

# Since Dissapeared

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*this is basically a bunch of short little clips from a story I'm trying to write. Since i have writer's block I'm posting everything i have so far and asking you guys to give me suggestions for the plot...*

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## 1 - random clips

*Dear mom, Dad, Nash, Liz,*

*I have missed you so much along the course of the past year. (Has it been a year in your world? Here it was around one year since I disappeared... or more like appeared here...) Anyways I have missed you a whole lot and I regret not being able to see you once again, but this land has a strict policy about wandering in the human world... sorry.*

*You might be wondering why this ancient-looking book randomly appeared at your doorstep mentioning your old friend/daughter. Well reading it might answer some questions. This is a book/novel/biography/whatever-you-want-to-call-it about my year away... telling just about everything that happened, or that I can remember, ^\_^ . It may seem like complete insanity but it is what happened to me, and yes I thought I was insane for a while too. That or I was in a dream. Anyways, it's the only way we could think of to skirt around the visiting policy.*

*That brings me to the contributing author, you will find out who he is along the course of the story, but he sends his hellos nonetheless. Well they'd be more along the lines of "Greetings friends and family of Ms. McKenzie" but I'm working on changing that. By the way, he has a really good memory; I mean it's kind of unnatural. He still remembers some of our conversations perfectly. He actually is really nice... my knight in shining armor of sorts, even though he won't admit it.*

*Finally I hope this reassures you somewhat, I wrote it for the sole purpose of telling you that I'm fine and I love you all. And I hope that you don't believe me a wacko after this. (Actually I pinched myself repeatedly and tried to find the nearest insane asylum several times so don't blame yourselves if you do...) And it felt really weird writing about myself in third person, but I think I'm over it now.*

*Love you all,*

### **Samantha**

"Ow!" a voice resonated around the room.

"I'm really sorry, but I have no idea what could be wrong. The pain you described is just like an ear infection, but at the wrong place and there's no symptoms at all." Said a man in a white lab coat to the beautiful girl sitting on the bed/bench before him. She had big eyes of an electric sapphire blue, and hair of a golden blonde that fell down to her back. She was tall, slender, beautiful, and obviously in pain.

"...Apart from the pain that is. Do you really have no idea?" asked the girl.

"I'm really sorry, Samantha, but it's not something I've ever seen before." The doctor said, concern in his voice.

"It's okay, I've survived every thing else haven't I?" Samantha said with a fake smile.

"Yes, then you may leave... I believe your mother has already paid for your visit. Hopefully see you much later!" the doctor said with a smile.

Samantha jumped off the bench/bed and walked out of the room, mumbling a "thank you" on the way.

"So, what's wrong with you?" Asked the woman waiting at the door, closing her cell phone and walking directly towards the exit.

"Nothing..." lied Samantha. Her mother never liked liabilities and sickness was obviously one, especially weird sicknesses that could not be described or explained. Plus, Samantha wanted to go on the field trip

later that week and being sick was not going to help her.

“Good, I’ve got a meeting in half an hour, can you get home on your own?” her mother asked walking quickly down the walkway to her car.

“Um... sure...” Samantha responded, it’s not like she wasn’t used to this. Her parents were always busy. Her mother was the head editor of some big magazine and she was constantly running back and forth. Her father was a policeman. This town was pristine and all, but all thanks to the police and their never-ending rules. And it didn’t stop when he entered the house, in his book she always did something wrong.

“Thanks... got to go!” her mother shouted behind her as she opened the door to the car, flashing a smile as she sat in the driver’s seat.

“You’re welcome...” muttered Samantha to the wind. Slowly she turned and walked into the dense forest that surrounded everything in the town. Somehow she always knew where she was in this forest. She walked slowly at first, but the fresh forest air lifted her mood away and she started to run, skip and flip on the way home. She didn’t know why she did this; it was just a simple and constant occurrence. And it kept her fit and flexible too, which wasn’t all that bad.

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Today was the day of the field trip everyone had been waiting for. The class was going on a three-day trip into the woods.

“Ready? This may be hard for some of you, but please try to endure it. If anything really bad happens call 911... and that’s pretty much it! Let’s go!” said a tall and fit Mr. Lankey, the resident gym teacher.

“He has absolutely no skill with words. I’m kind of regretting signing up for this trip now.” Said a brown-haired, blue-eyed girl.

“Don’t worry the forest is fun, it won’t harm you unless you ask for it.” Samantha said next to her, grabbing her backpack and putting it on.

“Sam, you practically live in the forest. It’s different for you!” the mirror image of the first girl said.

“And it hasn’t harmed me yet, you guys are going to be fine!” Sam said, trying to comfort her friends that were just a little scared of spending the weekend in the middle of lots and lots of trees, and the occasional wild animal.

