

All That For Nothing

McKayla Jacobs

**To Everyone with their heads in a book,
This is yours, It's the only life you get, take
risks, be you.**

~1~

I ran through the woods, well what was left. They were chasing me, they were right behind me. I kept running, I didn't know how long I could keep this up. Someone grabbed me from behind, they covered my mouth and pulled me low. They held my mouth until the guards passed, I knew who it was. He said,

“Nice to see you unharmed.” I exclaimed,

“Unharmed? You knew them. You knew what they did to the others, what they would gladly do to me. Do you really think I stand here *unharmed?*” He answered,

“You look fine to me, now let's move!” I stood there, staring at him. I took my shirt off to show him the taser marks. I exclaimed,

“Do you have any idea what they did to me? They tased me, they beat me. They tried to *beat the powers out of me*. They should’ve killed me!” He stopped and walked towards me, he argued,

“Your breathing aren’t you?” I answered,

“I don’t want to be! They killed my friends! The people we swore to protect! It was our job to keep them safe!” He exclaimed,

“I’m sorry princess, we can’t save them all!” I yelled,

“We didn’t save any! You fled, I stayed, I fought! You are a coward, just like your father was!” He clenched his jaw and kept walking. I could see I hit him where it hurt. We didn’t save our people, we let them down. I stood there, I wasn’t caving this time. I caved when we left our people, I stand for them nor. I called, “we have to go back!

There may be survivors!” He walked back towards me and yelled,

“There are no survivors! We are the only survivors and unless you wanna keep surviving we have to get out of here!” I could see the look in his eyes, remorse. I said,

“Finn, we have to go back! We can’t be sure that there’s no survivors!” He yelled,

“I know there are no survivors! Genevieve, I know you feel that it is your fault but it isn’t! It’s mine, I fled and you followed! You followed because you knew the outcome! You can keep acting like a noble leader but you knew the outcome!”

I knew he was right, there were too many of the guards. Even our powers couldn’t take them. He added, “if we want to survive we must keep going!”

I followed him on the trail, I stayed behind him. We didn't talk, we were running from something we feared most, a war. A war between the powerful and powerless. We may have abilities but we don't have enough powers to fight them. I asked,

“Finn, where are we going?” He answered,

“Somewhere for shelter, we'll make shelter.”

I asked,

“Is it safe to sleep at a time like this?” He answered,

“No, but do we have a choice?” I knew he was right but I couldn't sleep, not after being tortured for 3 days. He made shelter and said, “go ahead princess, you can sleep first.” I exclaimed,

“Stop calling me princess!” He exclaimed,

“You are the princess! Our marriage was supposed to be arranged, therefore you are the princess!” I yelled,

“I hate you!” He agreed,

“The feeling is mutual! I’m done with your prissy attitude, stop caring!” I asked,

“How am I supposed to stop caring about my people? I can’t do that!” He walked over to me and answered,

“You’ll make do! You’ll learn that caring only gets you killed! You’ll get us both killed if you keep caring!” I asked,

“Why do you care so much? It’s inevitable, we are going to die! In a war or maybe we’re just killed!” He shook his head and said,

“I’m gonna go get some wood.” I didn’t even acknowledge him. Quite honestly I didn’t care.

I hated him, before they figured us out we were about to get married. My family arranged for us to get married, since the day I met him I hated him. He's always been so cocky and convinced he was the best.

He wasn't king material, my family adored him. They didn't know he was like me. My whole life they *contained* my abilities. They've hid them, because I was *different*. When I came back he seemed worried, he announced,

“We have to move! Now!” I asked,

“What's going on?” He answered,

“They found us! Let's go now!” I stood up and started to run behind him. Something in my side shocked me, it took me back to the feeling of when they tased me. I fell to the ground, I looked at my

side. Something was blinking, a tracker. Finn called, “what’s going on?” I yelled,

“They chipped me, keep going, I’ll catch up.” I took the knife off of my belt and cut down my side. I yelled in pain. I could hear footsteps coming my way. It was Finn, he knelt down and took the chip out of my side and crushed it. He picked me up and threw me over his back. We kept running. He started walking after 20 minutes, he asked,

“Are you good to walk?” I answered,

“Yeah, I’m fine.” He put me down and said,

“You could’ve killed yourself.” I laughed and replied,

“Careful, your emotions are showing.” He didn’t find that funny, he kept walking. We walked in silence. I stepped in front of him and asked,

“What are we doing here, you and I?” He answered,

“Walking, obviously.” I rolled my eyes, he knew I hated when he was sarcastic. I asked,

“Why are we running? You obviously couldn’t care less if you live. Why run? He touched my shoulder and answered,

“You’re scared.” I stepped back and exclaimed,

“Stop doing that! You know I hate when you read my mind!” He smiled and continued to walk.

Again, I trailed behind him, my leg. I lifted up my jeans and saw it, it was inflamed and bloody. I could see Finn getting too far ahead, with every step I took I felt my leg get worse. He could hear me wincing as I walked. He turned around and asked,

“What’s wrong?” I answered,

“Nothing, I’m fine.” He replied,

“When I was carrying you, your mind was racing. Who’s Emily?” I closed my eyes at the sound of that name. He walked towards the rock I was sitting on. He looked down at what I was focused on, my leg. He announced, “it’s infected.” I replied,

“Yeah, I noticed.” He crouched down to my eye level and began to feel my leg. He felt around the wound, I winced as he touched it. He said,

“We need to get this taken care of!” I replied,

“I’m fine.” I stood up and continued walking. He grabbed my arm, pulling me back towards him. He announced,

“You’re not, I can hear it in your thoughts.” I asked,

“Why do you keep reading my thoughts?”

He smirked as he answered,

“You’re interesting, Genevieve. Your past, it’s dark isn’t it?” I mumbled,

“You don’t know half of it.” He picked my chin up from looking down. He replied,

“Let me in.” I moved his hand from my chin and said,

“Why ruin the mystery?” He answered,

“I’m not one for mystery.” I smiled, we continued to walk. He led the way, it was like he knew where he was going. I asked, “Is there a certain place we are going?” He answered,

“Not all of our people are dead, some live normal lives, some pretend. I’m taking you to a healer before it gets worse.” I asked,

“You knew some of our people were alive? You let me turn myself over?” He answered, “You did that yourself! You made that choice!” He walked towards me and yelled, “if it was my choice I would’ve killed you.” I flinched as he raised his voice. He noticed, he looked at me and grabbed my wrist. I tried to break his grip but he was too strong.

He saw him, he saw him beat me until I was bloody. He saw the guards taze me, he experienced what I experienced in just seconds. He yelled in pain as he broke concentration, I grabbed him as he fell back. I propped him up and asked,

“Do you understand now? Do you understand why I want to die with our people! That’s what our people have as their last memory!” He answered,

“Genevieve, I’m sorry. I didn’t know.” I replied,

“That’s the problem, you did know! You knew and you didn’t understand!” He nodded and kept walking forward, he knew I was right. While I was running and escaping I hoped one of their guns shot me. I wanted to die at that moment, I wanted to give up. I was willing to risk it all for our people. I asked,

“Where are we going?” He answered,

“I already told you!” I yelled,

“What if I don’t want to be saved? What if I want to die? What if I just want to die, want the pain to stop?” He answered,

“That’s not an option! I won’t let you give up, not now!” I yelled,

“That’s not your choice to make! It’s mine! My choice!” I sat on the rock and he walked towards me. He yelled,

“Get up!” I shook my head. He took a deep breath and asked, “are we acting like a child now?” I rolled my eyes, if I had to act like a child to get my way, I would. I yelled,

“I am not a child! I don’t want to live, what do you not understand?” He answered,

“I understand! I understand more than you know, if I have to keep going you do too!” I yelled,

“It is your choice to live! I want to die!” He grabbed my wrist and dragged me, and whispered,

“Sorry sweetheart, that’s not an option.” I tried to pull my arm away but his grip was too tight. I yelled,

“Get off of me!” He let go of my wrist and said,

“We're here.” There was an old house, he ran to the door and opened it. He ran through the house and yelled, “Alice! Alice, where are you?” I walked to the porch, I could sense the negativity. I felt the pain and suffering in the house. I could feel it.

I stood on the porch, I could hear Finn running through the house. I touched the wall, my hand started to glow, I could feel weak, I could hear screams. The light pushed me off the porch. Finn heard it and ran towards me. He asked, “what just happened?” I answered,

“I have no idea.” I looked down at my leg, it was healed. I announced, “I think I just absorbed someone's powers.”

