

Spellbound

By

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Spellbound

Introduction

A delightful tale of a cynical millionaire who believes in true love after falling for a Wiccan and the journey of two utterly unlike people on the path to true love.

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Prologue

There is magic everywhere. It is there in the music of the wind and the silence of the stars. It exists in anyone who has ever loved or has been loved. It is such a simple and such an extraordinary part of the lives we live. There are those to whom something more has been given and something more expected, who have been chosen to continue a legacy through endless ages, whose blood carries the enchantment of untold generations who lived through a time when faeries danced deep in the forest and high on the hills and granted wishes and made magic in its purest form.

Hers is an extraordinary bloodline, which through generations has been passed down from mother to daughter in keeping with the Celtic tradition and conventions of the Wicca. The enchantments and charms handed down to every bloodline, gave each Wiccan tremendous power and responsibility. Wiccans were white witches born with magical powers. Only one female in every generation possesses Wicca. The Wiccans had a strict moral code, "And it harm none, do what ye will", and were only allowed to use their power to help and heal, but never to harm.

She knew from the time she was born what her gift was and knew too that she must follow and keep to the traditions as others before her had done. Her loving parents trained her well to handle the responsibility that her gift would entail. Her gift was simple yet powerful – the gift of empathy to absorb another's pain and rebuild that which was broken. But it came with a price. Each time she healed another, she would feel their pain too and there may come a time when it might become too dangerous for her too. Yet, this was her gift, her legacy handed down from generation to generation.

She looked for peace and tranquility everywhere making it easier to use her gift as a healer, dedicating her life to healing and helping others as best she could. She yearned too, as humans do for a love that would never be, for who can accept a woman with elfin blood and magical powers? But fate has its own way of revealing one's fairy-tale and who can tell when love happens? For what is love if not magic?

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Chapter 1

It was a beautiful evening. Twilight just started and the sky was a kaleidoscope of pinks and reds reflecting the beautiful evening that it was. Children played on the sidewalk while fathers mowed the lawn or watered the garden and calling out to the kids to be careful and not to run onto the road. All around were the fragrance of spring flowers and the smell of fresh cooking wafted from the row of houses on the street. Mothers' were calling out to their kids to come in for dinner. All in all it was an idle Friday evening at the Crosswords Street a sub-urban neighborhood in downtown Bakersville.

At the end of the street, the road turned right to the town square which is the commercial part of the town, where there is a bakery, a grocery, several stores selling various knick-knacks and a dentist's office - the only dentist in town. The sheriff's office is on the other side, next to the fire department and a hospital. In a town of about 2000, people were well known to each other. The community was close knit. A stranger would be spotted a mile off, not that many strangers ever come here. The occasional tourist or someone visiting might probably be the only strangers in town.

'What is going on?' shouted an authoritative voice.

'Come on boys break it up', the man in the sheriff's uniform ordered stepping towards the commotion.

A group of five or six boys separated clearing a path for the policeman to walk through. A man was huddled on the sidewalk curled into a fetal position moaning with pain.

'Looks like he is hurt, the sheriff called to his deputy, George, get over here and help me turn him'.

They turned him over and were horrified. He looked like he'd been in a battle and not a nice one at that.

'Oh My God! Look at him' the deputy exclaimed.

The boys were terrified and ran towards their homes. Nothing like this has ever happened in their peaceful town. The poor man looked badly beaten and bruised. He had numerous cuts on his hands and face and several of the cuts had opened that seeped blood. His hands looked like they were broken and one of his eyes was completely swollen shut.

'Can you hear me?' asked the sheriff gently. The man moaned.

'Let's take him over to Nana Colleens', suggested the deputy.