“Natasha, Elisabeth, Samantha! Come on, we need to stay together during the trip. We don’t want anyone to get lost right?” asked a tall muscular jock.

“Oh, it really wouldn’t be that bad if we lost the three of them... eh Kris?” a ditzy little blonde Amanda said, clinging to the jock’s arms like it was the only thing keeping her on her tiny legs. It might as well be, she was a well-known anorectic. Both Natasha and Elisabeth sighed, still in a daze from the previous speaker, while Samantha scoffed at the stupidity of it all. Why did she have to have those two in her group?

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“Sam, are you okay?” asked Elisabeth, concerned. Sam nodded and flashed an obviously fake smile before stumbling. She managed to grab on to a tree before falling, but that did not reassure her friends any more.

“Everyone stop!” screamed out Natasha to the small party. All four other members were now crowded around Samantha.

“I’m just a little dizzy, that’s all. Nothing to worry about...” Samantha said, rising from the branch to walk out ahead of the group.

“Something’s wrong” Natasha and Elisabeth said in union, thinking that Samantha didn’t hear it. Their friend never lied so outright unless something was really, really off. Luckily no other mishaps happened for the next several hours. Samantha would occasionally stop and wait for the group, her head resting against a tree, but nothing major. Or at least not yet...

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"Let's set up camp here. Not everyone has your stamina and it's almost night-time." Kris said as everyone mumbled their consent. Sam flashed a feeble smile to the unofficial leader of the party before helping her friends with the tent. Realistically her friends were just there for show, having never set up a tent before and asking questions more often than not. Soon a fire was started in the middle of the campsite, which was not much... consisting of two tents, one for the guy, and one for the girls, and a couple camping chairs.

"Who's hungry?" asked Kris, reaching into his pack for the food stores he had brought along. The girls all mumbled yeses or continued on their duties. "Guess I'll make some anyway..." Kris said to himself, shocked by the lack of enthusiasm for the food. He carefully opened a can of soup and placed it on one of the rocks bordering the campfire. Within a few minutes the sickly sweet smell of clam chowder rose around the campsite, either attracting or repulsing its occupants.

For the rest of the hour, the group milled about, doing nothing much and absolutely nothing productive.

"We need more firewood..." mumbled a disappointed Kris, he had had higher hopes for the first day.

"I'll go get it. Be right back..." she mumbled as she ran into the woods.

"That was a bit too much enthusiasm for firewood... what do you want us to do?" asked Natasha.

"If she doesn't come back in a couple minutes, we'll send someone out to get her," Elisabeth stated.

Meanwhile Samantha was picking random twigs and fallen branches off the ground. As she walked she found herself within a few yards of a little stream, it's gurgling waking her from her daze. Suddenly a pain built up behind her ribs. She dropped the wood she was carrying and bent down gripping her chest. She started coughing violently, blood coming from somewhere deep inside of her. The world spun and slowed, just like a bad drama scene, and she fell, hitting the ground before passing out.

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"Hey! She's waking up!" shouted a female voice through the darkness.

"Are you okay?" asked another as Samantha tried to regain control over her muscles. Her eyelids flickered faintly before opening directly in the path of a particularly bright light. The closed immediately followed by a "Shut the light off, it's too bright for her right now!" Once she was reassured that the light was gone, she opened her eyes once again. This time she was able to look at her surroundings. A dark green cloth blocked her view of the stars and sleeping bags were spread all around.

"Hey sleepy head..." murmured a friendly voice. Samantha tried to sit up but the world was not ready for her, it spun uncontrollably, sending her back down on the not so comfy sleeping bag.

"Uh... what happened?" she asked as people now helped her to a sitting position.

"You tell me, all we know is that Kris found you passed out in the middle of the forest, blood all around you. Nash almost had a heart attack when she heard about it," said the girl she now recognized as Elisabeth.

"Yeah! Never do that to me again. Next time you feel like passing out, give us a warning!" Natasha said with concern poking through the sarcasm.

"Keep it quiet, some people are trying to get their beauty sleep!" mumbled a tired Amanda, rolling over in her sleeping bag.

"Oh! Be quiet yourself! Sam's finally woken up and you expect us to wait until morning to ask questions?" said Natasha venomously.

"The thing is I don't have anything to tell you guys. I had been feeling kind of funky... but not really that bad, but then the pain in my ear spiked and pain appeared in my chest. Then blood, then nothing. That's it." Said Samantha simply.

"Well we called the police, they said that they'll come and get you in the morning, can you last that long?" asked Elisabeth, she had always been the more adult of the twins.

"Yeah, I think so..." said Samantha as she fell back down on the pillow and feigned sleep. The pain was

still there, duller, but it was still there and it could probably spike at any moment. Oblivious to but obviously worried about the happening of Samantha's body, the twins fell asleep next to her.

