Frozen Again: Faith Hope and Love

by SetsunaKou

Summary

If love can thaw a frozen heart, will it heal a lost soul? Set 2 years later Elsa, Anna, Kristoff, with Rapunzel & Flynn go on an incredible journey of discovery. Kristanna's wedding turns to dangerous adventure as the sisters uncover the magic of selfless love & God's forgiveness. Can a repentant Hans give Elsa her own True Love destined romance? Book 1 in a Trilogy by HarukaKou. COMPLETE with original illustrations by SetsunaKou interspersed throughout! :)
"Summer's End"
(We do not own "Frozen" nor any of its characters.)
Act I

Prologue

Cold. Inside, I'm so cold…

It was conversely a warm day for this uneventful summer in the year of our Lord 1841 upon the idyllic rolling waves of the Scandinavian seas.

Visions of a spired castle rises on the shining horizon hovering over the intricately sculpted hedge mazes, hundreds of years preserved on this prominent estate. A stylized green topiary dances scenic fleur de lis before the groomed gravel path leading to the long drawbridge of this inviting Renaissance water castle.

Crossing its majestic stone and monk's brick threshold, hungry eyes take in the beautiful tapestries that line the hallowed vaulted ceilings and magnificently decorated walls full of proud ancient weaponry, numerous mounted trophies, historical Naval art and royal portraits as the wide double doors wordlessly swing open for him. A rich collection of elegant crystal chandeliers, plush Oriental rugs and gold-gilt Louis XVI French neo-classical furniture, as well as a Danish kingly throne greet him upon trumpeted 'welcome home' return arrival.

Stepping a dashing self-possessed boot back out upon the gravel drive outside his mirror reflective moat surrounded castle, the distinguished young lad with deep ambitions holds his noble chin high. His clear windswept gaze was satisfied as he strides across the sandstone pavilion's statue adorned marble bridge.

From that view he pauses to see the diverse fuschia spray of flora dotting the well cared for gardens on the vista, as they sweetly fragrance the air with their fresh untainted scent. All of these led, at last, to his favorite complex of royal stables, filled with steeds who shared in the liberating wind that blew through every part of his masterful youthful soul, destined for greatness…

Endless days and countless dreams that never came to pass for a comely well-bred boy spent alone exploring the castle interior's secreted staircases, always in the shadows beyond the library he frequented in solitude. Whether cloaked in fantasized mystery within his palace's double thick walls or in leisure on horseback roaming freely over a thousand hectares of lush fertile countryside filled with farming areas, bountiful flower gardens, stunning lakes and tall oak trees set upon the glorious hills of the Kingdom of Denmark, the resplendent landscape itself gave the clever young man vast scope for lavish musings.

Shaking off the illusionary blue sky and green grass mirage seen via his mind's eye alone, this same young man never imagined peeling potatoes in the dank smelly galley of a sullied rat-infested ship would be in his vaulted line of vocation.

My brothers always did have a demented sense of humor concerning me.

Prince Hans of the Danish Southern Isles still had the good humor enough to chuckle to himself in the foul stenched darkness, a far cry from home. Hans replays the 'sentencing phase' of his twelve older brothers passing judgment for his crimes – odious as they may be, in the benefit of hindsight reflection - against their neighboring Norwegian country's kingdom just beyond the true blue North Seascape.
It was a kingdom called 'Arendelle', in all its shimmering magical glory, now far beyond his reach…

Ah, Arendelle...such a radiant light still holds fascination for me beneath all that wondrous ice…
By way of a seagull, we fly over the Scandinavian oceans and winding isles to the south, its seadipped pure white wings iridescent as they catch every shiny ray of a dazzling sun over of freshly new awakening world.

It was nearing the end of the cherished short summer in the land of the midnight sun, whose icy dress, for few ephemeral moments, melt into the valleys beneath the yet snowcapped mountains, as the curious seagull peeks its head through the inviting palace window…

Knock Knock Knock.

Pause.

Knock Knock Knock.

Silence comes the only reply for an extremely patient, very kindly, hope springs eternal plump woman who always held the air of childlike freshness that the royal family of the Norwegian kingdom of Arendelle has been fortunate to employ in their service for the past 30 odd years as both palace housekeeper and unofficial royal nanny, not to mention quiet powerhouse who has kept this Arendelle sovereignty's royal house going through the good times and the bad.

Oh, dear Lord Jesus, bless their poor souls with your peace.

After a moment spent in devout silent sorrowful prayer for that which would certainly class as the bad times in Arendelle, Gerda, who had tasted now and then more than a few days of the bad in the past herself, as the dutiful and loving servant, still dusted every morning their rooms, along with the black curtained portraits that she and Kai had drawn over their beloved rulers that terrible day when beloved Queen Idun and her loving husband, Arendelle's King Agdar, were lost to their nation nearly five years ago.

Compassionate Gerda would still pause in respectful memory for the kingdom's departed leaders on that fateful final journey beyond the fjord's safety through the Skagerragat Straight, Kattegat Bay, or the Baltic Sea - one of the vast volumes of water to the South in between Arendelle's coast on their trip to Prussia where another royal daughter, the Queen's niece, was celebrating a joyous day amidst Arendelle's grief –

A royal wedding the King and Queen's storm-tossed shipwrecked vessel never arrived at.

And you're not here to see your own daughter's happy day. Sigh.

But it's still a royal wedding to make them proud! Gird up, Gerda! Spit-spot, busy day! Lots to be done!