~2~

He sat down next to me and looked at my leg, it was completely healed, not a scratch. I took a deep breath and asked,

“Is this even possible?” Finn answered,

“Think about it, you can manipulate energy, maybe you can manipulate the powers that linger from this house.” I felt overwhelmed, with all this power comes great responsibility. I felt a pit in the bottom of my stomach, I could feel the energy course through my veins. Finn asked, “are you okay?”

I took a deep breath, I could feel my head start to hurt. I felt myself collapse, I felt myself fall but then be caught. I could feel him shaking me but I could open my eyes, I couldn't force my eyes open. He shook me aggressively, I didn't know

what was happening. How did I absorb someone else's powers? No one has ever done that, as far as I know. It was like I was trapped in my mind, I couldn't open my eyes. I couldn't, even if I tried. I saw something, someone. As they grabbed my hand I woke up.

I woke up in shock, gasping for air. He grabbed my arm and pulled me up. I tried to walk and he pulled me towards him. He whispered, "take it easy princess." He lowered me onto the porch step, he sat next to me. I asked,

"What is going on?" He answered,

"I don't know, we're gonna figure this out, together." I asked,

"What's with the new attitude? I thought you hated me." He answered,

“I don’t hate you, I might not like you but I don’t hate you.” I replied,

“I don’t see a difference.” He looked at me, his eyes looking into mine. This was the first time that I actually saw this clearly. One bad thing after another, that was clear. Crystal clear. He looked away, something broke his concentration. I asked, “what’s wrong?” He answered,

“Someone’s here, there’s someone over there!” He pointed to the bush. I asked,

“An animal?” He answered,

“No, a person.” He stuck his hand out, my instincts told me to run the other way. Don’t be the hero, not now. I took his hand and we walked away from the house.

We walked over to the bush, he put his finger to his mouth as we walked closer. He looked

in the bush, I could see the look on his face, he knew who was in the bush. I asked,

“What’s wrong?” He pulled a woman from behind the bush, I could see the pain written on his face. It was obvious, something happened to him with that person, something painful. I could feel his pain, not emotionally. I felt his pain physically, I felt the eeriness of his pain. He was nervous, I felt the pit in my stomach.

When I absorbed those powers something happened. What powers were they? He had a woman in his arms, she had dark hair, dark eyes. She was injured, I could feel it. A sharp pain shot up my arm. I announced, “check her right arm.” He rolled up her sleeve, I was right. There was a bullet in her arm. He asked,

“How did you know?” I answered,

“I felt it.” I walked closer towards her, I felt drawn to her. Something was pulling me towards her, some kind of energy. As I stood in front of her I felt her pain. I put my hand to her wound and closed my eyes, I didn’t know what I was doing but somehow it felt right.

I felt an energy come off of her, I could feel her breathing slow down. I opened my eyes and moved my hands, the wound was gone. Finn asked,

“You’re a healer?” I answered,

“I guess.” He sighed. I asked, “who’s this?”

He was hesitant to reveal the answer. He put her down and she walked towards me. She stuck her hand out in front of me and nodded, as if she were telling me to put my hands in hers.

I hesitated, I didn’t know who this woman was. I felt drawn to her, her energy was strong. I put

my hands in hers, I could feel her pain. It was like I was there, I took a deep breath. These images, the things she was showing me. I couldn't make sense of it. I opened my eyes when the images stopped. I asked, "what did you just show me?" She answered,

"I did nothing, you came into my mind. You saw inside my mind." I asked,

"How did I do that?" She answered,

"When you absorbed the power from the house, you absorbed every person's power that died in there. Empaths, time controllers, energy manipulators, telekinetic. You are one of few that has multiple powers now. She smiled and added, "you are the key to this war." Finn asked,

"What do we do now?" I asked,

"Who are you?" She answered,

“I’m sorry, how rude of me. I’m Lilith,
Finn’s sister.” I scoffed,

“That’s hard to believe.” She smiled and
asked,

“Is my brother causing you trouble?” I
mumbled,

“You don’t know the half of it.” Her smile
looked like his, they both had a goofy big smile.

Finn announced,

“Not to break up the friendship but we
should get moving.” I walked but Lilith didn’t, I
could tell Finn was getting frustrated. He asked,
“Lilith, what are you doing?” She answered,

“I will not run, I will stand with my people,
dead or alive.” Finn yelled,

“You don’t have a choice, they will kill
you!” She yelled,

“I’m already dead! I should’ve died with mom and you know it!” He yelled,

“Do not talk about her! She made her choice!” Lilith yelled,

“She was protecting us! She loved us!” Finn asked,

“You call that love? She couldn’t even look at us in the face! She didn’t protect you like I did! I did that! I did it all, I helped you with your homework, I fed you, I bought you the clothes you’re wearing! What did she do?” She didn’t answer, I could see the hurt in his eyes when he brought her up.

I went up to him and touched his shoulder. I let him see her, I let him see my story. I let him in, I wasn’t sure why. It felt like I needed to, it felt like a force was pushing me to show him my life.

He grabbed my arm, as we went deeper into my history he tightened his grip. My life is complicated, messy and full of disappointments. I pulled my arm away, I felt something coming, someone. I could feel the energy of someone coming, their energy was heavy, dark. When I pulled away I whispered,

“Someone’s coming, we need to go.” He looked at Lilith, then back at me. He sighed in frustration. I stopped, maybe his sister was right. Maybe we need to stand our ground. He ran towards me and pulled me in the woods, we crouched behind a tree as we watched Lilith.

A man hovered over Lilith, he looked as tall as a tree. His gun in one hand, his hands were huge compared to the gun. Finn started to get restless, I could feel his nervousness. I closed my eyes and

focused on the gun, maybe my new powers could do something.

I heard something thud, it felt like it was right next to me. I looked over and saw Finn holding his head, the gun in his lap. He whispered,

“Do you think next time you won't hit me in the head?” I asked,

“You have the gun don't you?” He answered,

“Genevieve, you'll be the death of me.” I replied,

“At least I have something to look forward to.” I smiled, he didn't find it funny. I hate how he never lets himself have fun. He got up from behind the bush and yelled,

“Is this what you're looking for?” The guy turned around and yelled,

“Give it back, now!” Finn asked,

“Why, so you can kill us all?” The guy stopped looking at Finn, I closed my eyes and focused on my breathing.

I could hear footsteps coming towards me, I opened my eyes and the man was standing in front of me. I froze, he didn't say a word. Finn whispered, “what's going on?” I answered,

“I have no idea!” The man stood in front of me, he just stood there. He asked,

“What do we do?” I asked,

“Kill him?” Finn took the gun from his lap and answered,

“Sounds good to me.” I announced,

“They'll get what they deserve, they all will.” He shot the man right between the eyes. We all had to be trained to use a gun, that's what the

royals did, we were taught to use guns in case someone tried to steal our things.

We were taught greed and to abuse power. Now look where we are, they are killing people for their differences and we're just as bad.

~3~

We left Lilith behind, she wouldn't come and who knows when the guards will show again. I walked behind Finn, I felt like we were back to hating each other. He turned around and asked,

“Why did you show me your past?” I hesitated, I wondered what he saw. I answered,

“To get your mind off things. The comment Lilith made about your mom, I could tell that hurt.”

He asked,

“Why do you care?” I asked,

“Why do you?” He answered,

“I don’t, I couldn’t care less about you! I don’t like you!” I smiled and replied,

“You know you like me, you just don’t want to admit it.” He scoffed. I asked, “what did you see? When I showed you.” He took a deep breath and answered,

“I know about you dad, and the guard.” I nodded, he stopped but I kept walking. That was the only way to avoid the conversation. He asked,

“Do you wanna talk about it?” I answered,

“Nope, that’s kinda the reason I’m walking away!” He asked,

“Did you ever tell anyone?” I asked,

“Who would I tell? My father? Oh yeah that’s who we’re talking about! There was no one to

tell!” I could hear his footsteps behind me, he got closer with every step I took. He asked,

“What about your mother?” My throat started to close as I tried to answer. I never told anyone about her before. I answered,

“She was banished because of her abilities after she had me. That’s where I got mine from.” I added, “my father was so against it, he made me hide my powers. He tried *to fix me*, that’s what he called it.” Finn asked,

“Did you ever tell him about the guard?” My hands started to shake, my throat started to get tight. I shook my head, I couldn’t form any words. He nodded, I asked,

“Shouldn’t we keep going?” He asked,

“Why do you do that?” As I walked I asked,

“Do what?” He sped towards me and stood in front of me, he answered,

“You always shut down. Everytime we start to talk and start to get along you shut down!” I moved around him, I kept walking forward. He yelled, “Are you just gonna ignore me?” I yelled,

“Everytime I let someone in they leave or they die! Take your pick!” He replied,

“I pick stay! I’m not gonna die and I’m not leaving! There’s nowhere to go!” I turned around to look him in the eyes. He said he hated me and up to this second, I hated him too. I asked,

“Why stay? I wouldn’t! You didn’t want to stay before this, why now?” He answered,

“The more we spend time with each other the more we learn. I always thought you were a snobby princess, but you’re not!” I asked,

“I wasn’t the person everyone thought I was, because giving someone a second chance is like giving them another bullet because they missed the first one. I didn’t give myself the second chance I deserved, I gave it to my father. Now I know that he would shoot me in a heartbeat.” Finn said,

“I know, I’m here for the long run. I’m not gonna get up and leave.” I smiled but I said,

“We’ll see how things turn out.” He asked,

“Why can’t you just accept I’m in it! I’m this!” I asked,

“What is this? What are you talking about?”