A few hours passed and Samantha had been unable to obtain sleep of any form. The sun was starting to rise and still she was awake. Finally she got up and walked around camp, looking for something to do. Suddenly the pain resurfaced, but Samantha refused to let it take the best of her. She walked around the campsite, nails digging into her palms, in order to stop it. For obvious reasons it just became worse, pain was now seeping not only from her chest and ears but from the cuts she had just formed in her hands. For some reason yet unknown she decided it might be helpful to go take a walk in the woods, it had had such success last time. Silently she slipped through the trees in no particular direction. Once far enough away from camp she stopped any pretence of being quiet, it was actually very hard to concentrate with all this pain.

Within a few minutes of erring in the woods she found herself in front of a massive pile of boulders. They were completely normal except for the sheer amount of them. She walked around them with no true idea of what she was doing, one hand trailing against the surface of the rock, leaving a small trail of blood in her wake. Then her hand wasn't touching anything. She turned around and looked at where the hole was, but nothing. In front of her was a perfectly smooth and hole-less white colored boulder. Again she placed her hand on its surface. Her fingers went right through the surface of the rock!

"Okay..." she said to herself as she tried touching the surface of the rock several more times. Not once did she touch a solid surface. Okay, so that's just a little weird... she thought as she once again stuck her hand through the rock. In her confusion and pain a completely irrational thought popped into her mind. I could go see what's on the other side...

As if on cue the pain doubled, making her bend over in pain and, coincidentally, pushing her into the rock. Behind her a cry echoed. Apparently she had not been as alone as she had thought.

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Everyone was either shocked or scared when Samantha randomly appeared in the middle of the dining room, writhing in pain. Females ran away from her as the males brought out their swords and valiantly tried to protect the rest from a teen in pain.

"Destroy that thing!" screamed out the man on the golden throne, deciding to add his view to the mess. Soldiers went rushing out of the corridors towards the body, which had by now fainted and become immobile.

"But sir! It's a girl!" shouted one of the more humane ones.

"Oh... well then what shall we do?" the man asked to the woman sitting next to him.

"Sir, if I may say so... but isn't a golden haired being in the story our parents always told us as children. The Golden Savior?" asked an old man carrying heavy leather bound book.

"Yes! The Golden Savior has arrived!!!" the man on the throne shouted, much like a child would.

"But, sir. Our kingdom is in no trouble at all, what is there to save?" said the woman.

"Rainion! Suiadan! Take the girl to the guest quarters and help her in whatever she may need!" the man said with no regard for the previous comment. Two nearly identical boys stepped out of the shadows behind the thrown, nodded and advanced towards Samantha. The one with more muscle mass, Suiadan, tried to pick her up, but was swatted away by Rainion who whispered, "he said bring her to the guest quarters, not rape her along the way!" with an out raged cry and a murmur of "you're just the one who wants to touch her most," Suiadan gave in.

Together they walked down the passageways towards the guest quarters. About halfway there Samantha started to squirm in Rainion's arms.

"Go get a healer!" he yelled to his brother as her movements got to uncontrollable to handle and he placed her on the ground. Suiadan complied, running off towards some not too distant area of the ornate palace.

"If you wanted to beat her up, it would have been much easier somewhere less public," said Suiadan when he came back to the sight of blood.

"I didn't do any of it, it's all her!" answered a very distressed Rainion, who was obviously not used to having people thrashing in his arms.

"Shoddy lies brother, you never had any talent in that skill," Suiadan said, but he was interrupted by the healer.

"He does not lie, but he also does not tell the truth. She is reacting to a spell, and a strong one. Do you know how long she has been rejecting the spell?" the healer asked, kneeling next to the still thrashing and bloody body.

"She appeared in the great hall not ten minutes ago, before that she was unknown to us," Rainion said, trying to calm her movements.

"It can't have started then, the spell is too powerful. If only we knew the spell's purpose and why she is reacting in such a manner. But alas we do not have that information..." the healer whispered to himself as his frail hands pushed Samantha's limbs down with surprising force. Suddenly she went completely still. For a few seconds nothing happened, but soon Samantha lurched forward, a point of intense light forming at her chest.

"Get away!" shouted the healer as soon as he realized what was happening. Once the words had escaped his lips, every single being was running as fast as their legs could carry them. The booming explosion that rocked the palace moments after gave a whole new meaning to spontaneous combustion. A few moments later, when the light from the explosion could no longer be seen and the tremendous sound it had caused was down to a low throb, the healer and the twins returned. They found her lasting on the floor, entirely whole, but changed. Her features had been altered by the explosion, but not in a manner that would have been expected. They were finer, more delicate than before, and her ears...

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Samantha awoke to an eerie sense of disorientation. She felt a soft mattress beneath her and silken cloth covering her body, but wasn't she supposed to be on a camping trip? Her eyes shot open as the realization dawned on her. The rock had brought her here. Cautiously she examined the extensively put simply decorated room. Ivory walls were graced by the shining gold that contorted itself into nearly Celtic designs all over the walls and ceiling.

