



Virtual Writers

CENTAURI ARTS

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The creative writing fragments, flash fiction pieces, poetry, short stories and rants contained in these pages were created by writers aged 9-17 attending the Creative Writing classes offered by Centauri Arts, between September 2023 and January 2024.

Cover - Sophie Mahoney, Digital Art Class

The Amazing Gift Exchange of the Holiday Seasoning.

(aka, experiments in surrealism)

By Owen Cheng

Blueford, Sliver of a Silver and Jom were getting their apartment ready for their party. They invited his friends, co-workers and even their next door neighbor. Jom was preparing the balloons and brushing his teeth. They made balloon animals that were hyperelastic. Frankly, the balloons were quite frightening. SS was making a flower wine. The flowers had been fermented for a whole day. Improperly, of course! Blueford was making a cake out of batteries. No matter, they got their cake done and the doorbell rang. Blueford was listening to pirated music, SS was smelling the flowers and Jom was popping a balloon. In short, nobody heard a sound. The doorbell rang again. This time they heard it. Jom opened the door and saw a massive cell.

“Well hello there T-cell apostrophe 789102385697.90. Did you bring a gift?”SS asked.

T Cell'789102385697.90 brought out a virus trapped in its body.

“Oh goody, another pet!”Blueford picked up the virus with tongs and stuck it in the drawer with all his other “pets.”

The doorbell rang again. SS opened the door.

“Hello sir.”SS said, “Did you bring a gift?”



The person responded, "Absolutely not! You guys are in my house and you will leave the premises right now!"

Jom said, "I have a gift for you! The gift of fear."

Swiftly Jom brought out one of the hyper realistic balloon animals and it chases the man away.

A floating moon appeared and knocked on the door. Blueford broke down the door with an axe. "Hello there Europa!" Blueford said, "Did you bring a present?"

"Oui!" Europa says.

Europa performed the whole entirety of Hamlet and then summoned a pearl. SS beamed and ate the pearl.

"Tremendously tasty as always." SS said.

Europa said "Of course! It came straight from a crab!"

SS looked quite happy and continued making the flower wine. Everybody else arrived out of the vents and literally from any other open space.

They all did a theatrical performance of a musical and everyone else had the same idea for a gift: a box with a present inside. The presents consisted of many things such as time, nuclear fusion reactors, quantum physics-powered computers, rocket ships, black holes and socks.

And so concludes the saga of the amazing gift exchange of the holiday seasoning.



WHERE I'M FROM

by Leah

I am from vanilla mint, the new car smell that never went away
Freshly cut grass, my father mowed, splayed along the driveway.

I am from washed out giraffes and old Pandora charm bracelets,
Worn out skates, painted with bingo dabbers, slashed with my
triumphs and failures

I am from her dark eyes, pools of midnight, her chubby cheeks, her
ombre to black hair.

I'm from my Grade 8 graduation,
This Halloween,

Each birthday will have Maria by my side.

I am from the skating rink with people I love,
The camping park where the lake is just narrow enough
To swim the length of

I am from my reading chair, worn with age,
My great-grandmother's.

I am from pride, when my sister or a friend wins,
Adoration when someone I admire talks to me,
Loneliness, on that one day when I'm all alone at lunch.

I am from early mornings with light filtering through my blinds,
The radio playing quietly in the corner, my mother's fingers on my
face.

I am from the words across the page that save me from my reality,
The gentle music that steals my heart away,
The keys that I press to create instead of destroy.

From discs that soar through the air
As easily as I breathe, I catch.

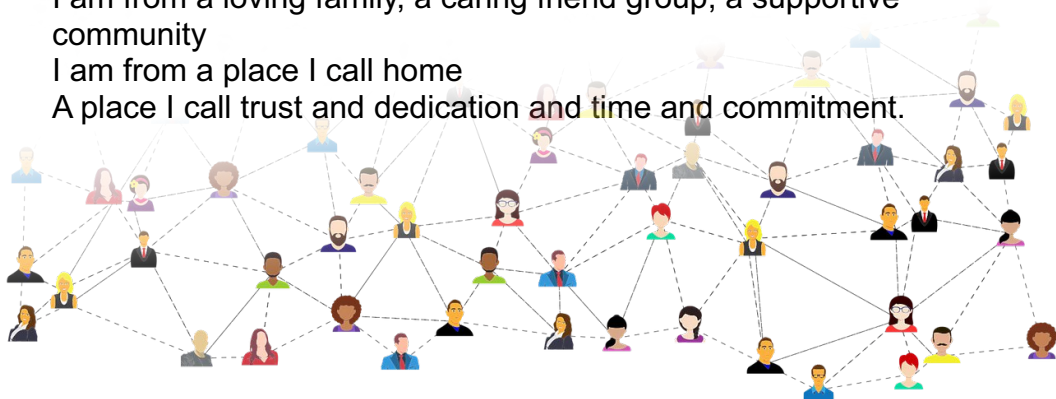
And throw.

And keep going.

I am from a loving family, a caring friend group, a supportive
community

I am from a place I call home

A place I call trust and dedication and time and commitment.



To Prove Oneself

by Leah

*Trigger Warning: mentions of violence (no gore)

When Chris came home from school they were all waiting in the kitchen, their faces grave.

“Chris,” Melanie said. “We need to talk.”

Joshua pulled a tablet out of his bag and clicked it, showing Chris a headline that flashed in red across the screen. *15 YEAR OLD CHRISTOPHER “CHRIS” JUNO ACCUSED OF FIRST DEGREE MURDER. LARGE REWARD FOR HIS ARREST.*

“What happened?” Joshua asked. “You were supposed to be subtle. Unnoticed. Undetected. Under the radar.”

Chris sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. “I’m sorry, Dad. I just got a little bit sloppy, I guess.”

“You guess?” Melanie asked, outraged. “This could jeopardize our entire career, Chris! Joshua, lord help me, spell out what he’s done wrong, because he clearly doesn’t understand.”

Joshua groaned and pulled himself off his chair. “Look son, I need you to hack into the press *tonight* and take these stories off of the board. If these keep circulating, who knows what disaster that’ll cause for the rest of us.” He stepped closer with each word, until he was looming over his son.

“Dad, I can’t hack!”



“Then find someone who can!”he fired back, turning to his family. His wife, his three children. These people are why he worked. He turned back to his middle-youngest son. “I want this done before the story goes wild over social media, understood? I want this done before this situation can get out of hand. The Juno name will *not* be ruined because of *your* rookie mistake. Go. You’re not allowed back in this house until you accomplish that –and I want the author of this article murdered.”He glared at Chris until Chris finally backed down, nodding.

