

Chapter 3



You make your way out of the castle area, but before you leave the capital completely, you agree to stop by the castle farm to meet Lisa and Don. They are the couple you who gave you a lift to the capital back when you and Mira first met. As you reach the farm you are greeted by mud and a familiar farm smell. You carefully try to avoid the mud by stepping on the stones laid down as a path. Mira just trudges on, not caring if she steps on the rocks or in the mud. She notices the look you give her. “What? The rain will wash it away later anyway, it’s fine.”

“Girls!” You hear from the direction of the main house. “How lovely to see you!” Lisa is carrying some wooden crates, probably to shelter them from the rain somewhere. She places the crates right inside the door of her house and turns to face you. She brushes away some of the blonde hair that clings to her face and opens her arms, inviting you in for a hug. You accept her hug and it feels warm and comforting against the cold rain.

“Lisa, how are you doing?” you ask, braking the hug and making room for Mira to hug as well. Except, Mira doesn’t hug her. She just smiles and waves. Lisa doesn’t seem offended though. “Oh, I’m alright,” she says, straightening her skirt, but there’s a hint of sadness in her voice. “Please, come inside. You look cold.” Lisa ushers you both inside and closes the door behind you. Both you

and Mira hang your cloaks on a nearby coat hanger. The cloaks are soaked, and droplets of water drip onto the floor. Immediately, you feel the effects of entering a warm room after having been out in the cold rain for too long. Lisa takes your coats off the hanger and disappears into the living room.

“So tell me,” Lisa says, making her way to the kitchen to put on the kettle. “To what do we owe the pleasure of your visit?” After taking off your shoes, you head into the living room. It’s a small, warm, room with an old looking couch and a grandfather chair next to it. There’s a coffee table in front of the couch, and a crackling fireplace on the wall opposite the couch. You see your coats hanging near the fireplace. Lisa soon appears with your shoes as well, setting them down by the fire to dry. The coffee table and floor are littered with little twigs and ribbons. “Oh, we just wanted to drop by before we head out,” you respond and take a seat on the couch. Don sits in the chair, reading a book. He looks just as you remember with his grey hair and quiet energy. He’s wearing some comfortable clothes for staying inside, including a knitted sweater you’re certain Lisa knitted for him. You and Mira both greet him, and he nods to you.

“You’re leaving?” Lisa heads back into the kitchen, and you can hear the clinking of glasses and water being poured. You explain what happened with the warlock and the curse and the journey you have to go on.

“That sounds like quite the journey,” Lisa emerges from the kitchen with two steaming mugs of delicious smelling, fruity tea and handed them to the two of you. You both thank her for the tea and you cup your hand around the mug. It feels amazing against your freezing hands. She grabs a chair from a small, round dining table in the corner of the room and sits down on it next to Don. “I am sure you will both be fine, but please be sure to always stick together.” Lisa furrows her brows, causing wrinkles to appear on her forehead. Despite her obvious worry, you were grateful that she doesn’t try to dissuade you.

Don, who had been quiet this entire time, stands up and heads for the wooden cupboard behind the couch. He retrieves an ornate wooden box with intricate carvings in it and goes back to his chair. Both you and Mira watch him curiously as he places the box on the table and opens it. Inside the box is a small bottle filled with some grainy, pink liquid. Don picks it up and hands it to you. “This is a Trailfinder potion. Pour some on the ground and it will guide you to the quickest and safest path to your desired destination.”

Your eyes widen. “Don, that’s very nice, but I cannot accept this. I’m sure these are not easy to come by.”

Don waves a hand dismissively. “I won’t argue with you. Take it.” You and Mira both thank him, but you thank him probably more than you need to. It’s important he knows just how grateful you are for this gift. He nods and gets back to his reading. You show the potion to Mira. “Look how cool!” you say excitedly.

“Yeah, it’s very cool” Mira nods, then completely changes the subject. “What’s with all the twigs and stuff around here?” She asks the couple. You were a bit annoyed that she didn’t seem to share the same admiration for the potion, but you let it slide. For now, at least.

Lisa looks around at the mess and sighs. “I was planning on making some nice wreaths for the holidays, but... I don’t know, it doesn’t feel right anymore. I guess now I know why,” she chuckles sadly.

“Please still make them. I’m sure they will look so nice! And after I’ve broken this curse, we’re going to have a nice Christmas party. I would love for you to come! And we can decorate with your homemade wreaths!” you say in the hopes that making the decorations will get her Christmas spirit up, despite the curse.

“Of course, I will make them for you if you request it, princess,” Lisa smiles, but there’s a sadness in her eyes.

“Only if you want to, Lisa. I do not want you to spend time on this if you do not want to,” you reassure her, taking a sip of your tea. You realise this is the first sip you’ve taken since you got it. It’s lukewarm at this point, but the taste of apple and cinnamon still goes down nicely.

“I will see what I can do,” she smiles.

You spend about an hour chatting and drinking your tea. You put on your cloaks and shoes, now nice and warm thanks to the fire. As you are about to leave, Lisa approaches you with a small bag. “Just something for the road,” she says, handing it to you. “I made a whole batch of jam, so I put some in a jar for you along with some homemade bread.”

“That is so sweet, thank you!” you say and give her a hug. You place the potion and the food in your bag and sling it over your shoulder.

“Good luck out there, girls,” Lisa covers herself in a green blanket before you open the door to let the cold in. “Oh! You have to go through Lavish, don’t you? Do say hello to our son, Jimminy, if you see him.” Lisa says a glimmer of hope and excitement in her eyes. She hurriedly goes and picks up another bag then hands it to you. “If you do see him, please give him this. I’m sure he misses his mom’s homemade bread. If you don’t see him, then you can just keep the extra food.” You promise her to give it to him if you see him. Which means you will definitely go out of your way to find him once you reach Lavish. Don nods a goodbye and good luck to you as you turn to head out the door. At least, that’s how you choose to interpret his nod.

With a final goodbye, you go outside again and make your way towards Lavish.