"God, my head hurts!" she exclaimed as she tried to rise from the bed. On the edge of her field of vision a figure appeared. She had silver hair and wore a plain brown cotton dress. The thing is, despite her hair color, she looked very young, maybe in her early twenties.

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Today was the anniversary of the birth of Meldamiriel, and a grand party was set up. Flowers were placed in garlands all over the palace, some even floating in the pond and fountains. Everyone was wearing their best robes. Samantha felt quite lost in all the cheer. Yes, she knew the little birthday girl, but she was not used to a party this... grand. There was supposed to be a feast and then a ball starting at 3 o'clock. Of course Rainion had not given her the day off, neither had Ethyarion. While people all around her were preparing for the festivities of the afternoon, she was running down the hallway to the library as to not be late for her lesson.

"Sorry I'm late," she blurted through her panting as she entered the library. Rainion was already sitting down at the table, flipping the pages of the tome they had started the day before.

"Sit," he said simply as she executed his orders.

"So, what exciting part of history are you going to force down my throat today?" she asked as she gave a glare full of venom and boredom towards the book.

"First you have to remember that I don't exactly enjoy this either, it's my duty to instruct you in this.

Second, we are not learning history today, we are going to tread on the more delicate subject of public etiquette.” He said politely.

“Aw, do we have to? I kind of want to learn history now...” Samantha whined reluctant to learn the elven manners. They were so complicated.

“Yes, this is your first public appearance other than training, and that doesn’t really count. I know you hate it but you are going to have to learn it eventually.” Rainion said, his speech returning to its casual form.

“So, who was watching us?” asked Samantha once she caught the switch.

“Some courtesan... I don’t know her though. So back to manners...” said Rainion.

“What? I still have to learn them, they weren’t an act?” Samantha uttered in outrage.

“Well, it does seem so, doesn’t it? What I said about tonight being your first public appearance is true,” he said with a mocking smile as Samantha pouted in an effort to change his mind. “There are some things you need to know. The first being the Kalkukki juice...”

“What’s that?” she answered back with feigned interest.

“It’s an extremely powerful alcohol that everyone has to drink on the celebration of the birth of the Royal family. You are sixteen years old right?” he said.

“Yes, and I don’t drink alcohols,” Samantha said bluntly.

“You don’t really have a choice. Either you drink it or your head is kindly separated from the rest of you. And trust me Breiadanwen will have no second thoughts about sending you there.” Rainion said, his voice brimming with sarcasm.

“I’d like to keep my head please. Why did you tell me this? I probably would not have noticed if you hadn’t told me.” Samantha said with renewed interest.

“For two reasons, the first being that the juice would knock you out cold. The second being that you can’t let it do that to you, the people believe that the people who can survive the drink are mentally and physically strong. And if you are going to gain any support from them you need to stay conscious.”

“So I’m guessing you survived it.”

“No, I was unconscious for six hours after my first sip.” Rainion said, smiling at the shocked face Samantha made. “I was four then, it took me three years to gain some control over its effects.”

“Okay, so this is going to be much harder than I thought... any thing else I need to know?” Samantha asked, dreading the feast.

“Only one thing, you’re late for your training.” Rainion said with an innocent smile.

“That’s your fault and you know it,” Samantha said, feigning a menacing glare.

“You are late.” Ethyarion said with his usual bluntness. He was not a man of many words, but he sure knew how to torture a girl.

“I know, the lesson took longer than we had expected.” Samantha said with humility.

“Twenty five laps, now!” he shouted as Samantha kicked herself into gear. The warm up was probably the worst part of training, and he had added five laps to it! Ethyarion was a cruel, cruel man. In her mind an image of him enduring the boring life of a rich lady danced around her thoughts, making her laugh out loud.

“This is not supposed to be fun! Want more laps?” Ethyarion shouted as he heard her laughs.

“No sir!” she answered back as she sped up. Cruel man indeed.

Once she finished her nearly 6 mile warm up she walked towards the training area. Surprisingly enough she was not all that tired, she was starting to get used to this torture.

“What weapon are we going to use today?” asked Samantha as she approached Ethyarion.

“It’s a holiday, you pick,” he said. What a present! Samantha thought to herself. Oh well, might as well make the best of it. Slowly she walked into the weapons shed and looked around for a weapon that

looked easy enough to handle. Suddenly a red ribbon caught her attention. Attached to it was a huge weapon, nearly her size in lengths and two blades that but butchers knives and swords to shame. "Double-bladed sword, you like it?" Ethyarion asked as he walked in, putting away two swords, probably the weapons he used to torture- I mean train- his previous victim. Samantha was unsure what to say. You could never know how he would react. That's probably why he has made it this far in the army. "Elves are too light to be able to wield such a weapon with ease. But you might be able to. Pick it up."