They loaded him into a truck and drove towards the woods to the manor where the Bentley's lived. Farther down south of the town, surrounded by tall trees and hedges, stood

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an old manor which looked like a castle. It looked like it belonged in a time of knights and damsels in distress. The family that lived in the manor were called strange to say the least by most in the town, yet they were the most renowned healers in the community. No one could say that their methods were conventional, yet it was the most effective. Over the years, stories were told of how each woman in the family had something remarkable within them which helped, healed or rebuilt someone around. Iris Colleen Bentley, the matriarch of the Bentley family, had a magnificent aura about her, and anyone who came close to her was humbled by her quietness and humility. She had the innate ability to calm wounded spirits, mend broken bones and cure most ills. The people of the town respected her and even were in awe of her. Her husband, the patriarch of the family, John Bentley was a 'Wye' – a wizard with pure magic. Their daughter Maureen Bentley Cunningham was also blessed by the Wiccan power. Here in this peaceful town, they lived and thrived, as healers of the community, enclosed deep within the woods, away from prying eyes, not because they feared the world, but because, the world would never understand or comprehend the true power and nature of the Wicca.

What's going on mother? Asked Maureen looking up from where she was simmering hot broth in a pot on the stove.

Her mother sat on a cushioned love seat, reading the ancient texts and books from which there was knowledge and learning about healing and curing.

I sense trouble. Replied her mother.

What kind of trouble?

I am not sure, but I fear, we have to face something unexpected soon.

Should we be afraid of this unexpected thing?

No...Not afraid, just prepared. Iris Bentley replied and went back to her reading.

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Chapter 2

Victoria Darcy Cunningham or “Darcy” as she was affectionately called by everyone, just finished the final touches to the room she was decorating as a gift to her grandparents. Her grandparents had the same interiors since the time they got married and Darcy had decided that they were well overdue for a change. So convincing her grandmother and her grandfather, she put herself to the task of redecorating their rooms completely. Now, it looked like a honeymoon suite of a five-star hotel.

Wow... won't they be surprised, she thought.

Darcy had always admired her grandparents...she was especially close to her grandfather and was the apple of his eye. Their family was never normal, but they were all that she could ever want. From her grandmother, she learnt how to use her gift to heal, without getting too involved to a point where it might become harmful for her. Her grandfather taught her all about magic- the purest of magic is found in the simplest things. The innocence of a child, the beauty of the sun, the stars, the bountiful nature around, the smiling rainbows-a promise of something better, the expression of love between her grandparents, her parents were all magical in special ways. From her mother, she learnt how best to develop her gifts as a Wiccan. But most of all, she learnt from her father, the human nature. He was her best friend, guide and her best link to humanity. Her mother was extremely lucky, to find a man such as her father, who was a complete mortal, with no magical powers, but who understood the Wicca, understood the legacy of this family in ways no other human could imagine. Wiccans were not immortal, but they could never die by conventional methods – such as mortals. So this put the Wiccans in a realm altogether different.

‘Darcy... where are you child?’

Darcy wrinkled her nose. Though she was 22 years old, her grandfather still called her a child, no matter how many times she tried correcting him.

‘Coming grandda... Don't come any closer. I want this to be a surprise for you both’ she shouted as she shut the door and came running out into the hallway, almost colliding with him.

‘Whoa there’ ... he said catching her. ‘There's my baby girl...Come on I have something to show you’.

‘Oh please! I am 22 years old’, she muttered

‘You are still a baby to me’ he countered right back walking towards the stairs.

‘I won't argue there’, her father intoned from below.

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'Oh for heaven's sake...!' she grumbled following them down the hallway.

'Who is that?' Her mother asked looking out the window towards the long driveway, where a truck was coming in slowly towards the house.

'Looks like the sheriff and his deputy. I wonder what they want' said Darcy also standing at the window.

'They are bringing an injured man', said her grandmother coming into the room.

'How do you know that?' asked Darcy.

'Is this the trouble you mentioned earlier, mother?' asked Maureen looking at her mother.

'Darcy, get back inside', Iris ordered.

'What? Why? If a man is injured, I can help, you know I can', she argued.

'Get inside now... Please do not argue', her grandmother insisted.

'But..Nana' she pleaded.