“I’ll go gather my things.”

Chris ran to his room and grabbed his things before exiting the house, already on a call with his closest friend. “Yas? I need you to start hacking, ASAP. I’ve got a murder to execute, and then I’ll meet up with you at the Seven Eleven, alright? See you soon.”

Slipping a black tuque over his head, Chris took off down the street, his sneakers making no sound on the pavement. He ran a solid ten kilometers in nine minutes before he let himself into the ambassador’s suite and ran lightly to the room where he knew the foreign news reporter would be working.

Chris deftly retrieved a knife from his belt, the perfect one for this mission, and glanced over his shoulder, careful not to wake anyone else who was in the embassy. The last thing he needed was another witness to take care of and another delay in his meet up with Yasmine.

He felt a sinking feeling in his gut as he twisted the door’s knob, and his mind twisted in confusion as he looked around, confused, trying to locate the article’s writer.

The room was empty.

Panicked, he turned around.

Pain blossomed from his temple and across his head as he blacked out.

Chris awoke with a tired grunt to see Yasmine on his left, her mouth gagged and her hands bound. How was he going to explain this to his father? He was in the embassy, tied to a chair, and feeling like cotton was stuffed in his head. He looked up to see a man looming over him, his sleeves rolled and his hair slicked back with far too much hair gel.

“Glad to see you’ve finally joined us,”he said.

Chris couldn’t find the words. Or rather, he didn’t want to. His fingers were already silently fiddling with the chains that were

holding his hands behind his back. He nodded along with his captor and praised Yasmine in his head when she started stalling for him. His eyes were already appraising the situation, looking for weapons. He spotted Yasmine's computer on a desk and his own knives just next to it. Someone had looted his pockets. Clearly they were amateurs, as they had just left it out in the open.

With his bindings seconds from coming undone, he continued to stall for Yasmine as she worked her own chains with her own deft movements, setting out a plan in his head. As soon as he heard the click from Yas, he ripped off his own bindings and ran to the table, throwing Yasmine her laptop and one of his knives and grabbing the rest for himself.

While the man ran out of the room, shouting for help, Chris grabbed the back of his shirt and ended him quickly, tossing him aside. He had no idea who the man was, but surely he couldn't be important...right? Either way, there were guards rushing into the room, clearly having been stationed just outside the door. He and Yasmine fell into a quick fight with the five burly guards which was unfair to Chris because he hadn't been to the gym in over a week.

Rolling and twisting, Chris found himself falling into the rhythm of a knife fight, his body dancing of its own volition around the guards and out the door, quickly putting each of them out with a knife handle to the head. The last guard he faced was clearly more awake than the others, and put up a fight, but Yasmine was already out of the room, so Chris left and slammed the door shut, ramming it closed with a broom that was lying nearby.

Chris thanked his stars for it, but he knew it was luck and not skill that had gotten him out of that one. He tried not to think too much about it and followed Yasmine down the stairs, ignoring the banging behind him.

"Done!" she said, looking back at him. "I've taken it all down. I've picked up some messages detailing where the author and inhabitants of the embassy are looking for refuge. They're still moving, but they're providing consistent updates to our government so we can continue to follow them all the way to where they're heading."

"Thanks Yasmine, you're the best." Once they caught up, it would be easy work to take out who they needed to and escape.

Hopefully back to a family that wasn't *too* angry at him.

The Moon is Made of

CHEESE

By Isla

Leo knelt on his bed, staring out his bedroom window at the round moon. He shifted, rumpling his rocketship bedspread.

His mum walked in.

“Are you remembering what I told you when you were little?” she asked.

“Uh-huh!” said Leo, not taking his eyes off of the moon. “The moon is made of cheese, and every night, space mice nibble away at the edge until it’s all gone. And then, they spit it up to start all over again.”

His mum kissed his head. “Goodnight, my little astronaut.”

Leo shuffled under his covers. Through the thin walls he could hear his parents in the kitchen. From the tones of their voices, they sounded worried. Leo caught a few words like “mortgage” “insurance” and “bills” He didn’t understand most of them, but he knew that it was something about money. He peeked out his window and noticed a single star, glittering in the night sky. He sat up, clasped his hands together and closed his eyes. He whispered, “Star light, star bright. First star I see tonight. I wish I may, I wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight. I wish...” He opened one eye to make sure that the star was still there, and then closed it. “I wish we had a million dollars.”

Leo lay back down and snuggled up in his blanket. He thought, *I bet moon cheese would cost a million dollars if you sold it at the grocery store.* And then he remembered something that his big brother Caleb had told him. *If you go as high as you can on the swing, and then jump off, you’ll touch the moon!* And he got an amazing idea.



The next night, Leo crept out of bed. He snuck around the house, grabbing everything he needed. A belt with seven pouches on it, his mum's white bathrobe, and his dad's plastic fruit salad bowl, which he taped around his head with duct tape. Then, he tiptoed into his older brother's room. He shook the lump that he assumed was Caleb. A mop of dark brown curls poked out of the top of the cocoon of blankets, followed by a groan. Caleb's hair was always messy, but it was especially ruffled after just getting out of bed.

Leo whispered, "Come with me! It's a great adventure!" He dragged a reluctant Caleb out of bed and outside. The two boys crawled under the fence separating their backyard and their neighbor's. They stood up in front of their neighbor's swing set.

"Leo, we're gonna get in trouble!" hissed Caleb.

Leo put a finger to his lips. "Mr. Deer doesn't mind if we use it during the day. What's the difference if we use it at night?"

Caleb shrugged and whispered, "Makes sense."

Leo pulled on the bathrobe and belt. Caleb held up a mirror. "Wow! I look like a real astronaut!" cried Leo. He sat down on the swingset. "Caleb, I want you to push me into outer space!"

"Why?" asked Caleb.

"Because I want to get some moon cheese and sell it for a million dollars!"

Caleb snickered. "Okay!" and he began to push.

Leo pumped his legs back and forth, and he got higher and higher. The moon was so close, Leo could smell its cheesiness. He let go. He sailed into the air. Distantly, he heard his brother scream. "Leo! The moon isn't made of cheese!!!" That couldn't be right. His mum had told him the moon was made of cheese! Mums didn't lie. But the moon was still so far. He reached out to touch it. And then he fell. Down, down, down. And everything went dark.

When Leo opened his eyes, everything looked fuzzy.