"Okay," Samantha mumbled as she reached out to the massive weapon. She stumbled a little at its weight... okay a lot. The thing could easily make a good 50 pounds.

"Come, we shall train." Ethyarion said as he stepped into the blinding sunlight. She walked out behind him. As the sun hit the blades, she notices the strange symbols running down them. On each side of both blades there was the universal symbol of Herr, the sun with it's waving sunbeams stretching away. Then there was an odd script scrawling down from the sun to the tip of the blade. Each side was different.

"Where do you come from?" Samantha asked to the blade under her breath.

"No one knows, it's always been there. Many have tried to master it, including me, none have."

Ethyarion said. A smile then appeared on Samantha's lips. This was something Ethyarion hadn't been able to do. Would he finally let her relax if she managed it? It was worth a try.

"How do you hold it?" Samantha asked, her hands trying to find a not awkward position on the handle.

"No one knows that either, you have to figure it out on your own." Ethyarion said as he charged towards her, his two swords twirling in all directions.

Samantha managed a startled cry before holding her weapon in front of her in a mad attempt at protecting herself. The blows didn't come. Normally by now she'd already have some sort of injury, but... nothing.

"Release your shield." Ethyarion said simply as Samantha opened her eyes. What shield? She asked herself, but the answer soon became clear. She was standing inside a shimmering blue bubble. She stretched her hand out to touch its surface, it went right through. A strange feeling of nostalgia and fear came over her as she remembered the white rock in the human world. How do I release this thing? She wondered, but the shield was gone before she could answer.

"Okay... that was weird," she said to herself as the outside world suddenly became clear, the blue haze no longer covering if fro her eyes. Suddenly the flat of a sword hit the muscle behind her lower leg with a vicious slap. She turned around to see Ethyarion lunging at her again, from a different angle. She barely managed to dodge the blow before another shield sprung from the ground.

"Release the shield, and watch your back when it disappears." Ethyarion said, a hint of frustration in his voice. Okay, I got rid of it last time. What did I say? How did I release- thought Samantha, but the shield has disappeared as soon as the word release had been uttered. Okay, so I figured out how to get rid of it. Now, how to stop creating it... to tell the truth she had no idea how any of this was happening in the first place. But she was saved from that dilemma by Merilwen who walked onto the training grounds.

"Miss Samantha, you should get ready for the feast now." She said as Samantha stretched out her muscles.

"I guess I have to go..." Samantha said, suggesting that training had ended.

"Fine, go." Ethyarion said, finalizing her statement.

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It was now nearly three o'clock. People had started filling into the dinning area. The soft rustling of silk could be heard from every direction.

"Are you sure I need to go in there? I mean, what if I trip and make a fool of myself?" Samantha asked Merilwen.



“Go, you have to eventually, might as well go now, than later. There are less people that you can make fun of yourself in front of now.” Merilwen said shrugging her shoulders. Both women were wearing dresses. Merilwen wore a beige cotton one with embroidered ivy climbing up it, her hair was let loose of it’s leather tie. Samantha was wearing a backless and formfitting silk dress that was nearly the blue of her eyes. Her hair was also let loose, but she had a simple silver chair with a teardrop sapphire crowning her head. She looked absolutely stunning... that is she would if she stopped hiding behind Merilwen.

“But I don’t like wearing dresses... they are so... annoying,” Samantha said as Merilwen dragged her down the main stairs and towards the stairs leading to the royal family’s tables.

“You’re already halfway there, what do you have to loose?”

“My dignity.” Samantha retorted.

“Just go!” Merilwen said as she shoved Samantha up the stairs and towards her seat. As Samantha walked towards the empty seat next to Rainion, heads turned to get a better look at the beautiful golden haired girl. Samantha promptly sat down and sunk in her chair.

“I hate parties.” She said bluntly as her arms crossed on her chest.

“You’re not the only one.” Rainion said beside her. He was dressed in green velvet pants, and embroidered white silk shirt, a green velvet jacket and green-dyed, leather boots. He looked just as miserable as her.

“I didn’t know that beneath all that male clothing a tanned skin, we had a beautiful flower.”

Beriodanwen said as she sat herself in the smaller throne, her deep purple velvet gown and golden jewelry fitting perfectly with the golden ornamentation on the throne. Almost as if it was planned, which it probably was. The woman almost never did something spontaneously. Veryamorcon followed suit, sifting to find a comfortable position in all the velvet and silk piled upon him.

Soon everybody was sitting down in their seat, talking to their neighbors about unimportant things like harvest, gold, and how they wished they were somewhere else. In the distance a dozen instruments started to play a cheerful song that gave the impression of running through a meadow on the back of a pony- a childish tune that Meldamiriel had probably chosen for the occasion. Everyone quieted immediately and hundreds of heads turned towards the balcony above the royal dining area.