'Come on sweetheart, let's go.. I want to show you something' said her father after a look from his wife, and took Darcy by her arm and began leading her inside.

'Dad..wait.. I can help'

'Not this time honey, let your mother and your grandmother handle this. Come on'.

They could still hear her arguing to go back and help.

'What is going on Iris? You know very well, our Darcy is much more established in treating injuries now. So why the fuss?' John Bentley asked, looking at his wife.

'I know, but I do not want Darcy anywhere near right now. You will not understand now.. but trust me'. She replied.

'Alright, let's see what is going on' said Maureen as the doorbell rang.

Maureen opened the door and asked 'Yes Sheriff, what can we do for you today?'.

'Hello Mam... we have an injured man in the truck and thought you might be able to help him'.

'What happened?'.

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'Cannot rightly say Mam, we found him in the town square like that', the sheriff replied walking towards the truck.

Maureen looked at the man and gasped. He looked terrible and badly injured. Now, more than ever, she knew that Darcy was the best person to help, yet her mother was adamant that Darcy stay away. She called out to her dad and John Bentley came through the door, a big hulking man of over 6 feet, with a build like a Viking, and a booming voice which put the fear of God, in even the meanest people.

'Let's get him through here', Maureen said, leading the way to the side of the house, which led to a conservatory, built especially for relaxing and resting. The room looked very homely and had a few couches which invited people to put their feet up. The sheriff and John lifted the semi-conscious man and carried him into the room.

'Put him here, Iris Bentley pointed to one of the low soft beds, on the far side of the room. We must treat this quietly, Sheriff, please wait in the hallway. John will show you out. My daughter and I will help him as much as we can'.

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Chapter 3

Jordan Riley Harrington could not focus. Of all the days, to lose concentration, this one had to be the worst. What was wrong with him? He wondered, looking at the stack of papers on his desk. All of a sudden, he was feeling very restless, and on edge as if something in his life was going to change and would never be the same again.

'Excuse me sir', his secretary's voice interrupted through the intercom.

'Yes Elise, what is it?'

'Your mother is here to see you Sir'.

'Send her in please'.

'Yes Sir'.

Moments later, the door burst open and Lady Millicent Harrington swept in with a regal look and sat down in the chair opposite her son. She crossed her legs, looking every bit like a royal, which she knew she was.

'Hello Mother, this is a nice surprise.'

'I don't believe that, you have not been answering my calls lately. Are you too busy to talk to your own mother?' She questioned.

'You know that's not true Mother.. I have...'

'Of course it is true, his mother interrupted. You have always been too busy for your family, and I know for a fact that you have recently broken your relationship with Marisol Richmond. Now she is a fine woman, worthy of our family and I do not understand...'

'Mother, Jordan interrupted, before his mother could launch her tirade into his love life. What brings you here?'

His mother sighed. 'It's David. He has not called once in the past week. This is not like him and your father and I are very worried'.

'What are you talking about?'

'David is missing; he has been missing for over a week now.'

'Missing? What do you mean missing?' Jordan exclaimed.

'Well, when was the last time you spoke with him?' His mother asked.

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Ah... Well I am not sure. What makes you think he is missing, he could just be taking a vacation to some god-forsaken place...you never know with him' Jordan said.

'How could you be so heartless? He is your brother for heaven's sake!'

'That does not mean that I have to be his keeper. He can take care of himself'.

'Jordan, I have a very bad feeling about this. Promise me, you will do something' she pleaded.

'What would you like me to do?'

'Something.. Anything she cried... just find him please!'

'Ok Mother, calm down. Don't worry. Go home. I will take care of this'.

'Oh please do Jordan... I do not know what to do.'

'Hush mother... go home, I will call you. Ok Now?' he gently led her outside and put her in the car and watched it drive away from the curb.