He asked,

“You don’t see it?” I asked,

“See what?” He asked again,

“You really don’t see it?” He walked over to me and asked again, “how can you not see it?” He

grabbed my waist, he cupped my face and pulled me towards him. As we kissed I could feel his emotions and hear his thoughts. I pulled away, I didn't know that he felt that way. He asked, "do you see it now?" I smiled and answered,

"I knew you liked me." He smiled and said,

"I do." I asked,

"See, was that so hard? You could've saved all the dramatics!" He smiled and answered,

"I was always one for the dramatics, it keeps life interesting." We continued to walk, for what felt like forever. He stayed in front of me, I could sense something was off when he stopped. He didn't turn around to look at me, he just stopped. I asked,

"What's wrong?" No response, I walked towards him. He stood as still as a tree, he wasn't moving an inch. I put my hand on his shoulder, he

looked shocked and in fear. I kept trying to reach him, I kept trying to read his thoughts but it was blank, a blank slate. I yelled, “Finn!” He fell to the ground, something was wrong. He just laid there. I checked his pulse, it was faint. Guards came swarming from every direction, Finn stood up and walked towards the guards. I yelled, “what are you doing?” One of the guards patted him on the back and said,

“Nice job man!” He smiled and said,

“Restrain her!” I laughed and asked,

“Was it all a set up? Well, I gotta admit.

You’re good.” I put my wrist out and as they went to handcuff me I added, “I’m better.” I used my powers, I didn’t know how to control them, I didn’t want to control them. I wanted him to suffer, I wanted him to feel pain. I killed most of them, I left

him alive. I yelled, “It was all a lie! Everything? Did you lie about your mother too? What about the arranged marriage was that a coincidence?” He wouldn’t answer, he could even look me in the eyes. I grabbed his chin and made his eyes align with mine. I yelled, “answer me!” He yelled,

“It wasn’t all a setup! They were gonna kill my sister!” I asked,

“How long?” He didn’t answer, I didn’t know if I wanted to know the answer. I know that I needed to know, but I didn’t want to face that fact. I yelled, “how long!” He answered,

“The whole time, when we found my sister, I drugged you. She told me about everything. You didn’t get the powers from the house, you got my sisters and I’s. We don’t want to be in this war anymore!” I asked,

“You were lying, about everything.” I walked away, the more I looked at him, the more lies I saw. He followed me, he explained,

“The arranged marriage was real! When the war broke out your father told me to look after you! He cared.” I turned around and yelled,

“He never cared about me, he lied to you! I bet he promised you something, when word gets back that his guards are dead, under your watch. Your sister will be next.” I added, “that’s what he does, he gets you to think you're saving someone but once you do it, you’ll never live it down. You and your sister are as good as dead now!” He asked,

“How do you know that?” I answered,

“I’m the only one who has seen the monster behind the king.” He asked,

“Why did he want me to stay with you?” I answered,

“So when his guards killed me you would be responsible and he could kill your sister. He wasn’t trying to help you!” I sat on a rock and added,

“He’ll be looking for us within the hour, I suggest you run.” He turned to face me, my expression was blank. He asked,

“What about you?” I scoffed, at this point my father was going to find me either way. Why not die the hero? Everyone fantasizes a heroic death until they actually have one. Every hero is the villain of their own story anyway, so what’s the point of fighting it? It’s not like we make it out alive, we all die in the end. I asked,

“What about me? It’s not like you ever cared!” He yelled,

“I’ve always cared! I like you! I just.” I interrupted,

“You just thought of yourself! Did you think about what they would do to me? What my father would do to me?” He yelled,

“Do you know what they’re gonna do to my sister?” I answered,

“You got yourself into this mess, you figure it out!” As I walked away he yelled,

“What’s stopping me from turning you in right now?” I walked back, I put my wrists out in front of him and whispered,

“Go ahead.” He grabbed my wrists and pulled me closer as he whispered,

“Maybe I will.” I could feel his breath on my forehead, his heart was beating fast. He was nervous, scared. I asked,

“What’s stopping you?” He whispered,

“You.” He pulled me even closer and kissed me. I could feel his pulse in his hand as he held my wrists. I pulled away first and said,

“I can’t do this! Not after the lies!”

~4~

I walked in the opposite direction, after what just happened I couldn’t look him in the eye. He yelled,

“You can’t just run away from us!” I yelled,

“There is no us! Not anymore!” I could hear his footsteps trailing behind me. I asked, “what are you doing?” He answered,

“Following you.” I kept my head forward, not showing weakness or showing that I care. He asked, “where are we going?” I answered,

“*We* aren’t going anywhere.” He replied,

“It kinda looks like we are.” I turned around and asked,

“Why? Why are you still trying to risk your life? After everything! Do you not realize what you’ve done? You tried to get me killed! You lied to me about everything!” Finn answered,

“I never lied! I’ve been honest about my feelings for you!” I yelled,

“You haven’t been honest! You used me to get to your sister! You would’ve let me die if I didn’t kill the guards!” He yelled,

“Yet here we are! Alive!” I yelled,

“Barely! I’m barely holding on! The fact that you don’t see that is why we are having this conversation!” Finn scoffed, I yelled, “if there’s something you need to say! Say it! This might be

your last chance!” He looked up from his feet and asked,

“Last time? What do you mean?” I kept walking forward and like a lost puppy he followed. I yelled,

“Can you just leave me alone! I don’t want to be around you!” Finn asked,

“Will you ever forgive me?” I answered,

“I don’t know. There’s too much damage, you tried to get me killed!” Finn nodded and said,

“If you want me to go say the word. I’ll go, I’ll go because I can’t be selfish with you.” I took a second, I replied,

“Everytime I look at you I see the lie. I don’t see you anymore! You need to go.” I said it, I might not have meant it, but I said it. He nodded and walked the opposite direction, I watched him as he

walked away. I wasn't regretting the decision, that's what I told myself.

I remembered the way he kissed me, I felt his grip on my wrists, even though he wasn't there. I stopped at a rock, I need to stop myself. My head was throbbing, I had so many thoughts. As I sat I felt guilty, what if something happens to him? What if he gets hurt? I considered going back, I stood up but I sat back down.

He was already gone, I could feel it. The second he walked away was the second he lost feelings. I got back up and began to walk, I turned around. I know it was stupid but I had to know, I had to know how he felt.

He's been saying he had feelings for me, this is the ultimate test. Will he stay? I walked back and

when I reached the spot we left he was standing there, his expression lit up. He said,

“I knew you would come back.” I walked over to him and whispered,

“Shut up!” I kissed him, I needed him, and he needed me. I pulled away and said, “Let's go get your sister!” He shook his head and said,

“I won't make you face him!” I put my hands in his and said,

“It's time for me to get my closure, I will not let your sister die because of me!” He said,

“It's not your fault! Stop blaming yourself!” I yelled,

“It is my fault! All of this is my fault! The only reason my father started this war is because I hurt him! I lost control, my power lost control! This is my fault!” He pulled me towards him, while I

was in his arms I couldn't help but sob. He
whispered,

“This is not your fault! Your father started
this war because he wanted to control you!” I
whispered,

“We have to go get your sister! We have to
get her before it's too late!” He cupped my face and
said,

“Breathe, it's gonna be okay! We'll get her!”
I nodded and my head went back into his chest. His
body warmth was comforting and it made feel safe.
I asked,

“Is this another adventure?” He answered,

“Let's try not to get killed!” I replied,

“No promises!” We began walking through
the city. It was empty and abandoned. I couldn't
imagine this being the city I grew up in. It was full

of life, and happiness, now it's abandoned and lifeless. He grabbed my hand as we walked. He whispered,

“You okay?” I nodded, I couldn't form the words to answer. I grew up here, this was where I lived. Now it doesn't even look familiar. The house is torn apart, it's foggy and dark. Everyone evacuated when the war first broke out.