Meldamiriel stood there, dressed in a rose silk gown with silver flowers creeping up the fabric. Her hair was done with elaborate precision with chains of pearls and diamonds strung across it. The petals of all the flowers from the meadow in the song were being thrown down the staircase before her and a cheer rose from the crowd.

“Are birthdays all like this, or is this one too simple?” whispered Samantha to Rain ion.

“No, Miri loves to be the center of attention, so she gets the most extravagant parties. Notice how no one is wearing anything remotely like she is. There was a rule on having pearls, diamonds and the color pink issued to all who cared. She loves being up there.” Rainion whispered back. He really hated parties.

Beriodanwen stood up and spoke to the crowd as Meldamiriel sat down, “We are here to celebrate the 8th year that this young girls has graced our lives with her presence. We are here to celebrate Meldamiriel!” Servants were now bringing drinks around. The common people received distilled wine, while the royal house received the dreaded Kalkukki juice. “We now drink for the well being of Meldamiriel!” Beriodanwen finished and sat back down.

“All in one gulp...” whispered Rainion as everybody picked up their glass and swallowed their drinks. The juice seared her throat as it went down; it became increasingly painful as time passed by, the drink burning its way down to her stomach.

“Just try to stay conscious,” Rainion said, but he was just a faint whisper under the buzzing that her ears were producing. On his side Rainion was also struggling. He wasn’t like his brother, who could take down several glasses of the stuff without feeling it’s effects. The Kalkukki plant was a wonder of

nature, in a twisted way; it affected the healthy and strong more than the sick and weak. Soon food was brought over, it's enticing aroma now sickening. To be polite Samantha forced a couple morsels down her throat, but could not manage much more. After an hour Samantha managed to regain some composure... and most of all, feeling in her extremities. People had started to move towards the Great Hall, where the ball was going to take place, and she followed suit. She knew that she wouldn't eat more anyways. Vaguely she felt Rainion get up behind her.

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Rainion awoke with a start. He felt Beriadanwen's furious energy rushing towards him. Slowly he walked over to the sofa perpendicular to his and shook Samantha awake.

"Wake up! Sam!" he whispered into her ear.

"Uuh... ten more minutes please..." Samantha answered back, still asleep.

"No time, wake up!" she whispered, more urgently this time.

"Fine, what do you want?" Samantha said, sensing his urgency.

"Remember what I taught you last night? Try it out now. Beriadanwen is coming for me and you need to hide. Your cloaking and the ring should be enough to hide you completely. Once your magic is cloaked go hide in Veronwë's bedroom and wait until everyone is gone. Now, Go!" he said all in one breath, pushing her towards Veronwë's bedchamber.

"What did you do to make her hunt you down?" Samantha asked, worried about Rainion's safety.

"You will learn soon enough, no go!" he said as he turned around and picked up a book. Samantha promptly cloaked her magik and hid, but not in Veronwë's rooms like she had been told, but behind a bookcase and a sofa, as to be perfectly hidden. She was just in time, for Beriadanwen arrived the moment she crouched down.

"Ah, so we have an early riser." She said, venom present in her voice.

"Only when I need to be." Rainion answered simply.

"Why would you need to wake up early? You do not work, or do you always scheme in the early hours of the morning?"

"I could say the same for you, it was your energy that woke me up. Murdered in my sleep is not exactly how I'd prefer to die." He answered back.

"Ah, then I will grant you wish. You will die publicly, as a traitor to the kingdom and all of elven kin. You tried to sell our kind Erdolliel, and said I was part of the Dark Ones too cover your tracks. The entire world will be able to see you fall from that nice niche you made for yourself in the world of politics. But you are too young, you would not last long. I will take you down." Beriadanwen said, an evil grin on her face.

"Ah, but I did not say in any way that you were of the Dark Ones. That rumor was started by my dear little twin. He happened across the tattoo of the spider on your breast when you were... together... and he spoke about it to his friends. Should he be killed as a traitor as well, or does an idiot puppet king fit your plans better?" Rainion retorted calmly.

"Well a cold king who knows too much is definitely not part of my plan for this little kingdom, but neither is your brother. This kingdom, if it can be called that, will soon belong to Siliwentolwen. Nothing you say or do can change that at this point. Say hello to your mother for me, last time I saw her she was

suffocating under a pillow. I'm afraid we didn't part on the best of terms, but I couldn't let the savior of the people mature to actually consisting of a threat." Beriadanwen said with an evil smirk. Rainion's face remained cold and neutral, but a flash of hatred could be seen momentarily in his eyes. His mother hadn't died of illness... it was all part of Beriadanwen's scheme to destroy Deslandra.

