entire time. Her face turned a bright shade of pink as she glared mercilessly at Semini. She couldn&rsquo;ve said something, anything. Belle was naked, and making a fool of herself. And it wasn&rsquo;t like she wasn&rsquo;t in pain either. Every gesture shot a sharp pain down her neck to the rest of her body. Belle could come to only one conclusion. &lsquo;They&rsquo;ve drugged me, stripped me, and made sure I have no means of escape... they want me dead.&rsquo;<br />

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Chapter 6<br />

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Ramel tried to climb out of the hammock in vain. He wrestled with the leaves and vines until he fell upside down onto the floor with a thud. Ramel stood, brushed off his new silk elven pajamas and stopped the hammock from swinging. He tip-toed to the fireplace across the tree-room to get his and Belle&rsquo;s belongings. <br />

It was pitch black inside and outside, but Ramel had prepared himself. Before the fire died out, he mentally memorized every inch and object in the tree-room. He patted himself on the back silently as he avoided the wooden dinner tray table near his hammock. He padded silently on the dirt floor in no shoes as he jumped over the dead leaves so they wouldn&rsquo;t crunch and make a noise. <br />

Ramel new things about the Elves that he would have to inform Belle about when he rescued

her. *'Not if' but 'when' I rescue her, I'm going to tell her a lot of things. I can't hold back anything in case of another setback like this one. Plus, girls have this thing with having guys tell them everything the minute they spark curiosity. I can't read her mind now, or else, Elkira, as I found out at dinner would know this.'*  
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*By this time, Ramel had reached and packaged their belongings into one magical bag he'd spotted during the dinner Elkira had invited him to. He tried to get her to give him a secluded dinner, but she was already two steps ahead of him. She made sure he ate dinner in public, and that many faces would be acquainted with his. Many would notice him, if they saw him sneaking out in the middle of the night.*<br />

*'Yeah, well, who's two steps ahead, now? I could shadow myself and no one would even know I left 'til morning.'* he smiled grimly. <br />

*"Don't be too sure about that, my young, na*