We reached the gates, the gates that kept people out, but also kept them in. I closed my eyes as we reached the gate, the light on the camera blinks green, I pulled Finn down and whispered,

“When the camera blinks green it's on, it's red for about 30 seconds at a time. We only have 30 seconds to get in.” He nodded. When it blinked green he opened the code box. He asked,

“Any ideas?” I answered,

“If he didn’t change it, it’s my birthday.” He stared at me, and I answered, “04/06/2002.” He nodded, it didn’t work. Two more seconds. I pulled him down. He asked,

“Any other ideas?” I close my eyes and whispered,

“04/08/2002.” We waited for the green light. When it blinked he entered that number. It worked, I closed my eyes, holding back the tears for that number. I get up and we run towards the door. I whisper, “I’m gonna do something you’re not gonna like.” He looked at me and asked,

“What are you doing?” I bang on the door and yell,

“Hey! I’m out here! I know he’s dying to see me!” Finn yells,

“What are you doing?” I whisper,

“When they come out, run in!” He yelled,

“Don’t do this! We’ll get her another way!”

I yelled,

“This is the only way!” The guards came from each direction. One grabbed my arm and said,

“Your father will have a big consequence for you!” That’s the guard, the guard we talked about.

Finn yelled,

“Don’t touch her!” I looked at Finn and yelled,

“This isn’t the plan!” He yelled back,

“I won’t let him hurt you again!” I closed my eyes and focused on the guard, I focused on his pulse, I could feel his grip tightening. The guard yelled,

“What are you doing to me?” I answered,

“I’m cutting the blood circulation to your heart, one more squeeze and you’ll be dead!” He asked,

“How are you doing this?” I answered,

“I control everything now, I can control anything I focus on.” He yelled,

“Stop!” I asked,

“Does it feel like your blood is boiling? Your chest is getting tight? Like there’s 100 pound on you?” He answered,

“Yes, make it stop! Please!” I replied,

“That’s how I felt that night, when you came into my room. You hurt me and maybe if I wasn’t a good person I would hurt you too!” I released my concentration and watched him fall to the floor. I announced, “I suggest you let me through!” They

let me through, Finn trailed behind me. He stood in front of me and said,

“I’m proud of you.” I asked,

“Why?” He answered,

“I would’ve killed him.” I smile, I almost did. The only thing stopping me was him. He asked,

“Are you ready to face him?” I nodded, I knew I wasn’t but I had to, now more than ever. I had to get his sister back even if that meant facing him. We headed down the hallway, we walked toward the cells. That’s what my father called it, where people went when they didn’t follow the laws. His sister was sitting in a cell, I didn’t walk past the doorway, I couldn’t pick my feet up. Finn walked over to the cell and looked at me as he asked,

“Keys?” I pointed over to the wall, they were hanging up on the little shelf. He nodded and unlocked the cell. His sister hugged him and explained,

“They came out of the woods when you left.” He hugged her and whispered,

“I know, you’re okay now.” I asked,

“How did you know my father took her when you were with me?” He answered,

“They told me, that’s when I needed to turn you over.” I nodded, I announced,

“We have to get outta here, like now.” I walked up the stairs and they followed, this place became a jail. Maybe it was always a jail, maybe it was always a jail. We ran up the steps, I let them get ahead of me. I needed to see him, I needed to see

the look on his face when I walked through the door. Finn asked,

“What are you doing?” I answered,

“You guys go, I’ll catch up!” Finn replied,

“I won’t leave you!” I yelled,

“You don’t have a choice, I will be fine! We came all this way for your sister, now you have her! You have to keep her safe!” He exclaimed,

“I also have to keep you safe!” I yelled,

“You’re not my keeper! I will be okay! Go protect your sister, I’ll find you!” He ran with his sister, I could hear my fathers voice. He was yelling at the guards to find up. I opened the door and asked, “are you looking for?” His jaw dropped and he yelled,

“How dare you come into my kingdom!” I answered,

“Soon it won’t be yours!”

~5~

He asked,

“What are you talking about?” I laughed and I concentrated, I concentrated on his heart. I asked,

“If the king dies, his child becomes the heir, right?” He tried to signal the guards. I yelled,

“You touch me and your precious king dies!” He tried to talk but I was squeezing his heart with my mind. I asked, “Give me one good reason I shouldn’t kill you!” He muttered,

“I know where your mother is.” I tried not to break my concentration, he just wanted me to break. He didn’t know where she was, he wanted me to break. I asked,

“Oh come on, you raised me better than to believe a liar. Do you honestly think I’ll believe you?” He started to lose consciousness, this is the part I’ve waited for. I heard someone, I knew the voice. I’d recognize it anywhere. He screamed,

“Genevieve, don’t do this! Don’t let him win!” I asked,

“What are you doing here?” He walked towards me and put his hand on my shoulder. He answered,

“Saving you from doing something you’ll regret!” I broke my concentration when he touched me. I yelled,

“Why would you do that? I almost had him!” He answered,

“You were going to kill him!” I exclaimed,

“I wasn’t going to kill him! I was gonna get him to end the war! Call off the guards!” He yelled,

“You can yell at me later but we gotta go!”

He ran and I followed, he ruined the plan but I know he wouldn’t have let me get hurt. It felt like we were running for hours. The cold breeze sharp to our skin, it felt like needles being thrown as we ran. We lost them after we left the city, we walked along a dirt road. Finn announced, “I’m sorry, I can’t stand you being mad at me!” I asked,

“Did you honestly think I would’ve killed him?” Finn answered,

“You did kill the guard.” I nodded and said,

“Yeah I killed the guard because he was a monster, and maybe you’re right maybe I would have. Not at that moment, I just wanted him to say

that it's over, no more war!" Finn nodded and grabbed my hand. He whispered,

"I'm sorry I doubted you." I nodded and kept walking. I could tell he still felt uneasy. I looked at him as I stood in front of him and said,

"It's okay, I forgive you." He asked,

"Why forgive me? I doubted you, I tried to get you killed. I am now realizing that I don't deserve to be forgiven." I answered,

"You've shown me that everyone deserves a second chance. We are all chapters in someone's book, some are longer and some are shorter. Some are in multiple, yet some are only mentioned. You and I have more than one chapter. I'm proving that." He asked,

"What if I don't have a book?" I answered,

“We all have a book, you just have to find the title.” He asked,

“Will you help me find it?” I smiled and nodded. He smiled as we began to walk again. I asked,

“Where’s your sister?” He sighed and said,

“She went back to the house, she refused to come with us.” I put my hand on his shoulder and said,

“Everything’s gonna be fine.” I put my hand back in his, as we walked it started to get dark. He asked,

“Shouldn’t we find somewhere to sleep before it gets too dark?” I nodded, we looked for an abandoned house or barn. It felt like we were searching for hours, the darkness set in and before

we knew it, it was pitch black. We found a barn after a while, completely abandoned. I asked,

“Where do you think everyone went? How could they just pack up and leave?” He paused. He sighed and laid on the floor. He answered,

“They're scared of us.” I muttered,

“The only person they should be scared of is their precious king.” He agreed,

“I know, I know.” I asked,

“What are they so afraid of?” He didn't answer, even he couldn't give me an answer. I rolled over, away from him and facing the door. I needed to watch the door. Eventually I drifted off into a dreamless sleep. The last time I had a dream I was 7, I don't remember what it was about but I knew I had one. Ever since then I went to sleep not knowing what was going to happen, would I dream?