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The battle was raging. Both sides were probably going to fight to the death. No one wanted to let their beliefs go, they had been raised that way and nothing was going to change it. Rainion had been against having a bloody massacre but it was now his only option. Beriadanwen wanted just that, after all, she was better than him at blood spilling. She sat on the tallest hill overlooking the battlefield, as a priestess before her sacrifice to the gods. She was the goddess of death, Erdolliel, that she loved so much, and the world was her playing field. Not for long! A voice screamed in Rainion's head. Yes, you will not sit there for long...

"Shoot at will!" he screamed above the deafening roar of clashing swords and the wails of the dieing. A volley of arrows shot out from the trees and beat down on the advancing lines of the enemy. Sighing Rainion shot his load of arrows, killing and injuring the crowd. It was in the nature of elves to be at war, but not within their own city. This little battle would leave Deslandra vulnerable to anyone with a brain in their skull. One would think that would make us perfectly safe, they are becoming harder and harder to find. He thought sadistically.

"More arrows sir?" asked Voronwë, holding out a box filled high with he feeble sticks that could cause such damage.

"Only a couple... I don't want to use them all myself." Rainion said, picking out a handful of the dangerous twigs. "Veronwë, why are you here?"

"I wanted to help, lots of people do. We're taking up any job we can to aid you and your warriors." He said, puffing out his ancient chest in the universal symbol of pride.

"Just as long as you are all willing and you do not get hurt. At the first sign of danger, drop everything and run, I don't want any more people to die." In his head an image of people being trampled under the feet of burley soldiers was visible. Enough people were going to die already!

"We are all willing and I will tell the others about your orders."

"Thank you," This was definitely not going out as planned.

"Sir!" yelled a voice next to him.

"What now?" he retorted tired of all the duties of war leader, they were so nerve wracking. Even his cold exterior could not deal death to his own people. Why couldn't we have avoided the whole thing? It would have been so much simpler...

"Look..." the warrior said, pointing to the battlefield. Amongst all the silver and iron there was mass of gold. A string of rather elaborate and venomous curses sprung from his mouth, surprising the warriors around him. Who knew the perfect prince knew such insults?

"Is it her?" asked another warrior that had been attracted by the swears.

"Of course it's her, who else would throw herself into the middle of a battle without any back up. How long has she been there?" asked Rainion, worry, fear, frustration and anger mixing in his voice.

"I showed you as soon as I spotted her." The first warrior said.

"Thank you, Stop the arrows! Mobile weaponry charge!" he said all in one breath as he ran out into the medley of swords daggers and armor. Hundreds of others soon followed in his footsteps. Their force was miniscule compared to the masses that were against them, but they still fought. The force of archers was still in the trees shooting at anyone that came too close.

"What do you think you are doing?" asked Rainion when he made it to the twirling golden hair's owner.

"Last I checked... fighting, want me to check again?" Samantha replied, kicking a man in the gut at the same time.

"So, if asking and ordering doesn't work on you, what does?" he asked followed by a grunt as he pulled his short sword out of some man's chest cavity.

"I don't know..." She said quickly. "Duck!" Rainion barely had time to register her words and fall to the ground before she swung around, skewering everyone around her on her sword. The poor victims of her last attack had all looked up to the sky, trying to figure out what bird could be so important to scream out to it during a battle.

"Would begging work?" he asked, getting up while the next wave of attackers showered down on them. "Nah, I never really liked people who beg... it's unnatural." Samantha said as blood splattered everywhere.

"Would his life be enough to make you change your mind?" asked a cold feminine voice. Samantha spun around, wide eyed, to see Rainion being held by Beriadanwen, a not so nice sharp dagger at his throat. A drop of clear liquid dropping off the tip of the dagger informed all that she was using her favorite mode of destruction; poison.

"Maybe..."

"Rebel to the end, I see. Drop the weapon!" Beriadanwen called out and Samantha complied without a single protest. On the other hand Rainion was protesting silently, testing Beriadanwen's hold on him. He soon found that it was surprisingly strong for a woman who never seemed to practice, and he was forced to watch as a big, muscled man took hold of Samantha's wrists and held her captive.

"I'm really sorry, but I cannot spare your lives anymore. Samantha, you could have saved yourself if you had stayed calmly in your little cell, but now you are going to die too. Well, actually, I'm not all that sorry." Beriadanwen said, tightening her grip on Rainion. The man holding Samantha did the same.

"Since you so gallantly came to the rescue of your little lover and escaped your one chance at life, you get to die second. Your brashness will let you see this young man writhe in pain as his last breath escapes his lips. You like how that sounds?" she continued, her voice rising to a cheery, girly voice.

"No..." Samantha whispered silently to the wind, tears refusing to come out.

"Oh, a cold little girl aren't we... letting your love die without a tear on your part. 'tis a shame. And it is a shame that we have to waste such a beautiful young man, but you both have cost me too much. I will have a thorn in my side no longer. You would have been perfect in bed though..."