What had David done? He wondered. Looking back he could see that for as long as he could remember, David had been problematic – a problem child his grandmother used to call him, always getting into trouble, never on time for anything, disrespectful, rebellious and willful. His parents had indulged him to a large extent, being the baby of the family, and David always understood that what his family called acceptance, he called it love. Yes, his family accepted everything he did, and never criticized him for his failure which is probably in Jordan's opinion one of the foolish mistakes ever made. Now he was left to clean up the mess – David's mess.

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Chapter 4

He was dreaming again. He remembered something about a gentle lady with eyes like an angel soothing his fears... he remembered hearing whispered conversations; twinkling lights and feeling a throbbing pain...so much pain he thought he would die of it. Where am I? What happened to me? Did I die? Is this heaven he wondered struggling to get up? Why can't I get up? What is going on? He thought.

'Hush stay still. You will only hurt yourself if you try to get up'. He heard a soft voice say.

He opened his eyes and looked into the most beautiful face he had ever seen in all his life and thought, I must have surely died, for this is an angel here in front of me.

'Where am I?' He croaked his voice hoarse.

'You are safe now. But you are hurt; you must stay still and rest'. The woman replied.

'Who are you? What happened?'

'You do not remember?' She asked.

He struggled to answer, trying to think back 'I don't know' he stammered.

'It's alright.. Do not worry... Everything will be ok' she said in the same soft voice.

Lulled by the woman's soft voice, he closed his eyes and a moment later was fast asleep.

Maureen closed the blinds and shut the door and moved towards the corridor.

'So did he say anything? Like his name or where he is from?' Asked Daniel Cunningham.

'No, nothing' sighed Maureen walking towards her husband and slipping her hand through his arm as he led her outside.

'I don't know who he is...But I get a strange feeling from him, he seems unsafe'.

'Unsafe? What a word? Unsafe for whom', Daniel asked.

'I don't know. I just feel...' she trailed off as Darcy came running through the door.

'Mom! Dad! There you are. See what I have got' she said jumping up and down in excitement.

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'What is it dear?' Maureen asked.

'Look', she said thrusting an envelope towards them.

Daniel took it from her hand and opened it.

'What is it?' asked Maureen again.

'It's an all expense paid trip for two to a trip to Enchantia. Liz and I have been dying to go there'. Darcy all but shouted.

'What? But this is in Nestern'. Her Dad exclaimed

'So what?'

'That's too far away' her dad said.

'What do you mean too far? It's just a few hours by air. It's only for a week. Please mom... Please dad...Come on! Liz is all excited too... You don't want to disappoint her now do you?' She pleaded.

'Honey... Come on... look at it from our point...Nestern is a big city... Too big and honey with your gift it's really not going to be so easy'

'Oh why does everything have to do with my gift? Cant I just have fun like a normal person for once'.

'Of course you can sweetheart, but...'

'But what Mom?But what? I can take care of myself. You showed me that. I know my limits and I know our ethics...you taught me that...so what could possible happen?'. She said earnestly.

Her parents looked at each other. Then her dad said, 'Ok we will think about it'.

They walked inside the hallway and Darcy fumed. It is never good, when your parents say that. Darcy knew immediately, that they were going to discuss this with her grandparents, which means there is no way her grandmother would allow this... She was so livid. This was her life, shouldn't she be able to live it her way at least sometimes. She barged into the hall fuming where her parents and grandparents were in deep discussion.

'Darcy. Hello sweetheart' her grandfather said affectionately.

'So can I go?' Asked Darcy abruptly. She was in no mood for discussions. Just a yes or a No. that's it she decided.

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'Darcy', her grandmother started to say.

'Nana, I know what you are going to say, but I understand the risks. Don't you think you have taught me well?' she asked looking at her grandmother. 'And don't you think you have raised me well?' she asked looking at her parents.

They sighed.

'Alright, maybe just this once', her grandfather said looking at Iris.

'Really?' Darcy asked.

'I do not have a good feeling about this' Maureen said looking at her mother.

'I know, but we need to let Darcy make her choices'. Iris replied.

'Great.. I am going to call Liz right away.. Thanks you guys..really this is great!!' Darcy joyfully exclaimed.