Would I drift off with a blank mind? Every night I drifted off with a clean slate, a blank mind. When I woke up, Finn wasn't there. I walked out of the barn and there he was. I asked,

“What're you doing out here?” He didn't answer, he stood still. When he turned around I saw it. His hand covered in blood, he dropped to the ground. I ran over to him and put my hand on the wound. I asked,

“What happened?” He answered,

“I don't remember.” He was still responsive, but with the cut so deep, I didn't know if I could save him. I whispered,

“You can't die! You promised you wouldn't!” He cupped my face and said,

“I'm not gonna leave you, I'm fighting for you!” I asked,

“And I’m gonna fight for you.” I put my hand over the wound and concentrated. I could feel the wound as I closed my eyes. I could feel the pain and the stinging sensation. When I opened my eyes it was gone, his blood was on my hands, but that’s all that was left. Just the blood. He smiled and said,

“I knew you had it in you.” I asked,

“What are you talking about?” He answered,

“You needed a push, so I pushed you.” I asked,

“What are you saying? I’m about 5 seconds away from punching you!” He backed up with his hands up and said,

“I needed you to use your powers and be able to work under pressure!” I asked,

“Did you stab yourself?” He answered,

“Only because I knew you would save me, only because I believed in you!” I exclaimed,

“What if I couldn’t save you? What if you died? Who’s fault would that be?” He answered,

“Okay, I get it! I wasn’t thinking!” I yelled,

“That’s the problem! You have to think! You have to think to survive! All that matters right now, survival!” He asked,

“What about us? Do we matter?” I took a deep breath and answered,

“I don’t know anymore! I’m so tired of fighting with you! I feel like all we do is argue!” He asked,

“What are you talking about? We’re fine!” I yelled,

“No, we’re not fine! You just wanna believe we’re fine! We are not fine!” He asked,

“What’s the problem?” I yelled,

“The problem is that all we do is argue, right now, right in this very moment do you honestly think we’re okay? Do you think we’re fine?” He answered,

“No, but we’ll get through it!” I yelled,

“I’m tired of just getting through it! I’m tired of being patient and waiting for it to get better! It doesn’t get better! Look where we are, we’re in the middle of a war! Maybe this is the rest of our lives, and if I keep waiting, I’ll be very disappointed!” He looked down at his feet, this war, this is our life. We can’t fight a war with two people. He asked,

“So is this it? You’re just giving up on everything?” I answered,

“I guess so, you should do the same. If you don’t, you’re gonna get yourself killed!” He yelled,

“I’d rather die than give up!” I nodded and whispered,

“It’s your choice, but when you’re dying, don’t regret it!” I walked away first, this time I didn’t. I knew I couldn’t, we needed to be apart. I could feel his sadness, even when I wasn’t around him. The sadness lingered for a while, but it finally stopped. Meaning we were too far apart to even feel each other. As I walked it felt different, I could feel worry and anger. It wasn’t my feelings, I could feel someone else’s anger and their energy. I kept going, I wasn’t letting anything slow me down. I knew what I had to do, I knew I was the only one who could do it. I was the only one willing to do it.

~6~

I walked through the town, what's left of it. The ground dried into dirt, as I walked I could feel the emptiness. It was unlivable in these conditions. Most people had nowhere else to go. Just like the rest of us, no one likes to admit that we're all humans. We all bleed, some heal faster than others but we still bleed. We have the same emotions, in fact I can feel other emotions, maybe we are a little more different. Yet differences are the things that make the world. I got to the gates, guards standing in front of them, guarding them for people getting in. Or getting out. I take a deep breath and stand in front of the guards. I announce,

“I'm here to speak to my father.” They look at me, expecting something. I put my hands up and said, “Just a conversation. No powers.” They

nodded and let me through, I knew where my father was. I always did, his energy dark and evil. I knew that once I walked in this castle, I might not walk out. I stood before him, his face shocked, he never thought that his daughter would stand up to him. He asked,

“Why are you here?” I answered,

“To talk.” He looked me up and down and asked,

“Why do you think I would give you pleasure to talk with me?” I answered,

“I have something you want.” I pulled a stone out of my pocket. I asked, “Can we talk now?” He asked,

“How did you get that?” I smiled and took the necklace off my neck. I asked,

“Do you remember this necklace? It was in a box of mom’s. There was a note, it was a valuable antique. The note said it gets passed down by generations.” I added, “Here I am.” He asked,

“What do you want to talk about?” I answered,

“A deal.” He yelled,

“Leave us!” The guards left, he turned his attention to me. I began,

“I give you the Stone of Eternal Life, in exchange for you to never enter the kingdom again, not even a foot inside this town. I become queen and rebuild this kingdom from the ground up.” He laughed and asked,

“You think you can run this kingdom? Silly girl, you are to be queen, with a king ruling!” I yelled,

“I could run this a whole lot better than you!
Banishing people for being different! Disgraceful!”

He yelled,

“Banishing people who could harm us!” I
asked,

“Us? There is no us! It’s always been you!
There wasn’t a moment when it was you and I! It
was always you! You banished my mother!” He
yelled,

“I did that to protect you! I will always
protect you!” I yelled,

“That’s the problem, you’ll risk the world to
save one! I’ll risk one to save the many!” He asked,

“After everything I taught you, why would
you make a deal? With someone who could be
dangerous.” I answered,

“Oh father, the danger is what makes it fun.”

He raised his eyebrow and I announced. “Are you scared I’m just like you?” He got off his chair and yelled,

“You are nothing like me!” I nodded and exclaimed,

“Maybe I’m not. Let’s see, I’m not a coward like you! I care about people unlike you! I am better than you! I would be more fit to run this kingdom, unlike you!” He yelled,

“I hate to admit it but you are! You are definitely your father’s daughter!” I asked,

“Well then, do we have a deal?” He asked,

“What makes you think I’ll stick to it?” I said,

“Because you’ll announce to the whole kingdom that you will step down as king. I will be

queen and then and only then you will get the jewel.” He nodded and said,

“Only one problem, there’s no people for you to rule!” I smiled, he didn’t think I figured it out. I asked,

“Where is the manipulator? Did you honestly believe that everyone ran out? Manipulators can manipulate anything; space, time, land. Who are you using?” He answered,

“Go find her.” I nodded and yelled,

“This isn't over if you want the stone. I suggest you play nice.” He smiled, I walked out of the main room and into the dungeon. Where he kept his prisoners. I saw a girl, very young. She had her eyes closed and she was scared. I bent down, I could tell she was strained and exhausted. I asked,

“What’s your name, little one?” She didn’t face me, I opened the cells. She flinched at the creaking of the pipes. I explained, “I’m Genevieve, don’t worry, I won’t hurt you.” I stuck my hand out, waiting for her to take it. She turned to me, and I whispered, “You can break your concentration now.” I nodded as I spoke. Giving her respect, she closed her eyes and let out a deep breath. She took my hand. I smiled. I asked, “how long have you been down here?” She didn’t answer, still in fear. We walked out of the dungeon and into the main room. I could hear from a distance,

“Winner, winner! You found her!” I could feel her grip tighten. I whispered,

“It’s okay, he’s not gonna hurt you as long as I’m here.” She nodded. I announced, “What’s my prize?” He answered,

“She gets to live.” I pulled the jewel out my pocket and asked,

“Did you think of our deal? All it takes is you leaving this kingdom behind, you could live forever! Don’t you want that? To build another kingdom?” He asked,

“Why would I build another if I have one right here?” I nodded and asked,

“So you don’t mind if I just?” I placed the stone on the ground and put my foot above it. He sat up in his chair and yelled,

“What are you doing?” I answered,

“Well you don’t want it and I certainly don’t. Why not?” He yelled,

“You wouldn’t dare!” I lowered my foot and asked,

“I wouldn’t?” He yelled,

“Fine, I’ll take your deal!” I sighed and said,
“Unfortunately that deal no longer stands
but maybe next time.” He asked,

“What are you talking about? You said we
had a deal!” As I exited I yelled,

“I changed my mind!” He yelled,

“You can’t just walk away! We had a deal!”

I smiled and yelled,

“Watch me!” I ran out the gates with the
little girl beside me. When we reached the outside
of the kingdom I stopped, she stood beside me. I
asked again, “what’s your name?” She stared at the
ground as she answered,

“Alice.” I crouched down to eye level and
whispered,

“Well, hello Alice.” She smiled, and I began
walking again. She followed behind, not stepping in

front of me but not following far behind. I didn't know where I was going but to me it didn't matter, it didn't matter what I would find, who I would find. I was only looking for one person, one person who understood me. The only person who knew what I was going through. I was looking for him, him and only him.