"Oh good. He's awake." The voices sounded like they were underwater. His vision cleared and he saw his parents looking down at him with concerned faces.

"Oh, my baby!" His mum leaned down and hugged him.

"Where am I? What happened?"

His dad stepped forward. "You're in the hospital. You got a concussion from falling off the swing. Thank goodness for my salad bowl, or you might have split your skull."

Leo looked around. He was in a plain white room on a plain

white bed surrounded by his family and people in plain white suits. His mum stroked his hair. "Honey, why were you swinging in the middle of the night?"

Leo's voice trembled. "I-I was trying to reach the moon. S-s-so I could get some of the cheese and s-s-sell it for a million dollars."

His mum's face fell. "Oh, sweetie. The moon isn't really made out of cheese. It's just a story." And Leo's world crumbled to pieces.

A few weeks later, Leo was sitting on his bed. His bedspread lay crumpled on the floor in a heap. He stared up at the night sky, and at the moon that definitely wasn't made of cheese. He thought about how his parents had lied to him. About how they had told him not to worry about money. They were doing just fine.

But Leo didn't feel just fine.

His mum stood in the doorway. "What happened to your rocketship comforter? And alien pajamas?" she asked.

Leo lay down on his bare bed.

"I don't want to be an astronaut anymore," he said.



Moon Rise:

The True Story Of Idallia's First Moon Wolf

By Kristine Quan

This is an excerpt from a much longer story. Here is the story so far...



Isabella used to be a normal human girl just like you and me. But when she got bitten on the arm (in the exact same place she got bitten long ago) she was turned into a Moon Wolf.

When an evil witch threatens to steal her powers and take away all the things Isabella loves, it's up to her and her friends to go on a dangerous quest, or bid farewell to their home forever...

“Okay, everybody: got your items?” Isabella asked. Minutes before, Isabella had told everyone to bring an item from home, but she hadn’t explained why. They each showed her the tool they had brought from home.

“I got a used wooden pickaxe, and Flasher found a very old sword,” Sugar said.

“Snowy and I found a rusty trident and emptied potion bottles,” Aqua answered.

“Great, and me and Gale found leather boots and a stained hat,” Isabella replied.

“But what are we supposed to do with these items? They’re used and broken.” Flasher asked, confused.

“Well, my howls are very powerful. Like how they brought out the sun and healed Gale. Maybe they could also strengthen our abilities and tools!” Isabella explained.

“Good idea, Isabella! The witch may be powerful, but with our powers combined, we still have a chance,” Snowy said confidently.

Placing the items under her, Isabella let out a long, eerie howl and a blast of blue light filled the room. Once it stopped, the items laid under each of the fantasy friends, looking more powerful

than ever before.

“Look at our items! They’re different!” Gale exclaimed, as she and her friends looked at them in awe. Gale’s leather boots turned into beautiful hoof shoes that were white like the sky and had swirly golden and blue patterns. Flasher’s stone sword was transformed into a magma sword with flaming, hot edges and an obsidian handle. The pickaxe that Sugar had was now put neatly in front of her and was made out of oak wood, earth emerald and vines wrapped around it. Aqua’s trident was now an enchanted one that had aquamarine and ocean sapphire carved into the handle. Snowy’s broken potion bottles now had been filled with rare substances like the Potion of Sapphire Swiftiness, Ruby Fire Core and Healing Snow Potion Of Strength.

But Isabella’s item was the most powerful of all: it was a moonstone, opal and diamond tiara that gave her two new powers: Moon Beam Blast and Summon a Moon Monster Army. She had also grown in size and strength.

“Wow! I feel so much more powerful!” Isabella cried.

“Not only that, you’re huge! Isabella, only such creatures can grow at that size and strength in a short amount of time: you are the new boss!” Gale exclaimed.

Isabella was speechless. She had turned from orphan to hero in a blink of an eye. And now it was up to her and her elemental friends to face off against the witch!

“Let’s check out these powers and see what they can do!” Flasher said, excitedly.

“Who should go first?” Snowy laughed.

“We all know you want to go first, Flasher! So go on.”

Flasher gave a grin of approval, put his sword in his paw and swung it dramatically. Fireballs came shooting out, putting everything around the Fire Tiger, aflame.

“So cool!” Flasher cried.

“My turn!” Sugar barged in. Using her earth magic to control the pickaxe, the earth pony hit the ground and a major earthquake shook the ground, uprooting trees nearby.

“Wow! Let’s see what my power is about.” Aqua said. Holding the trident between his claws, he pointed the enchanted item to the sky and thunder and rain started to pour out of the clouds. “Rain, stop!” he shouted in between the storm. Once the water dragon said that, the rain immediately stopped. “Now I can control thunderstorms too!”

“My turn.”Gale cut in, putting on her hoof shoes. Then all of a sudden, the pegasus turned invisible and her friends couldn't see her.

“Where's Gale?”Aqua said, confused.

“Guy's, I'm over here!”the invisible pegasus cried. “Can't you see me?”

Then, Isabella burst into laughter. “I think the shoes you put on were the mythical and magical Swift wind Boots! An ultra rare item, able to make its user invisible. My parents told me stories about them when I was a little girl!”

“Nice!”Gale exclaimed, appearing right next to Isabella.

“Now that we have these powers, the witch stands no chance at all!”

But while everybody was celebrating, Isabella was still a little wary. Even though they had powerful weapons, the witch would be able to seriously damage them. If they wanted to stand a chance, the mythical beasts would have to complete one more quest before the final battle.

(Several hours later)

“Isabella, I'm still a little confused, why did you ask us to climb up the highest peak of Idallia?”Sugar asked, confused.

Isabella had taken her friends to Primadorial Peak, the highest point of Idallia.

“It's so cold up here!”Aqua complained, as snow started to fall. Walking quietly through the snow, the fantasy friends kept wandering until they reached the edge. The snow blizzard made it hard to see and frost started to form on their faces, but in the clear, they could see some kind of ritual. It had bones scattered around it.

Black poppies and red tulips surrounded a skull smothered with blood.

“That is so creepy! Why is there a ritual up in the most isolated part of Idallia?”Sugar wondered out loud, shivering at the thought.

“I'm okay with the cold because I'm a snow element, but I definitely agree with Sugar: this place really gives anyone the spooks.”Snowy declared, as he followed closely.

“Here's some heat.”Flasher said, as he emitted some heat from the sword.