'Before you go Darcy, there are a couple of things I need to say. Iris said. You need to understand and remember who you are.'

'My goodness Nana... Why all this fuss?'

'Darcy, Iris said. Know this and know this well, the outside world will never understand or accept who we are and what we do. Do not ever put yourself in the position of having to doubt who you are and defend our legacy'.

'Nana, I understand, but why are we even talking about this. I am not going to be away for that long'.

'I know child, but you must understand the importance of what I am telling you. Do not for any reason reveal yourself and do not put yourself in a situation where you know you should walk away. Do you comprehend what I am telling you?' Iris asked.

'Yes Nana, I understand and I will be careful'. Darcy replied not fully understanding, but just wanting to get the whole conversation over so she can call Liz and start planning their trip.

'Alright.' said Iris and took Darcy's hands in her own. Immediately Darcy felt a sliver of heat pass through their linked hands into her body. She felt warmth and comfort. Iris said something below her breath and let go.

'What did you say Nana?' Darcy asked.

'Nothing child, just a spell for protection'.

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'Oh for goodness sake!' Darcy exclaimed and went off in a huff.

'Liz, guess what?' Darcy was saying over the phone.

'You could not convince your parents? Oh please don't say that. I will never speak to you if that's true' wailed Liz on the other end.

'Oh, shut up! So what are you going to pack and where are we going sightseeing?'

There was a shriek on the other end. 'What?? You convinced them! OH I love you Darcy... Wow! this is awesome!! Enchantia here we come!!' shouted Liz excitedly.

Darcy laughed. 'OK you crazy female, I'll catch you tomorrow and we can work out a schedule'.

Darcy could not sleep...she was so excited. Enchantia was an island in the middle of Nestern, a city on the far side of the continent. It was Liz actually who wanted to go there and had researched all about the island and wanted to visit it. Liz and she were best friends since they were babies. Liz was the only person other than her family who knew who Darcy was and the power she had. The fact that Darcy was a Wiccan never made any difference to Liz and Darcy loved Liz because of that. In so many ways, Liz was the sister of her heart – her guide, philosopher and friend all rolled into one.

Dreaming about their upcoming trip and all the fun they were going to have Darcy finally fell asleep.

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Chapter 5

Nestern was beautiful. Darcy wondered why she never pressed her family for a visit here. There were so many sights and sounds to see. So many many people all around.

'Come on Darcy!' Shouted Liz.

Elizabeth 'Liz' Darrow, a stunning brunette skipped alongside Darcy dragging her along.

'Hold on Liz, I want to take a picture' said Darcy stopping at a roadside fountain in the middle of the town square and clicking away with her camera.

'Don't use up all the battery. We'll take a lot more when we get to Enchantia. Come on, the bus to Enchantia leaves in exactly 20minutes'.

'Ok ok I am coming'.

They barely made it to the bus in time. Stowing away their bags and suitcases, Liz and Darcy took the two vacant seats almost in the back of the bus. Soon the bus was on its way to the beautiful island of Enchantia. Enchantia, an island located almost in the center of Lake Carnation, which is in the middle of the city, can be reached either by road or air. A tall bridge connected one part of the city to the island. Surrounded on all sides by the lake, Enchantia was a true paradise of greenery, tropical rainforests, exotic wildlife and colorful flora and fauna.

'Wow! Look at all this' shouted Liz pressing her nose to the window.

'You look like a six year old who just discovered ice-cream' laughed Darcy.

'I have never seen a more beautiful place, have you?' Liz asked still looking outside.

Darcy had to admit, this really was a beautiful place. Though she was born and brought up around magic and enchantment, she still never saw a more beautiful place in her life.

Collecting their bags, Liz and Darcy hailed a passing taxi and gave the driver directions to the resort.

'Wow.. Finally we are here, said Liz plopping onto the soft mattress of their double bed suite which had a spectacular view of the entire island. So, what should we do first? Shopping or sightseeing..?'