~7~

I wasn't looking for him on purpose, we just walked. I hoped I ran into him. Yet I knew that I wouldn't just run into him, I knew that we had to want to be together. I knew that we had to find each other, we had to find each other, we had to want it enough. We had to want each other enough. As we continued to walk I could tell Alice was trailing behind. I asked,

“Do you need a break?” She shook her head. I could tell she was exhausted. I could feel her exhaustion. I crouched down in front of her and whispered, “I’m getting really tired, why don’t we take a break?” She nodded. I sat on the nearest tree trunk. She sat on the ground beside me, I could feel she was scared and tired. She was like all of us, she didn’t know what it’s like to run. She never felt this scared. I looked at her, she was looking at her feet. Playing in the dirt below her. I tried to open up to her, I tried to learn something about her. I asked, “do you have a family?” She shook her head. No words necessary, I changed the subject. I asked, “how old are you?” She mumbled,

“I don’t remember.” I nodded, I didn’t know how to talk to her. I began,

“Well, when I was a little girl I had this doll, I would carry it around everywhere. When I was scared, or when I was upset I would hug it.” I took the necklace from around my neck and placed it in her hand. I added, “this might make you feel safer.” She looked down at the pendant on the necklace, a stone. The stone. She smiled at me, the first time I’ve seen her smile. She looked up at me and whispered,

“Thank you.” I replied,

“It’s just me and you now, kid.” She walked over to me and sat in front of me, she laid her head on my lap. Trust, she trusted me now. I proved to her that I wouldn’t hurt her. I don’t intend to break that trust. As she slept on my lap I could feel she felt safe. I could feel her self awareness, she was worried yet at the same time I could feel her

emotions of safety. I let her sleep, she looked so peaceful as she slept. I felt someone coming, I could feel the vibrations as they came closer. I tapped her on the shoulder, I whispered, “we have to go, someone’s coming.” I began walking, she grabbed my hand as we walked. I began to walk faster as I felt the vibrations increase. We walked through the woods alone, it was dark and cold. I could feel Alice’s hands as her grip tightened. Her hands were ice cold. I crouched down and asked, “are you cold?” She mumbled,

“No, I’m okay.” I held her hands and said,

“Your hands are like ice.” I took my hoodie off and wrapped it around Alice. She put her hands into the pockets and we continued. I took a deep breath as we walked up a hill, the air stung my cheeks. When we reached the top of the hill we

walked back into the woods, the trees would be our best bet for hiding. Nowhere open, no fields. We stay where there's woods and trees for our best chance of survival. I sat on a cut down tree, Alice sat next to me. She whispered,

“I had a family before the king took me. I had a mom, and a dad. The king took me when we were leaving.” I said,

“I had a family too, not a good one. My father was mean and he was selfish. My mother was the most beautiful thing ever. Her smile was so bright in her pictures.” Alice asked,

“Pictures?” I smiled and answered,

“My father banished my mother after I was born. Only pictures, pictures were the only thing I had of my mother. Now I just have the memory of

her smile. You have the memory of your parents, you'll always have their memory." She asked,

"What if I forget them?" I sighed and answered,

"We never truly forget, our mind shuts things out. There will always be a part of you that will remember maybe not in the front of your mind but you'll always remember. Maybe it'll be when you look in the mirror and see your mother's smile on your face. Or your dad's eyes looking back at you. You'll always have a piece of them, no matter what happens." She nodded, I could tell she didn't believe me, she didn't have to. I know that she'll always remember, even if she doesn't know it. I smiled at her, trying to lighten the mood, but she didn't smile back. I sigh as I say, "we should keep moving. We can't risk being caught." She nodded as

she stood up. We continued to walk through the dark woods. Hearing the birds and the other animals gave me a sense of comfort. It was like being back in my room at the castle. I would leave my window open just to hear the birds. What's different is that there used to be music playing on the outside of the castle walls. I used to dance for hours, it was the city that never slept. It was live, and beautiful. Now, there's nothing left. I could feel Alice getting tired, she was slowing down. I asked, "do you need to take a break?" I knew she wouldn't admit it but I could feel she needed one. We sat on the ground, my back leaning against a tree. I took a deep breath as I let my stress escape. I just wished we could find him, although I wasn't looking for him. I just wished we would casually bump into each other. I felt myself slip away, I felt myself drift to sleep. I

tried to fight it but I couldn't. I was exhausted, I was hurt. I was mentally and physically drained. I could hear myself think *just for a minute, I would just close my eyes*. Yet we never just sleep for a minute.

~8~

I woke up in a bed, a metal bed with a mattress. It was dark, yet I knew where I was. I will never forget, this was 'punishment' when I was growing up. Whenever I used my powers I would have to spend days here. It taught me 'self control' is what my father used to say. He wasn't teaching me to control it, he taught me to hide who I was. I looked around, it smelled the same, it smelled like mildew. From the water damage, he never repaired it, he would let his prisoners suffer. I could feel the

memories flood back, all the hours I spent crying in this very cell. I rubbed my hand across the wall, looking for the initials I engraved when I was 12, I found them *GM*. Genevieve Maxwell, the daughter of the king, his prisoner. The one he despises the most for being just like him. I walked around in circles in my cell, there was nothing I could do. This is a sign of defeat, the sign that makes everything worse. The last time I was in this cell was when they caught me during the war, they killed everyone. Except me, he left me to live because he knew I would rather die with my people than live without them. I can hear him talking above the cells, his voice echoes down here. His voice lingers in my head, I can hear him saying, *you're worthless, just like your mother*. At the age of 12 I began to realize that I'm just like him, in his

vindictive ways, his narcissism. We're the same, we both will do anything to survive, yet I'll do anything to save people. The difference between the hero and the villain is that the villain will sacrifice the many and the hero will sacrifice themselves before anyone else. I hear something next to me, groaning. There's someone else down here, I close my eyes and focus on him. I can feel his pain, there's something in his leg. Something sharp, something stabbing him.

There's a tingling feeling shooting up my leg. I ask,

“Are you okay?” I can hear him groaning.

He asks,

“Do I sound okay?” I know that voice, I know that sarcasm. I ask,

“Finn?” I could tell he hesitated. It was silent for a while. I sat with my back against the wall. How did I get here? How did the world get

like this? Why would anyone start a war over someone being different? But that my dear, is the way it works. The second someone is different is the second everything changes. The voice next to me asked,

“What are we gonna do?” I asked,

“We? I don’t even know who you are.” He sighed and answered,

“I know you know my voice. I can hear yours from a mile away.” I smiled, I did know his voice. I could never forget it. I asked,

“What’s in your leg?” He scoffed,

“The tip of a sword.” I mumbled,

“Just like my father, always for the dramatics.” I looked around, for something.

Anything that would help us get out. I could see the keys, they hung on a rack across the room. I took a

deep breath, I didn't know which power I had, maybe if I concentrated hard enough something would happen. I closed my eyes and thought about the keys, I thought about getting out of this cell and the keys falling into my lap. I could feel something, a force being pulled. I could hear the keys jingle. I felt the fall on the ground in front of me, when I opened my eyes they were directly in front of me. I unlocked my cell, I could feel Finn's pain. Even when I wasn't focused I could feel it, I could feel everything and everyone's pain. That's the downside, I can feel everything. I felt when Alice was cold, when she was heartbroken that she had to leave her family. I could feel the anger my father held. I feel everything, even things I don't want to.

I opened Finn's cell, his leg was worse than I imagined, blood all over his leg dripping onto the

floor. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, I didn't want him to see me hurt. I put my hand on his leg and focused on it healing. When I opened my eyes the wound was gone, only the blood was left.

He smiled at me, I missed his smile. I mirror how he made everything better with just a look. The way he made me feel, he made me feel like I could do anything. He made me feel like there was nothing else wrong, like we weren't in a war. Like it was just us, like there was no one telling us anything. Finn asked,

“What's the best way out of here?” I answered,

“I have to do something first.” I added,
“there's a window, it has a crack in it, if you break it

it's a straight shot to the woods." He shook his head as he exclaimed,

"I'm not leaving without you! I won't lose you again!" I yelled,

"You don't have a choice! It's not safe for you here!" He asked,

"It's not safe for me? It's not safe for you! He won't hesitate! He will kill you the second he gets the chance!" I yelled,

"That's a risk I'm willing to take! I need this war to be over! The only way to do that is to kill him. I'll be heir and I will make this kingdom great again!" Finn asked,

"Are you insane? The guards won't let you anywhere near him! They'll kill you if you raise a finger towards him!" I sighed, I knew he was right but this had to end somehow. I answered,

“That’s another risk I’m willing to take. Heroes save the many, I intend to save everyone I can.” He exclaimed,

“I won’t let you do this!” I smiled and kissed him, I pulled away and grabbed a piece of wood from beside me. I hit him in the head with it. I couldn’t let him stop me, not this time. I whispered,

“This will all be over soon.” I walked away, leaving him there. He’ll be safe in the cell until I get back.

~9~

I walked out of the room, nervous but I knew what I had to do. I took a deep breath, if this was going to work I need to not feel. I need no remorse, no feelings. I walked out into the main room, I felt the guards stare at me as I approached.