Once they felt much warmer, Isabella sat down and began to tell her story. "Legend has it that a young girl named Idli used to live on this mountain with her mom and dad. But on one tragic day, mountain bandits found her home and decided to keep it to themselves. First, they waited until young Idli went out to visit a friend, then they ambushed the old couple while they were farming, killed them and looted and burned their house before Idli came home. When she found her parents' bodies, she cried and cried and cried for 2 straight years.

Then one day, a hooded figure visited the mountain and claimed to Idli she had the power to bring people back to life. Idli trusted the figure and decided that this was the best chance to get her parents back. The figure told the young girl that she had to create a ritual out of bones, black and red flowers and smother a human skull with blood. The young girl agreed and made it almost immediately. Once she finished, the mysterious, hooded figure told Idli to stand on top of the skull until a thunderstorm, wait for her to get struck by lightning and then her parent's souls would hear her cries for help and come down from heaven to rescue her, bringing them back to life. Idli wasn't very sure about the plan, but did what was said anyways.

On the 3rd day of waiting, a thunderstorm started to form, but the lightning never struck the girl. When she was about to give up, a lightning bolt came striking down on Idli. Waiting for her parents to hear her cries of terror, Idli's body started to grow in size and strength. And pretty soon, she turned into a half demon, half death dragon and eagle beast. Idli still waited for one hundred days straight, but nothing happened. Infuriated, Idli flew to the hooded figure's home and demanded she tell her the truth. Laughing evilly, the figure took the hood off her and revealed to the young girl that she was listening to a witch. Screaming, Idli disappeared and went back into the ritual. Even though her soul and heart have gone dark and evil, the legend says you can still summon her with another thunderstorm, striking the skull once again and she might still be friendly to those who experienced the same tragedy as her."

"What a sad story!"Gale commented.

"But do we know if the stories are actually true?"Flasher asked doubtfully.

Snowy nodded. "My grandfather and grandma used to tell me stories about Primaldorial Peak when I was younger. Apparently, it used to blossom with wild life, flowers and was the right

temperature for hiking and picnics. Once when they were hiking the mountain, they got lost and met a girl named Idli who agreed to let them stay in their hut. Soon, my grandparents became very good friends with Idli's parents. But on one mysterious day, they went to visit the family, but were instead, greeted with a chilly snow storm. Though it was near the winter season, The peak should be the only place in Idallia that's sunny and cheerful all year long! Then they went looking for Idli and her parents. But found their hut destroyed and family missing, and the only thing they found was this strange ritual at the edge. They never seen it before and the weather change that happened was way too peculiar. That's how I have proof about Idli."

Everybody seemed to buy into Isabella's plan at last, but Flasher was still a little skeptical.

"Just one question, if I'm correct, we can summon Idli by striking that skull with another lightning bolt, right?" Flasher speculated.

"As far as I know, yes," Isabella said in reply.

"But how are we going to get a thunderstorm in the middle of a blizzard?" Sugar asked.

The fantasy beasts thought hard.

"I know!" Aqua suddenly said. "I can use my new weather powers to turn the weather rainy!"

"Great idea, Aqua!" Snowy cried.

"Perhaps you can make Primaldorial Peak sunny and cheerful again!" Gale said hopefully.

But Aqua shook his head. "I can only change the weather to rain since water is my element."

Turning back to his plan, Aqua raised his trident and thunder clouds replaced the snow.

"Ow, Ow, Ow, Ow Owww!" Flasher winced, as ran around trying to avoid the water.

"Oh no! Flashers a fire element. Water and fire don't mix!" Snowy cried.

"Here," said Sugar, using her earth powers to grow a pine tree for Flasher to hide under.

"Thanks Sugar. I nearly evaporated."

Then Isabella turned to Aqua. "Aqua, can you ask lightning bolts to hit that skull naturally?"

"Sure can," replied the water dragon. Then, all of a sudden, three lightning bolts struck the ritual at once.

Immediately, something started to grow out of the skull. It looked like a griffin but had the horns of a demon and the powerful paws of a death dragon.

“What do you want?!”the boss screamed, hurling a gigantic fireball at Isabella and her friends.

“Get behind me!”Isabella cried, shielding her friends with a strong moon shield.

As the fireball bounced off the protective magic, the death griffin stared at the group (but specifically at Isabella) in awe. “How do you do that?”the beast demanded, breathing out intense shadow magic.

“Stay away!”Snowy squeaked, using his ice magic to freeze the shadow ball in place.

Anger shone in the death griffin’s eyes, as she planned her next attack. Getting in between them, Isabella blocked the attack while trying to coax the creature.

“Please listen to us. We need your help! We aren’t here to fight!”

But the death griffin just laughed, hurling a shadow ball and once again, Isabella blocked it with her moon shield.

“Where did you get such power?”the beast growled, intensely. Feeling like this was the opportunity to explain, Isabella told the story to the griffin, who was more gentler and more understanding than before.

“That evil witch.”the beast scoffed. “Me and my family were so happy before she came along.”

“Do you trust us now?”Gale asked hopefully.

After some intense stares, the griffin finally nodded. “I know see that your hearts are pure and you come in good will. But I still don’t know your names.”

“My name is Isabella and these are my elemental friends, Flasher, Gale, Snowy, Sugar, and Aqua.”Isabella introduced.

“My name is Idli.”the griffin replied. “Where are you going now?”

“We’re heading to the evil witch’s hut to find a way to bring us back to normal. The only thing is we don’t know where the location is.”Aqua explained.

Idli looked at the group, not surprised why they wanted to go. “I’ll give you a lift. But be careful, even though you have legendary powers, items and a powerful moon boss by your side, there is still one more thing you need.”Idli said.

“What is it?” Sugar wondered out loud.

Then creating a swirly fire ball, Idli presented a beautiful gem that was blood red and gave off red magic. Flasher gasped. “That’s the mythical Blood Agate! One of the most powerful gems in the realm. Where did you find it?”

“Well, when I was turned into a death griffin, I was granted the powers to be its guardian. But the witch wanted the power of death and blood to herself. So I spent most of my days protecting the valuable gem. I knew if it went into the wrong hands, terrible things would happen.” Idli explained.

Isabella and her friends stared at each other in shock. They never knew Idli was such an important guardian. “Now, when you need me, the blood agate will come with me. And when I come, everything will be alright.”

As Isabella and her friend flew through the silent night, hope was on their side, as they knew they had the power of death and blood to help them.

(12 minutes Later.....)

“Here we are; the witches hut,” Idli said, landing, softly. Then Isabella took a second to admire it. The witch’s hut was made out of dark oak planks and had onyx and lapis leaves covering the walls. It made the hut look both stunning and menacing at the same time. As her friends started to go closer to the entrance, Sugar noticed that Idli was ready to turn back and fly away.