"I'd rather die..." he whispered

"I might as well grant your wish!" Beriadanwen said, as the knife dug a scratch into the soft flesh of his neck. Once the poison had had contact with his blood, his senses slowly disappeared. The world became fuzzy and light moved in patterns, almost like dancing.

Samantha watched as Beriadanwen let go of Rainion, making him fall to the ground. His eyes were half open, as if he was trying to see something that she couldn't. A soft wimper escaped her lips. He can't have died... he can't die, not yet, not now... not like this! A voice screamed in her head. Suddenly an immense feeling of heat coursed through her body. She started to struggle violently in her captor's arms.

"Calm down girly, you'll be able to meet him again soon..." The man said, laughing at his own little joke. "No... no..." was all Samantha managed as her struggles became increasingly violent. At this point she had complete disregard for her own safety, the stubby dagger the man had used to keep her calm digging into her shoulder blade.

"Beriadanwen! She's gone crazy! She'll get loose!" the man cried out, refusing to admit that a little girl could defeat him. Samantha was now pulsating energy at an unbelievable level. A blueish glow had started to seep from her eyes, making them look like lamps on the battle field. Suddenly the hold on her

slackened and the man dropped dead behind her, being too close to the power the reason for his sudden demise. Beriodanwen saw this and a look of pure terror flashed across her face.

Men all over the battlefield were now stopping their futile battles and looking over to the brilliant light source that once was Smantha. They all saw her raise her hand palm up towards Beriodanwen, and briskly turn it so it faced the ground and then make a fist of it. Suddenly Beriodanwen's chest exploded, hollowing her and spreading her gore over a wide area.

"Ha ha, you cannot kill me. I will forever live on as long as living beings exist!" Beriodanwen exclaimed, holding back the blood rising in her throat.

"oh be quiet," said a voice as the tip of an ax appeared in the opening Smantha had newly created. Beriodanwen fell forward, revealing Fjalar. "I knew you'd be trouble, but not to this point."

Men everywhere stood still for a moment, still trying to process all the information they had just learned. Samantha moved forward, towards the slumped body of Rainion, momentarily forgotten in the turmoil. Accidentally she stepped on her double-blade sword and all her power returned to its store house. The sword's filtering ability lending her control over her magik. She fell to the ground, unconscious just inches from him.

"Oh come On! Won't anyone help the beautiful couple here? Get a doctor!"

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Samantha woke up surrounded by trees. The soft gurgling of a stream could be heard not far off. Was it all a dream? She asked herself, looking around at the eeriness of it all. To tell the truth it was all too unreal to be true, especially that part about the phoenix. She had really wanted all the fighting to end, but a phoenix!?!? It was all too unreal. She pushed herself onto her back to get a more comfortable position.

"Ow!" said a voice she knew all too well. It was not a dream after all.

"So I am living this fairy tale after all..." she said as she sat up.

"Naw... fairy tales have prince charmings," he answered, lying on his back in front of her. "And they generally save the day, not kill hundreds in a stupid war."

"It was your only option, and it was your forced that won. Plus prince charming is normally a thick skulled macho man, and who likes those?"

"And those defenseless princesses, there's enough of them to populate a large town. It's becoming tiring to rescue them all." Rainion said, now with a smile on his face.

"Doesn't the prince generally kiss the princess at the end of the fairy tale?" asked Veronwë with a sly smile on his face.

"Who said it was the end?" said Samantha as Rainion dragged her down. His lips latched onto hers as soon as she hit the ground. One of his hands followed her arm to her hand. The other was already cornered under her, at the base of her back... a place it did not really mind being stuck at. Soon they had to draw apart for air, Rainion rolling over so that they were both lying on the ground, next to each other.

"I bet you practiced kissing like that with all those rescued princesses you had to save, right?"

Samantha said turning her head so she could look over to her prince.

"That was a very un-damsel-in-distress-like thing to say... plus didn't your parents tell you not to gamble when you know you'll lose?" said Rainion with a smirk. Samantha's only response was to sit up and stick her tongue out. "Don't show it unless you are going to use it..." He responded with a threatening growl.

"That was a very un-prince-charming-like thing to say...and what was with the growl?" Samantha said with a smirk to rival his.

"Oh, you are going to pay for that last comment!" shouted Rainion as he chased after his escaping prey.

"Only if you catch me first!" she yelled over her shoulder as she ran across camp, swerving around the

warriors polishing their weapons and men carrying bowls of stew. Shouts of “Slow down!” and “Watch where you’re going!” and a particularly interesting “Why does the Goddess hate me so?” were drowned out by the laughter of the couple as they chased each other around. Soon Tithae joined in, accompanied by a cry of, “No fair! That’s two against one!”