The guards came closer, the closer they got the more cautious they were. My father yelled,

“Stand down!” They looked at him, confused. Yet they obeyed, they always obeyed. I asked,

“Why did you bring me here?” He answered,

“This is the only place where you would be safe. Believe it or not, you are my daughter Genevieve.” I exclaimed,

“I stopped being your daughter the second you started this war!” He yelled,

“I wasn’t the one to start the war! I promised myself that I would always keep you safe! When our people found out about you, I had no choice!” I interrupted,

“There’s always a choice! They are not *our people*, they are your people! Always have been, always will be! My people died on that field because your guards wanted a war!” He yelled,

“I didn’t intend for that to happen! They were there to get you and only you!” I yelled,

“Then I think you need different guards because they disrespected your order!” He looked at them and back at me. He could tell I was upset. I closed my eyes and straightened my back, *you never show weakness to anyone*. I said,

“I have a deal.” He sat back in his chair. He asked,

“Are you going to leave again?” I ask,

“Where’s Alice?” He rolls his eyes and gestures to the guard out of the room. He answered,

“Somewhere safe, for now.” I yelled,

“The only way for this deal to work is if I have her by my side. If not, no deal!” He asked,

“Do you not realize I have guards scattered across this castle? If you dare lay a finger on me they will kill you!” I laugh. I ask,

“Do you realize that I am willing to risk everything? I just want this over, what do I have to do to prove that?” He asked,

“What do you presume we should do? Pretend they’re normal? Go back to believing this lie?” I answered,

“Now, not we.” I looked down at his neck, I began to imagine it tightening, getting tighter, so tight he couldn’t breathe. He gasped for air. I announced, “it’s my turn to rule this kingdom and it will be greater than it ever was.” He gasped for air, I

watched his eyes get heavy. Eventually they closed.
He was dead and it's time for new beginnings.

~10~

I watched as the guards swarmed around his body. I looked at them with my eyes filled with tears. I muttered,

“He had a heart attack! We were talking about what was going to happen and he started holding his chest, he wouldn't let me use my powers to heal him!” One of the guards put his hand on my shoulder. I closed my eyes and said, “he wouldn't let me save him.” The guard hugged me, they believed my story. He whispered,

“It's all going to be alright.” I asked,

“What happens now?” The guard answers,

“You’re the heiress, it’s your kingdom now.”

I take a deep breath. I nod. The guards directed me to my old room, where Alice sat on my bed. I smiled at her, she didn’t smile back. The guards asked,

“Do you need help moving your stuff?” I asked,

“Moving my stuff?” The guard looked confused. He answered,

“I figured you wanted a bigger room now that you’re queen.” I nodded and asked,

“Can you move my stuff? I have something to do first.” He nodded, they began tearing my pictures and posters down.

It didn’t feel as good as I hoped it would. I killed my father, that will forever be on my conscience. Now we focus on the future, the fate of

our people. The fate of my people, the ones with supernatural abilities and ones without. This kingdom will be made up of diversity, all people are welcome.

There will be no standard of *normal*. I walked down to the room with the cells. Finn was probably awake and hated me, I did what I had to and I couldn't risk him stopping me. I walked down the stairs quietly, I could hear him breathing from the stairs. He sat on the ground, he didn't look at me as I turned the corner. He asked,

“What did you do?” I answered,

“What I had too.” He scoffed,

“You told me once that there was always a second option.” I exclaimed,

“That was the second option! The war was the first, this was the only thing left to do!” He shook his head and asked,

“What happened to you?” I answered,

“Too much.” I unlocked his cell and started to walk, before I reached the stairs I turned around and said, “do your head tells you, not what your heart does.” I began to walk again as he asked,

“What if they’re telling me the same thing?” I answered,

“That’s a choice you have to make.” I walked away, I could hear his footsteps tracing after me. He asked,

“What do we do now? Just pretend nothing happened?” I answered,

“You have to make a choice.” He exclaimed,

“I can’t do that! It’s not just my choice to make!” I yelled,

“I know what I want!” He scoffed in frustration,

“And what is that Genevieve?” I answered,

“I want you to fight! For us! I want you to fight for what we have!” He yelled,

“I can’t do that! You becoming queen changes everything! You might not see it but you’re a completely different person!” I asked,

“If doing what no one else would makes me different, then I’m different! Why does it matter? I’m still the same person I was!” He argued,

“No, the person I fell in love with wouldn’t do something like this!” I exclaimed,

“Maybe I’m not the same person, but I assure you I am a better version! I intend on protecting this whole kingdom!” He yelled,

“Maybe that’s the problem, you’re so worried about everything else that you haven’t taken the time to look at yourself in the mirror! You haven’t fought enough! Not for us!” I exclaimed,

“I’m tired of fighting! With you, and with everyone else! I just want something to be easy!” He asked,

“So, we agree? We’re done?” I answered,

“I don’t agree, but I’m tired of fighting! If you wanna leave, I’m not gonna stop you anymore.”

He looked at me, I wanted to kiss him. I wanted him to know that I loved him. If he was unhappy, he needed to make himself happy, I couldn’t make him

happy, not anymore. He was the only one that could make himself happy. He said,

“Give me a good reason to stay.” I shook my head, only he could decide to stay. Only he can make his decisions. I will not make the decision for him. He asked, “the hero will sacrifice themselves for everything. Remember? Maybe that’s the problem. You’re the hero.” I answered,

“Yet the villain will sacrifice everything for one person. Are you the villain?” He answered,

“Maybe I am.” I watched him walk away, another person gone. I walk up to my old room, Alice sitting on the bed. I ask,

“How would you like to live with me? You and I, the guards but only for our protection.” Her smile faded into a frown, I could tell something was wrong. I asked, “what’s wrong?” She answered,

“I miss my family.” I smiled and said,

“Well then, we’ll just have to find them.”

She smiled, I was determined to find her family. I need an escape, an escape from the reality I created. I left the room after that, I told her to get some rest. Tomorrow, I’ll bring everyone together, or at least try. When I was little I would lay awake and dream about my mother, what she looked like in real life, not just pictures. I wanted to see her smile, I wanted to hear her laugh. I wanted to hear her voice at least. My father always told me that I was naive for thinking she would come back for me. At times I thought she left because that’s what he told me. He told me *she doesn’t love you, she doesn’t want you*. Unfortunately those words stuck in my mind. Like any young, impressionable child, when you say hurtful things, that’s all they think about. Everytime

they feel good about themselves, your words are there to tear them down.

~11~

When I woke up I felt nervous, I was the queen and these were my people. *My people*, they've always been my father's people. It was time for a difference, a change of the way this kingdom was ruled. The guards came to my room, they stood in a line in front of me. I asked,

“What’s the next step to bring this kingdom together?” They answered,

“You’ll have a crowning ceremony, when you will officially be queen in front of the whole kingdom. We as your guards take care of everything, you just have to be there to receive the crown.” I nodded and asked,

“When is this crowning ceremony?” The guard answered,

“Tomorrow, you’ll be able to speak there as well. Speak about the next step in this kingdom.” I nodded, the guards left. To go plan I’m guessing. *A crowning ceremony*, my father had one before I was born. I saw all the pictures, he was quite young. My mother was in the pictures, she was pregnant with me, he smiled with her. What changed? They had me? Was it all a lie?

I went back to my father’s room, I was looking at his things. His clothes, his pictures, anything I can find to not feel guilty. He abused me my whole life yet I felt guilty. I found a box in his closet, it had pictures in it. Pictures I’ve never seen before, of my mom. Her smile, something about it made me feel like she was right beside me. Like she

was holding my hand and telling me I was going to be a great queen. Telling me that I'll make a difference, that's the goal. I went back to Alice's room to check on her. I knocked and opened the door. I asked,

“You okay, kiddo?” She smiled and nodded, I sat on the bed beside her. I smiled and showed her the picture in my hand. I whispered, “this is mom, well maybe was.” She smiled and said,

“You two look alike.” I smile, her black hair and blue eyes, my father had brown hair. I look like my mother, but I have my father's eyes. I said,

“Tomorrow I become queen, then will start looking for your family.” She nodded. She asked,

“Can you sleep with me? I'm scared.” I nodded, I got up and turned the light off. I crawled into my old bed. So many memories surfaced as I

laid here. She was half asleep when she whispered, “you’re gonna be a good queen.” I smiled, I could feel her drift off to sleep. I just wanted to stay there, stay with her. Stay in this part of reality not the other. Just be here, live in the moment.

As humans we like to plan ahead. We like to know where we’re going in life, but if we were closer to death would we want to know? If something was going to change our lives for the worse, would we want to know? There’s telling of me becoming queen is for the better or worse. I drifted off to sleep shortly after she did. I woke up around midnight and went back into my father’s room. I couldn’t remember the last time I slept in my bed. Those memories of all the bad times are what stuck, I can’t even remember the good ones anymore.

There were so few of them, we were always yelling and arguing. Something always went wrong but everything happens for a reason.