“Where are you going, Idli? Aren’t you going to stay?” the earth pony asked puzzled.

“No,” Idli said firmly. “If I go into the hut as well, the witch will definitely hear us AND foil our plans. We can not risk it. But when you need me at most I’ll come out of my hiding place. Just build the same ritual as I did and then I’ll reappear.”

After handing out the items to do so, the death griffin turned to a light red flame and disappeared into thin air.

They were walking up to the witch’s door to confront her, when a voice came from behind them unexpectedly.

“Who are you looking for? Me?” said the voice.

Startled, the friends jumped back.

“Show yourself!” Flasher cried fiercely, readying his weapon of fire.

With a sudden potion splash, there was the witch, looking stronger than ever. But she wasn't alone. Just beside her were the cursed versions of Isabella's friends!!!!!!

"How could you!?" Isabella said, ready to explode.

"Ohhh, I just put a curse on them. Don't worry: the spell will wear off once I'm DONE WITH YOU!!!" screamed the witch.

Noticing that the witch had powerful magic, Isabella decided that it was better to be on a team than to go solo. "Well... I have the power of Elements on my side." Then, looking back, the Moon Wolf realized her friends were gone.

Where were they?

The witch started to snicker, as she realized what was going on. "The elementals are gone. They're nowhere to be found. Now, it's just you and me," the witch said, as Cypruis, Alicia and Edith stepped forward to attack.

Thinking all hope was lost, Isabella started to back away. But just as the shadow magic was ready to hit her, a blast of ice magic stopped it. Looking up, Isabella saw her Elemental friends come out of their elemental forms!!

"Just wanted to do a little surprise attack," said Aqua.

The witch looked lost in her thoughts. "You slippery Elements! You chose to show yourself, and now we'll have our final battle at last!" screamed the witch, as dark clouds started to replace the sky.

The battle went on through the night. Isabella and her friends dodged every attack, but so did the witch. When it became apparent that their side was losing, the friends had only one more option. "Guys! It looks like we have to summon the Death Griffin herself!" Sugar cried, over the roar of the lightning. Doing what the griffin told them to, they laid down the black and red flowers and the bones in the corners. Finally, they put a giant human skull in the middle.

"What are you doing over there!!" the evil witch demanded.

"Anddd...GO!" Isabella cried, as Aqua held his trident to the sky.

This time, seven lightning bolts struck the skull, so intense that everybody needed to cover their eyes. And once the light settled, there stood Idli, looking more powerful than ever.

"It's lucky that the weather empowers me!" Idli shouted, as she grew in size and strength immediately.

The witch smiled an evil smile. "Hello, Death Griffin. And as

your master, I demand you attack those puny fantasy critters and hand me the Blood Agate.”

But Idli just scoffed. “One, you were never my master to begin with. Two, It was thanks to you I’m like this now. So, no!!”

The witch scowled in fury. “Well it looks like you're basically made out of fire. So, water blast!”shouted the witch. But as soon as the water started to touch the griffin, it evaporated into steam.

“Ha! I’m so hot, a little water can’t stop me.”Idli laughed.

“Numskulls! I never needed to use this, but it looks like I have to in this situation,”the witch said, throwing a potion bottle to the ground. She immediately started to rise up from the ground.

“Get behind me!”Idli cried, taking out the blood agate. As soon as the powerful dark magic was shot at them, blood essence started swirling out the gem and twisted until it reached the witch. Before she could react, the magic pulsed the witch back, sending her flying into the air, making her disappear into ashes.

“Curse you fantasy creatures!!”the witch screeched.

“Guys, we somehow did it!”Snowy panted, once the witch was gone for good.

“Idallia would always be safe as long as you are here,”Idli said, somenly.

“A thousand thanks Idli. We couldn’t have done it without you!”said Gale sweetly.

“You’re welcome. But about your friends...”Idli began.

“Don’t worry! I was sorting through my potions and I found a “Spell Removal Crystal Potion” strong enough to cure any curse.”Snowy said, handing the potion to Isabella.

Closing her eyes, Isabella prayed for this to work. “Don’t worry, friends. I’m going to save you.”she thought, splashing the potion on them. Then, purple sparkles came out of the splash potion once activated. The grass quivered and a pulse of amethyst light made everyone fall backwards. Once the light cleared, Isabella’s friends laid there, unconscious but unharmed. The fantasy creatures surrounded them.

“Let’s get them to my den,”Isabella said, turning to Idli. “Idli, you carry Edith and Cyprius and I’ll take Alicia.”

Idli nodded, flicked Cyprius and Edith into the air and made them land softly on her griffin back. “Come on! Let’s go!”said Flasher, leading the way.

(Next Morning...)

"I think they're waking up!" Sugar announced as soon as she saw fluttering eyelids. Isabella and her Elemental friends had been guarding the cave since the big battle.

"Yay!" Isabella cheered as Aqua and Idli followed.

"Huh? Where am I?" Edith murmured. Waking up one by one, Edith, Cyprius and Alicia just stared at what they were seeing.

"Ahh!! It was that wolf again. She must have brought us here for dinner!" Cyprius screamed as he and Alicia prepared their weapons. Then suddenly, Edith shot his bow...and hit Idli right in the leg!

"Ouch!" Idli winced as Aqua took out the arrow.

"Are you sure these are your friends, Isabella? Because they act more like little gremlins."

"Oh, don't worry. As soon as we reveal our true form, they should be more trusting." Isabella replied.

"Guys! I finally did it! It took a long while, but I finally found a way to make a spell that can help us control our powers. It can also change us to our animal and human forms at will," Snowy cried, each handing them a necklace with a relic.

"These gems on the end are the part I infused with magic. They each are based on our fantasy creature. A snow quartz for me, A tiger's eye for Flasher, a moonstone for Isabella, Petrified wood for Sugar, Clear quartz for Gale, Ocean sapphire for Aqua and last but not least, The Blood Agate for Idli. And also, ouch! Can you please call off your friends Isabella? One of them just shot an arrow through my leg!"

"I will after we transform," Isabella replied, putting on the necklace.

Moon magic surrounded Isabella and swirled and twirled around her. Once it stopped, Isabella found herself standing on two legs and wearing the same outfit and cloak as before. She looked around and saw that her elemental friends had also gone through the transformation while Isabella's other friends starred in shock.

Gale was wearing a light white summer dress that was hooked by a golden pin on one side and she was still wearing her Swift-Wind Boots.