'Did you know there is a castle nearby this resort. We should definitely go there', Darcy said looking at the brochures.

'I am so excited...I do not know what to do right now', said Liz.

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'Let's just get out of the room... We can walk around the resort. There is bound to be something there...Oh, by the way did you call your parents and let them know we have reached safely..?' asked Darcy.

'Oh ya...I probably should, agreed Liz flipping open her cellphone and dialing. What about you?'

'I don't need to call them, you know how it is with magic' sighed Darcy.

'Ya...right...you think something here and automatically your mom knows what it is..? Like telepathy'

'Not really that... but yes...something like that.'

The place was really beautiful thought Darcy walking along the outside of the resort. There was a row of shopping like street vendors selling various knick knacks and souvenirs. Liz was haggling over the price of a really cute swan look-a-like. Darcy took the opportunity to snap a few pictures of everything around her. About a few yards away a little girl of maybe six or seven years old was skipping gaily with her dog beside her. The little girl was so pretty, Darcy could not resist. She focused her camera and snapped a few photos of the little girl so full of life, carefree and happy.

'Come on Darcy, enough already! Haven't you taken enough pictures?' asked Liz exasperated.

'Look at that girl...isn't she pretty?', smiled Darcy.

All of a sudden, like something out of a storm came a whooshing sound of a motorbike at great speed charging towards the girl with the dog. No one had any time to react and the dog- faithful companion that he was pushed the girl to safety and unfortunately fell under the wheels of the motor bike. The people on the street started shouting and the rider escaped. Everyone started running around towards the little girl who was crouched next to her dog, crying, her heart broken as her dog lay apparently lifeless on the ground.

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Chapter 6

Darcy was rooted to the spot. She could not stop staring at that little girl and her dog.

Liz saw the look on Darcy's face and knew what her softhearted friend would do. Not wanting to draw attention to themselves, and wanting to protect Darcy from getting hurt, Liz called out urgently, 'Come on Darcy...let's go'.

Darcy was torn between helping the little girl and hiding her true self from others.

Liz dragged her towards the resort saying, 'Come on honey, there was nothing you could do. That poor dog died... I mean what could you have done...Even with all your magic; you could not bring back something from the dead. It would have been a waste of time, so better to just leave it alone'.

Darcy was quiet. All the way back to the resort, she kept thinking, what if she had done something...tried to help. All through dinner, she could not stop thinking about what she had seen. That poor little girl was so lost; crying as if her heart was broken and she could not help thinking that there was something that could be done.

She could not sleep a wink that night. Slowly, so as to not waken Liz, Darcy got up and got dressed in blue slacks and a white top and stealthily got downstairs to the lobby. There was just a night guard at the door to the resort, a kindly old man with a beard.

She went up to him and asked 'Sir, that little commotion on the street today...what happened..?'

'Oh that, he replied... Why do you want to know?'

'Oh I just felt sorry for the little girl, thought I could send flowers to her or something'.

'Flowers... that would be a miracle'.

'Why do you say so?'

'The little girl you might have seen today is none other than the Princess Julianne, the granddaughter of Her Majesty, Lady Millicent Harrington'. The old man replied.

'Lady Millicent Harrington? Who is that?'

'She is the Queen of Nestern. Her family has always ruled this land. They live in the beautiful castle on the edge of this island'.

'So? I could still send flowers to the little girl'.

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'Madam, they would not allow anyone in or out of the castle. The royal family has always been very secretive and closely guarded in these parts. Only a handful know that they are even here. The child would have been severely punished for even coming out onto the street'.

'Punished! Exclaimed Darcy horrified. She is just a little girl'

'Yes, but the royal family would not see it that way'. The old man said.

Darcy thanked the man for all the information and walked back to her suite. More than ever now, she was determined to help that little girl.