I woke in the morning ready to face reality. I was their queen, I had to take responsibility, feelings aside. The guards stood before me, waiting while I got dressed. I came out of the room in a beautiful purple ball gown dress, dark purple. One of the guards asked,

“Are you ready for this?” I smiled and answered,

“As ready as I’ll ever be.” They nodded and walked me outside, hundreds of people gathered around the front of the castle. There were so many people, some scared. I could feel all the emotions, they were strong but I’m stronger. One of the guards announced,

“I present Queen Genevieve Maxwell of Achabia.” I smiled as everyone clapped. I walked in front of the guards and began,

“Hello everyone, I wanted to thank you for coming to this today. It means the world that I get to stand before you as your queen. promise to bring this kingdom to justice. First we need to discuss the split in the kingdom.” I could hear people mumbling in the crowd, I knew going into this that not everyone would be on my side but this needed to happen. I added. “Our kingdom has been at war, that is no longer acceptable! We will embrace our diversity within this kingdom! There will no longer be any discrimination between our people! I welcome back all of the people who were banished and or left this kingdom!” I know that this was being broadcasted all over the kingdom. I’m hoping

this leads to a change in our kingdom. I saw someone in the crowd, he was moving to the front. He smiled at me and looked me in my eyes. I smiled back, but when I blinked he was gone. He was never really there, I just wanted him to be. I wanted him to be there so bad that I actually saw him.

~12~

When the ceremony was over I went back to my room, it didn't feel different, I expected it to feel different and powerful. It felt the same, it just felt normal. What happens now? Do people come back? Do they stay in hiding? Only time will tell, maybe time is the only thing that can solve this problem. I lay on my bed, *my bed*. I just lay there, staring at the ceiling. Thinking, planning, what's the difference?

The guards came in and stood in a line in front of me. I asked,

“Did you need something?” One of the guards stepped forward, head held high as he announced,

“There’s someone in the main hall to see you.” I hopped off my bed and followed them into the main hall. Standing before me was him, Finn. I announced,

“Leave us.” The guards walked away, slowly. He stared at me, looking me up and down. I asked, “why did you come here?” He answered,

“You know the answer.” I shook my head and said,

“You felt very strongly about your choice before, what changed?” He answered,

“What changed was you didn’t follow me.
You just let me walk away.” I said,
“You decided to walk away, I was not going
to chase you.” He asked,
“Why not? Did you forget what we had?” I
asked,
“How do you possibly think I forgot? I
didn’t want you to leave! That was your choice, a
decision you made!” He sighed, I could tell he was
upset. I didn’t have to feel it, I could tell. He asked,
“What do you suppose we do?” I answered,
“I don’t know.” He nodded. He sat on the
ground in front of me. He patted the ground next to
me, I sat here with him. Just seeing him made
everything feel like it was going to be okay. He
asked,

“Do you remember the first time we met?” I answered,

“How could I forget? It was the day my father told me that I had to get married if I wanted to rule. He made me put on a dress.” He interrupted,

“The white one, it had yellow flowers on it.” I smiled and looked at him. I nodded as I said,

“That’s the one. I remember being so angry, I didn’t wanna get married. You hated me, you said you were only marrying me to be king.” He laughed and said,

“Well, not only to be king, I liked you. I just didn’t want my father to know that.” I laughed and asked,

“You liked me?” I looked at him, we made eye contact. He didn’t break concentration as he answered,

“Of course I did, who wouldn’t?” I smiled and looked away. I asked,

“Where do we go from here?” I answered,

“What do you want? What are you looking for?” He answered,

“I was looking for you, I’ve always looked for you, even if I didn’t know it.” I put my head against the wall and whispered,

“I’m tired of fighting, with you, with everyone. I don’t wanna fight anymore, I’m tired.”

He put his head on the wall and muttered,

“Me too.” I took a deep breath and added, “I’m sorry.” He asked,

“Why are you sorry?” I looked at him, then back at my feet. He added, “I’m sorry, I’m sorry for being selfish.” I said,

“I’m sorry I wasn’t more selfish with you.”

He leaned his head back on the wall. He sighed and asked,

“You know this is never gonna work right?”

I answered,

“I know, that’s what I was scared of.” He stood up and reached out for my hand. I put my hand in his as he asked,

“Dance with me?” I asked,

“With no music?” He laughed and answered,

“Oh come on, now that you’re queen you can’t have fun? Genevieve, have you gone snobby on me?” I opened my mouth, my shocked face turned into a smile. I asked,

“Oh is that what this is? Me going snobby?”

I pulled him towards me and whispered, “not a

chance.” He smiled as he put his hands on my back.

He slid one hand down to my hip, he asked,

“Can we just stay here forever?” I answered,

“Unfortunately reality has to set in

eventually.” I pulled away first, he looked at me as I

pulled away, he was hurt. He asked,

“Is this it?” I answered,

“It doesn’t seem like there is much left.” He

walked toward me and cupped my face, he kissed

my forehead and whispered,

“I will always be rooting for you, even if

I’m just in the crowd.” I smiled. He added, “looks

like we weren’t meant to be, but Genevieve you will

always be my soulmate.”

My eyes began to fill with tears as I watched

him walk away. Maybe we weren’t made for

each other in this life, maybe we’ll be together in the

next. I closed my eyes and left my tears fall as I walked back to my room. It felt a part of me was gone, there's a whole in my soul where that one person used to be. There will always be a whole, it doesn't matter how hard you try to fill it.

I walked into Alice's room, she sat on the bed brushing one of her doll's hair. I sat beside her and watched her as she got the doll dressed. I asked,

“How are you feeling, kiddo?” She smiled and said,

“I'm fine.” I smiled and patted her shoulder.

I walked out the room but as I walked out I announced,

“Get some sleep.” She nodded and laid down, I turned the lights off as I walked out. I sat on the edge of my fathers bed and took a deep breath, I couldn't wrap my head around anything. I'm queen

now, and I just lost him and this time afraid it's for good. I could hear rustling from outside my room. I walk out and see the guards swarmed in the main room, I slowly walk towards one of the guards. I ask, "what is going on in here?" One of the guards announce,

"An intruder was found trying to enter the castle." I walk towards the middle of the guards. I look at the intruder in the eyes, a face I recognize. A face I know. I ask,

"Mother?"

~13~

The woman stared at me, the guards still tense, ready to attack at any second. Seeing her, well in person, made it feel like a dream. I could never imagine her actually walking and being real,

it was always just a picture. The woman just stared into my eyes, I asked,

“Why are you here?” She answered,

“I heard of your father’s death, and the speech at your crowning. Good first act.” I smiled and asked,

“Why now? After all this time?” She took a deep breath and answered,

“Your father and I were in an arranged marriage, we only had you because we believed we were in love. After I had you his guards banished me, on his orders. Outside of the kingdom there are tiny villages of people like me. I’ve found family. I only came here to make sure it was safe for us to seek shelter and potentially build a life here.” I nodded and stated,

“I can assure you I will try my hardest to embrace diversity, not destroy what little of it we have.” She nodded and asked,

“How can you ensure that we will be safe?”

I answered,

“Unfortunately there will always be people who will hate others for their differences yet I will try my hardest to keep that at a minimum.” She nodded and asked,

“Are you one of those people? Like your father?” I scoffed,

“If you’re implying that I am anything like my father I assure you you are very wrong.” She took a deep breath and said,

“I apologize, I assumed since you were raised by him.” I interrupted,

“Your assumption was wrong. The only reason I was raised by him was because you made a choice. Now if you’ll excuse me I would like to go to sleep.” She nodded and as I walked away I heard her footsteps exit the castle. I went back to my room, my breath was shaky.

Seeing her in person, made it seem like there was no connection. When I saw her in pictures it made it easier to create a bond because in my mind she loved me. It is easier for us as humans to create emotions in our mind then to face the reality of someone not wanting us.

I fell asleep after crying, my pillow was wet from the tears that fell off my cheeks. My whole life I dreamed of meeting my mother, of her loving me and just hugging me the first time she saw me. Yet

she has a family and she made it clear that she's only here for them.

When I woke up I felt better, as good as one can feel after your mother basically wants nothing to do with you. I get out of bed and get dressed, I will not let her stop me from being productive, not after everything I had to do to get here.

I walk to Alice's room, I open her door slowly. She's still asleep. I let her sleep, I ventured down to the basement, this room had all of the history. It had the names of all the rulers who had control of this kingdom. My father, his father, now me. The bloodline goes back centuries, this kingdom has been in my family for over two-hundred years. I am one of the two females to ever reign in this kingdom, I will not let anything screw that up. Not even my mother, especially not

Finn because I know he would want me to be the best queen I can be.

I look out the window and think, what would life be like if she was my parent and he was banished? Would it be better or worse? I am who I am because of who raised me, we are all who we are because of who raised us. Yet is all that for nothing?