Flasher was wearing Fire Samurai armor and had his flame sword in his hand. His eyes were a fire red.

Aqua had on an ocean robe and cloak with his trident on his back.

Sugar wore an earth emerald dress with jade crystal shards and a lime green cape.

Snowy was wearing an icicle robe with snow shards, frost pendants and a pouch to store his potions.

And finally, Idli wore a bone robe and ruby head piece. Her eyes were a dark woodland brown, but shone with light.

Cyprius, Alicia and Edith seemed to lose their words. "Isabella...but, you were supposed to be dead.....how...when..." Alicia muttered.

"Long story short, you guys got cursed by an evil witch, I made new elemental friends and we were able to find a way to uncurse you and bring me and my friends back to our true human forms." Isabella explained as her friends nodded in approval.

Edith lowered his bow. "Soooo...You aren't going to eat us Isabella, even though you turned into a vicious wolf?" he asked nervously.

Isabella shook her head. "No! Even though I turned into a Moon Wolf, I would never ever think to eat anyone."

Turning her head, Alicia gave a long look at Isabella and her elemental friends, then turned to Edith and Cyrius, who nodded their heads approvingly. "We trust in you Isabella. Sorry for like, chasing you before." Alicia said sheepishly. Then she turned to Gale, Flasher, Aqua, Sugar, Snowy and Idli. "What are your new friend's names?"

"Ohh! My Elemental friends? The air elemental is Gale, the fire elemental is Flasher, the water elemental, Aqua, the earth elemental, Sugar, the snow elemental, Snowy and the death elemental, Idli." Isabella explained, pointing to each of her friends.

Flasher looked critically at Alicia's, Cyprius's and Edith's tattered and torn robes. "Let's make you fit in with us." he said, beckoning Aqua and Sugar.

Fire, Water and Earth magic started swirling out of their necklaces and twirled around Isabella's friends. Almost immediately, it began to change their robes. Cyprius's robe turned into a scorching hot looking lava robe, giving him the ability to swim through lava and fire with no harm. Alicia's fading green robe turned into a brilliant lime and brown one, granting her the ability to talk to woodland creatures. And finally, Edith's changed into a turquoise and dark blue with specks of lapis. He now was able to breathe and

talk under water.

“These robes can’t give you the ability to transform yourself, but we will be working on it.” Aqua explained.

“Cool robes! But why do we need them?” Edith asked.

Turning back to her werewolf form, Isabella turned to her elemental friends who also turned too. Beckoning her non-fantasy friends, they hopped onto Isabella’s back. “There are other villages that need our help. So it’s our job to help them and grow our population once more.” Isabella said. Flasher nodded. “Right!”

And to this very day, when you take a trip to this magical island, you will find it flourishing and filled with fantasy creatures. And it’s said that the come-back of these creatures is all thanks to Isabella and her friends, who were able to show the good of fantasy creatures to the world.

Coming soon:

Sapphire’s First Dragon Tamers.



Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right

By Amalyn K.

(trigger warning - this story contains an act of violence and may not be suitable for all readers)

Oh Laurel. The awakening beauty.

The cause of all of this.

That cold evening during autumn, at exactly midnight, I stared down at the gleaming blade that I held in my hands. It had to be done. The sharp end of the knife I wielded so proudly, yet so shamefully, was a story with a twisted end, and a bloody beginning. It held whispers shared behind curtains and hands. Lies that were told so proudly, they seemed true. I wanted it. I needed it. I needed to win.

Laurel Hundrel.

The name echoed in my head. Laurel Hundrel. She had to be gone, she had to be swept off the earth like the useless fly she had made everyone believe they were.

Laurel Hundrel. The beautiful, slim girl that had everyone yearning for more of her twisted, bent words. Her bright blue eyes portrayed innocence, yet the things she whispered, the things she spread showed who she truly was.

A girl, broken then put back together in all the wrong places. A girl who would do anything to know she was loved. Adored.

A girl who was willing to ditch her one true friend, her one true lover, at the bottom of the pit she had dug herself. Then use them as a stepping stool so she could climb herself out. Her smile, with perfect white teeth yet containing maggots waiting to be planted in others ears, had beamed down at me. Had beamed upon her friend. Pity yet a shrill sense of joy was swimming in the sea in her eyes. She was a monster.



And she knew it.

She let it become her personality, her life. She let an abuser, a cruel old man turn her into the thing she sought to destroy. And yet she seemed to enjoy it.

Which was why I had to be the one to put an end to it all.

Laurel Hundrel was to be stopped tonight. It wouldn't take long, only thirty minutes. A quick and easy job.

Which was why I stepped out that night, letting the crisp autumn night air sink in. I walked the path I used to walk so many times. With her. The person that was going to go "missing" shortly.

I sat on the curb, swinging my legs. Watching as every car passed by.

Blue, gray, black, red.

None of it mattered. I couldn't care less what the people driving's stories were, or where they were going.

I only looked up when a white Honda pulled up in front of me. The perfect girl rolled down her window and asked, "Are you okay? Do you need a ride?" her classic smile spreading across the fake face she wore. Slowly opening the door, she outstretched a tan hand, offering it like food for a peasant. Of course I accepted, graciously grabbing it in my own gritty hand. Making sure to rub as much dirt as I could off on hers.

Laurel didn't seem to mind though, she kept on smiling, even as she opened the back seat for me. I settled myself on the neat leather. Not even a speck of dirt had found its way into this car, not a piece of trash.

It was truly a shame that the white fabric was soon going to be stained a striking red.

I let a smirk spread across my face, as the concerned Laurel asked through the rear-view mirror, "So, where are you off to?"

I gave her a random address. She'd know mine, as she'd been there before. She had spent endless nights with me eating popcorn and laughing at the stupidest of things. Of course it was all a part of her plan to rise to the top of the pyramid, leaving me at the bottom. I was her 'pity project' the thing she didn't want, but needed for her plan to work.

Which was why I felt no remorse or regret when I pushed the knife through her chest, and up into her heart. Her twisted, dark heart that everyone longed for. That everyone needed. And yet no one would miss. A twisted feeling of bliss overcame me, and I couldn't help but chuckle .

I watched with a smile on my taunting face, as the life slipped from her eyes and her smile drifted into a crack on her face. Her perfect face. She was scared, as her breaths became ragged and hitched. I was perfectly fine. I was the perfect one for once.

Finally, after what felt like hours watching her chest rise up and down, her head dropped, and she stopped breathing.

Blood trickled down her chest, and her clean leather was drenched.