Conjuring up a spell beneath her breath

"Charm of the sun, power of the moon

Make me rise to the castle lawn

Do what ye will and it harm none"

The next moment, she found herself on the lawn of the castle. The shadows were dark and long and under the cover of darkness, Darcy slipped towards the back entrance of the castle, keeping a watchful eye for guards and dogs. There were servants walking around near the back entrance carrying platters and trays and vessels. Moving closer, Darcy snatched an apron lying on a bench nearby and tied it around her waist to try to blend in as one of the kitchen maids.

'You there!' Someone yelled.

Darcy turned, expecting to get caught. But the person only pointed to someone behind her and Darcy heaved a sigh of relief. She walked quickly away into the kitchen from the back door and found the staircase leading to the top floors. She climbed the stairs all the while looking around to make sure no one was looking at her. As she walked by one of the rooms on the second floor, she could hear angry raised voices. Standing behind a huge flowing curtain at the entrance of the room, Darcy peeped in. There was a very tall, whipcord lean and an extremely handsome man standing near a window, facing away from the door and a very beautiful woman with almost white gold hair standing next to him. A woman with black-gray hair was seated on a very plush and expensive loveseat. A young maid-servant dressed as servants do in black frock over which a white frilly apron was thrown stood in front of them cowering in fear.

How dare you? The woman on the chair shouted at the servant maid. How dare you let her out of your sight? Do you know what you have done?

Mother said the woman with the white-gold hair. It was not her fault.

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Don't tell me whose fault it is, the woman in the chair snapped. She is being paid to take care of the child and she could not even do that properly.

Mother, the tall man said. Enough now! Everything is under control now. No one got hurt, except the dog... but seems like the dog will be alright now according to the vet. So let's stop this now.

Turning to the maid servant he said 'You are dismissed.'

The maid curtsied and immediately fled from the room, missing Darcy by inches. All of a sudden, she heard the child in the next room crying.

Oh no.. Julianne is crying again... I better go to her, said the woman with the white-gold hair.

NO Theresa. The child must learn obedience. She needs to know that she has broken an important rule today and must be punished. If you go to her now, you will make her soft and she will never respect you again. The old woman asserted.

Mother said Theresa, she is my daughter. I must go to her.

I am your mother. You were also brought up in the same way by me. I know what I am doing. Now, let's get back to what we were talking about.

Theresa looked at the tall man and implored Please Jordan, talk to her... I cannot stand to hear my daughter cry.

The tall man replied, I am sorry Theresa, but mother is correct. She must learn to obey and be punished if she disobeys.

Theresa was silent. She did not know what to do.

Darcy was shocked. Such heartless people she thought. As none of the people in the room seemed to be facing the door, Darcy quickly passed the room and went towards the door from where she heard the child cry.

She opened the door and saw the little girl in a corner by her dog who seemed to be sleeping covered in blood soaked bandages.

'Hello Sweetie', Darcy whispered.

The little girl was startled out of her crying. She sniffed. Darcy held out her arms and the girl immediately threw herself into them. What a sweet child, thought Darcy cuddling the child and soothing her.

'Who are you'? The child asked.

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'I am Darcy. Who are you?'

'My name is Julianne'.

'That's a big name. I will call you Julie'.

'We are not allowed to shorten our names. Grandma won't like it'.

'Well, this will be our secret ok'? Darcy said.

'Ok', the little girl agreed happily.

.So sweetie, what happened to your dog?'

Buster got hurt today, Julianne said, and her eyes filled with tears again. I heard the doctor tell Uncle Jordan, that if he does not get better tonight, they will have to kill him. I don't want my dog to die she sniffed.

'Hush now... Baby. We won't allow that to happen. Come on; let's see how we can help Buster'.

Crouching beside the dog, Darcy told the little girl 'I will try to help him ok... but you must be very quiet. Do you understand?'

The girl nodded.

Darcy placed her hands on the dog and whispered

***"Charm of the sun, Power of the moon,
If it be let it be, heal and mend
Do what ye will, And it harm none"***

Then, Darcy felt a sharp pain in her backside, the like of which she has never known and struggled to stay focused. Her eyes closed on a wave of pain so acute, she thought she would pass out from it. And then moments later, all was calm again. Darcy opened her eyes and saw that the dog was well again.