Oh Laurel. The sleeping beauty.



Deceit, Manipulation and Corruption

By: Lily-Anne B.

This is the story of a tunnel. A tunnel of good, of bad, of truth, of lies, of joy, of sorrow. This tunnel was ventured into by a young girl whose innocence spread like butterflies. I wish I knew how I could've stopped this little girl from becoming what she became... For her soul was crushed, the butterflies destroyed. The power corrupted her life, her soul, her heart. I will help you avoid this fate. To avoid this tunnel of corruption, of lies, and of unknown evilness hidden far below the surface.

Just listen. Let me tell you the beginning, and take note... We cannot determine who we truly are until it is too late.

A tunnel. That's where it began, I believe. Isn't it always? Marked by Time's cruel hands, withering and scrapped and dark, left plain and left unmemorable. It was large, dusty, and strangely had an aura of, 'I'm boring, please leave, you might die from starvation or cold but probably from your extremely boredom.' It was strange, picturing the newly built, fresh structure which it used to be.

With a torch in hand, May felt the hot burn sting her small, tanned hand. She wanted to flinch, but the light was her only chance to escape. The dewy grass would dampen the light- the light of the truth.



The structure was intricately detailed, May noticed. As if the designer had years of work and tough practice to build just this- but May had never found out who. It was horrible, and May recognized the feeling, like when her mother told everyone her sister had done something great when May had done something even better and yet she hadn't gotten any acknowledgement. It *wasn't fair*, but it was life and it was her reality. She couldn't run away from it.

Now, don't be fooled. She seems like an ordinary girl with ordinary complaints and a nice attitude. But she always believed she could be so much more, so powerful...As if her human body stopped her from getting everything and anything she wanted. As if the world was some little toy box filled with puppets and she was the puppeteer.

She sighed, trying to refrain from frowning after her years of etiquette. *An unthanked wonder. No thanks, no one to congratulate or at least know deep inside that someone worked so hard on something*, May thought sullenly. *The worst pain anyone can feel.*

May was a young woman, born to the sun on the 12th of September 1846. Her mother had idolized her, shown her the true life she could live, and taught her everything she knew. This went on until her perfect sister, Margaret, was born. Then, all May heard mother say to her was: "Why can't you be more like Margaret?" "Do the dishes, May!" and "So unrefined. I'm glad I raised at least one well-bred daughter!" She kissed the very floor Margaret walked on.

Margaret was beautiful, with gentle blond curls and deep blue eyes. She had thick lips and thin eyebrows, and she had a beautiful thin body with excellent posture. She normally wore an elegant peach dress, or thin blouse, or a colorful shirt. Either way, she looked like a princess. Her voice was like milk, silky and sweet and unbothered.

May, however, had a halo of dark, crow-black hair and deep blue eyes which glared icily at anything she didn't like. She wore a black robe and had small gold opera glasses. She was very defiant and determined, though people despised her for it. She was a poet, a creator of words, a sharer of thoughts and ideas, a dreamer of possibilities, a powerful person, and a master to those who tried to leash her.



But none of that mattered. She had failed.

Her kingdom had lived through a cruel reign by the King, King Rex. He was ridiculed as a prince for his so-called 'babyish' name, (Stupid baby Rex! Helpless baby Rex! They would shout) but May knew that he would become more powerful, climb up the ranks and use his wits and cruel taunts to become popular-popular enough to manipulate society and punish those who mocked him. He lied and made sure that no matter what, he would get his way and punish everyone. They would all suffer.

May never mocked him, never once thought that his name was babyish or he was too chubby, never said to his face how he was adopted or that he was the runt of the family. May stood out of his way, held her tongue, and for the sake of her family, she had never once told him he was wrong.

Until today.

I vow to defend the throne and make sure the kingdom I inhabit is safe and that the ruler is just, fair and doesn't have too much power. I vow to use my life as a tool rather than some toy; to make the most change I can and to inspire others. I, May, will protect my people and never let us fall into the puppet-game we had once fallen into.

This was May's vow.

Horrible thoughts swarmed around, and she pictured King Rex and his bitter tongue and mind and soul all dead, laying in a pool of blood. She pictured him in a dungeon, begging for mercy. She thought he was chubby and fat, she called him a little cow, she thought that the name Rex was stupid and childish, and that he was a horrible runt and mutation, a stain on the family name.

You know why she thought this? Because the king had formed a group, almost a cult. A lot of fake judges, to harness power and destroy and devour. He had killed her friends' cousins and aunt and hundreds of peasants. He had the blood of vicious King Chapp in him. He had taken her mother to the dungeon for weeks, and his lying was something he couldn't go without. Sometimes she got so mad about it, she made up a little three verse song to cool her anger. One of her favorites was:

*'Never stopped you on your quest for power,
Never noticed you steal, hurt, or devour,
But that was then, and this is now.'*

She knew, however, that these small songs would do nothing, so she simply waited for an idea. One came, and then a

few days later she sat in the meeting-room, listening to the fake judges.

“We need to destroy the forest,” Rex persisted against Light, the judge of Fairness. “It will help the village.”

“That’s against Law 8, kindness to all creatures and approval by the general public,” said Light, in her dull, s-l-o-w voice. She raised a thin eyebrow at him. “Besides, help how?”

“Clearly it is important for resources and expanding the village. It must be tamed!” King Rex cried triumphantly, raising his head, and placing a wary hand on the hilt of his sword. This time the judge Amethyst, of Rights, spoke up.

“It is within the rights, if it is not a one-sided fight. It would be within all the laws if there was a war... One we were bound to win. We can taunt, it is not considered cruel... They will get impatient and lash out, but we will be ready. The animals of the forest and the tribe there, that is. Then, eventually, they will declare war, and clearly we are stronger and have better forces.”

“That’s against Law 6!” spoke up Evidence, the judge of Crime. “No setting up or manipulation against those who can’t fight back.”

“But we used what we have,” insisted the king. “They would do the same to us. Law 7- think of the two-way road.”

“But Law 10!” cried out Wrong, the judge of Cruelty. “Think of the now’s, the whose, the essence of whatever you’re doing! Don’t dismiss it in future, past or thought of anyone, for it is the true thing of what you’re doing!”

“I am, and I vow to plant more trees as soon as we have the resources. Law 12- focus on your citizens before some forest!”

“That’s not Law 12-” started Light, but the king had made up his mind.

“Let us prepare ourselves for the most excellent of travels!”

And this went on forever. The excuses and procrastination blinded society into calming down and resting, but when they woke up there were prisoners galore, territory stolen, forests demolished. May should have stopped him. Spoken up. That was her *vow*, her purpose!

May shook off the thoughts. She was raised by a very strict family who taught her to make a difference- to stick out her neck, to be unlike others and to be confident. They made her practice her *vow* until she memorized it perfectly. But that was then, this was now. She almost turned back, sobbing, and she would’ve if it

weren't for the sharp, red-hot sting of the torch.

May held it forward. The old castle. What a marvelous sight! It was giant and elegant, and it had the air of something important yet impossible to truly understand, like a clue in a mystery novel, like a far-fetched theory with no evidence. So desperate to prove it true, a longing, running feeling, and yet nothing to do about it.

May walked in. This could be the answer to all her problems- she could find some evidence to condemn the King, show it to the kingdom somehow, and then convince them that they needed a new king.

Something flickered under the light. It was an old ruin- a picture of someone on a throne, smiling cruelly as two people writhed in pain in front of him.

May's first thought was, *What is this-* but then she finally remembered. The Great Pain. The most horrible, cruel disease in the whole kingdom, which spread like wildfire or gossip, infecting nearly everyone. She'd even had a bit of the disease herself, but luckily she recovered very quickly and wasn't too harmed, having not gotten to the blood-coughing stage.

A horrible disease which apparently King Chapp, the old king of this kingdom, found hilarious to watch as people coughed up blood, as they begged to be taken to a doctor. He'd laugh, empty-eyed and empty-souled as people coughed, and watch in horror as their life was sucked out of them. King Chapp would just laugh and point. Then, when the subject had died, he brought in the next. It was horrible, and that was why May had taken her vow.

I can't let that happen again. May thought, as she realized the two people in the picture were King Rex and his sister, Elija. Elija had died that day- but by a miracle, Rex had fooled his father and been nurtured back into health. That's why, May assumed, he would be the same. Furious, vengeful, and soulless.

They could be cured! May thought furiously, but as she noticed a possum in the corner, foaming mouth and blank eyes, a plan formed in her mind. *It won't be great, but what must be done must be done. For my vow, my dignity, for the sake of my kingdom. I will give the disease to him that he once had- the miracle will not happen twice. This is the end of the reign for King Rex. He has made fun of and destroyed the hopes of thousands, murdered his own father and wife and hundreds of peasants through starvation. He would kill the whole kingdom if it meant more power.*

And from there she chopped up the tail of the sick possum, spiced the meat and mixed it into a stew, cooked it and for extra good measures, added some dirt and earthworm. A fine delicacy. This possum had the disease, ergo that meant King Rex would catch it too. It was bound to make him sick, and hopefully kill him. May dressed as a simple maid, someone forced to work, so as to make extra money. She spent her afternoon practicing serving the possum on a gold platter.

"It's an odd taste," she apologized as she served it. "It's fine- just a bit undercooked, is all."

"Oh, no worries," Rex huffed, dazed at her beauty momentarily. "I'm sure I'll enjoy it."

Of course he will, the fat pig, thought May, hiding her fury under a smile.

"Now leave! Shoo!" said the king, angrily. "I don't want a scullery maid taking up all my space! All I want is peace."

"Very well, master," May mumbled, scurrying out of the king's way. "Hope you like it, master. It is very special." The words felt like poison on her tongue, ever so wrong and horribly bitter. She could picture her mother screaming, "You pathetic child! And you call yourself a Protector! Margaret wouldn't break her vows like this!"

Never shall I call anyone master again! May thought angrily, though she was pleased with herself, as the picture of her mother gradually faded. *Soon I'll be free from everything. Everyone will be free from his horrible reign.*

So right she was.

Plastered across newspaper headlines everywhere-

'King found dead in his room!
'Witch curse set upon beloved king!
Poison? Heart attack? We don't know!
Come tomorrow for our latest update!!!
Right or wrong, we'll post it all!
King dead! Poison! Poison! Poison!

Hundreds of other headlines also caught her attention, telling her she was correct. She had made her vow true- she had freed society and helped mankind.

Years passed. May had formed a sort of cult- the Black Mambas. Fighting anyone who abused power, anyone too powerful, anyone who threatened a good leader, like her...There were many targets. One day, as May sat on a velvet chair counting bills a new cadet came in.

"This is horrible!"the young boy yelled, his brows furrowing. "You killed me dad! 'E did nothin' Why?!"

"Oh, shush. None of that now,"May said, adding hundred-dollar bills galore. Then more tens, then ones, then hundreds again. The bills stacked to form a twisted, horrible tower. "He disliked our new leader and caused a ruckus in public. He'd cause problems- we helped society by getting rid of him. Imagine if he stayed- then he would tell everyone, 'Don't follow King Charles! Don't do it!'and half the people would still follow him, half wouldn't. They'd go to war and this kingdom would be destroyed, all because of your dad. It's my job to protect this kingdom, so I can't let that happen. It's my vow.. It's not, well, as evil as you make it sound. Surely you must understand that. I'm good, and just doing what I was told. Clearly his death was for the betterment of everyone."

"No, it wasn't!"the boy cried, tears streaming down his face. "It's not for the betterment of society, you witch!"The boy broke down in tears but May felt not a shred of pity. "How could you do that? He had a life, a family, people who loved him! Imagine that, having someone who loves you! I bet no one loves you, because you're stupid and mean!"

"Guards, take him to the dungeon. Immediately,"May said icily, not a waver in her voice. Her eyes, however, spoke her fury, turning to two spearing icicles which almost helped the guards drag him back. She held the boy's stare as he was violently dragged to the dungeon by two burly guards.

"No! Please, no! I'm no trouble! Please!"the boy cried, trying to resist "Please! I won't be like me dad! Just let me go! I won't cause a war! This kingdom is safe with me! I take it back...I take it back..."He sobbed violently, but May just chuckled. It was all going perfectly! Everything was in her control, everyone knew just how to live...Who would deny a perfect life like that? Clearly no one.

May smiled to herself. There was order and peace. All thanks to her and her careful planning! Now she could live perfectly. Now her future was set up, even if she had needed to take a darker path to get to it. She'd been picturing this day since she was a child. Now society was swell, everyone was happy, and her vow could be upheld.

That's what she thought, but I? Oh, my...She was a wonderful child, but she got so wound up with the 'betterment of society' phrase and 'upholding her vow'she forgot kinder things-pity, empathy...love itself. It's horrible how people can become the exact thing they're against...I would know.

So let me tell you the story, the true one.