The little girl was staring at her with awe and was overwhelmed with gratitude.

'Are you an angel?' she asked awed.

Darcy laughed and the sound was like twinkling bells on a Christmas morning. 'No honey, I am not an angel'.

Spellbound

'You are to me. The girl insisted. Thank you...thank you... thank you... and a million times thank you for saving my dog'.

'You're welcome sweetheart. Now go to sleep'.

The girl fell asleep beside her dog dreaming about angels and miracles. Darcy sighed, the sigh of contentment of a job well-done. While the little girl slept peacefully and contentedly, Darcy slipped out of the room and ran down the stairs taking care not to make a single sound. As she was nearing the kitchen door to slip outside, she collided with someone coming on the other side.

'Oomph!' she said against a broad chest.

The man on the other side was delighted to find a beautiful woman in his arms and was reluctant to let go.

'Excuse me Sir' Darcy said.

'Hello my beauty.. Wow...what a beautiful woman.. Come dear we will have fun' said the man.

'Let me go...you big Idiot' struggled Darcy.

'Come...Come... stop dawdling'. Said the Big Man.

'Let me go!'

'What is going on here?' Shouted a new voice from behind.

They turned and Darcy saw the tall man she had seen talking earlier in the upper floor. Jordan something the woman had called him, Darcy recalled.

This big brute is not letting me go said Darcy, her face in shadows.

The tall man looked at the man holding Darcy with a critical, disapproving eye and the man immediately let go of Darcy and stammered Sorry your Highness, Did not mean any harm and he fled the room.

'Who are you?' Asked the tall man.

'No one your Highness... just one of the kitchen maids' replied Darcy. For some reason caution and prudence demanded that she be quiet about herself and she did not want this man to know who she was.

Spellbound

'What are you doing outside the servant quarters at this time of night.. It is not very safe for a young woman like you with all the guards prowling around'.

'I apologize. I was just leaving' Darcy said.

'Come, I will walk you towards your quarters', the tall man said.

Darcy had no choice but to walk along with him. She was terrified, yet a strange kind of longing was through her as she looked at this tall, dark and handsome prince. The kind of prince every girl dreams of finding one day and then she remembered his heartlessness, when they heard the child crying and thought to herself, He may be a hot prince, but he is cold at heart.

'Is this where you stay?' asked the prince.

'Yes your highness, Thank you for your help' replied Darcy turning to look at him and her face now no longer in shadows, but clear under the moonlight and the palace lights was startlingly beautiful to the Prince who just stared at the young woman standing before him.

Before he could say a word, Darcy slipped back into the shadows beyond the row of houses and was gone.

Spellbound

Chapter 7

Who was she? Jordan Harrington could not stop thinking about the maid in distress, he ran into the previous night. She was without a doubt the most stunning woman he had ever seen in his life. He could not for the life of him, recall ever having seen before and he was sure that a woman that beautiful would have definitely stood out. He was determined to find out more about the mysterious maid. Anyone that beautiful should not be working for a living. She was too gorgeous to be a maid, and Jordan was determined to offer her something better.

He summoned his head butler Harrison who walked into the room bowing 'You rang, your highness?'

Harrison, how many maids are there in the castle?

'Maids Sir?' Asked the butler perplexed. The prince had never before taken an interest in the running of the castle.

Yes..maids.. I found one trespassing in hallways last night and would like to know who that is...

Oh I see..well we have around 12 maids working the castle Sir... I will check with the housekeeper as to who it could have been.

No...never mind, just call them all and I will check myself Jordan replied.

The maids all stood before the prince in awe. They had never been summoned before and were both excited and apprehensive. Jordan looked at each and could not find the beautiful one from last night.

Are you sure, all the maids are here? Is anyone missing?

No Sir.. all of them are accounted for.

....To BE Continued...