The stout-hearted lady claps her hands together, and brushes both a stray hair and stray matching
"Princess Anna! You get up right this minute!" In her sweet, yet commanding tones, Gerda calls through the closed bedroom door of the younger of the two royal siblings who were both the pride and joy of Arendelle's people. For the two now come of age young girls who had shown their mettle in selfless sacrifice and the triumph of sisterly love not two years ago, were all the pride and joy the kingdom had left with both their parents deceased.

*Sigh.*

And now my little Anna is growing up... Gerda had long felt an affinity with this very bright, sprightly girl who traversed a long and dangerous journey out of friendship and love for another in peril, as the older woman herself had for her sweet Kai all those years ago.

It seems just like yesterday... Busy hands that needed to constantly move neaten the fresh spray of flowers from her garden displayed in a vase on the nearby windowsill.

And as if right on cue, he appears, and Gerda shares a shining eyed smile full of matronly pride with the Butler/footman/court official/tutor and everything that had to be done in between older gentleman, the love of her life named Kai as he peeks his strawberry blonde, turned more carroty over the years since their own youthful adventures, nearly balding head around the long hall's corner. He gives his wife a rather toothy grin and inquisitive look on his jovial foppish face, to which Gerda simply affords her fellow servant, whom the king and queen allowed to stay on even when the rest of the Castle was shut off from the world, a smile and nod in response before going back to her job of waking up the sound sleeping beauty whose loud snoring could be heard audibly beyond the door.

"Princess Anna! Have you ever heard of the bride being late for her own wedding!??"

Placing frustrated hands on her ample hips, Gerda authoritatively shames the dizzy young girl as she did when Anna was small, letting some familial teasing mix with her duty on this happiest a felicitous mornings.

Gerda twirls the well-tended white bloom between her fingers, remembering being a new bride herself given the gift of Kai and his white rose back by the Good Lord above, Who watches over all little lost children who believe in Him.

*Big yawn!*

"Huh? Bride...? Who's getting married..." snore...

Yawn, Mouth smack, smack, sleepy head jerk!

"You are, little Anna." She could hear the playful condescension in Gerda's tone through the closed door.

"Whoa! That's me! What time is it?! Wow! I'm gonna be a *bride* today!" There was pure joy evident in the princess's sweet sunshiny voice with that final sung out sentiment that the older woman could sense glowing, even through the closed door.

"Whoo-wee! But not looking like this! Elsa! That is one bad hair day! Elsa! Help me!"

Sounds of noisy chaos and clumsy tripping over bed sheets and general crashing to the floor is accompanied by panicked yet deliriously joyous giggling, all signaling the girl was awake and ready to attend her own wedding at long last.
Both caring Gerda and faithful Kai shake their amused heads at what a lively day awaited them all, if Princess Anna, the girl who put the sparkle back in every soul in Arendelle's eye, had any say to it.

The dragonstil architecture of the high vaulted ceiling in the medieval wooden slatted interior rosemail design paneled Chapel Cathedral stave church was the highest spire in all of Arendelle Castle. It was even higher and more auspicious than either the tower on the East side, whose cylindrical roof made of ornate carved stone housed the royal family's quarters, library and balcony, or the West wing's thick protruding stone tower that held the Council Chamber, Great Hall and Portrait Room.

And that's how it should be.

For the ruler of this kingdom called 'Arendelle' was also the head of the Church of Norway, same as it was for some 800 years since the honorable King Olaf II, the country's canonized 'Saint Olaf', achieved.

The former Viking king had converted to Christianity in his youth, and he ruled his kingdom in wisdom, justice, simplicity and piety in order to unify all of Norway under Christ and subsequently, lead to the Christianization of the entire Scandinavian region, thus giving Norway's first Christian ruler the name of 'Holy Protector and Eternal King of Norway.'

"Faith like light should be simple and unbending; while love, like warmth, should beam forth on every side and bend to every necessity of our brethren."

Queen Elsa of Arendelle understood well the truth behind the words of that holy man of God, Martin Luther, when he spoke of God's gifts of light and warmth, the meaning of which still seared into the ice of her regretful soul.

After her rebellion against the forces thriving within her had caused a maelstrom of trouble for this kingdom, her utterly good and sweet little sister had to shine brightly with her effervescent light and endless belief in her older sibling to bring them both out of the cold loneliness and into the warmth of love's light.

"Anna, it was your unfailing spirit that brought me back again."

Since then, every waking second, every dream-filled night, Elsa, as she learned to control her growing powers for good, would still beg forgiveness for her willful transgressions from not only that faithful and ever-loving little sister, but also from the one true God, who she, in her fear and pain, had turned her face from—though He never turned His from hers.

"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow..." Isaiah 1:8

Recalling this particular passage being read a long time ago by her own beloved father from the pulpit one Sunday mass morning in this very chapel, his loving eyes meeting hers meaningfully across the room, a grateful tear for the Lord above's infinite forgiveness of past sin falls to Elsa's cheek. Cascades of the stunningly beautiful girl's platinum blond hair ripple over her bowed head in deep study of the Bible held in her trembling hands while the enchanting strains of 'Fairest Lord Jesus' begin to play above her.

Unbeknownst to the young woman who secretly crept into the chapel sanctuary early every morning to devote her once confused mind and heart to the stability of the Lord's Word that brought her such peace and tranquility as it had to Sainted King Olaf, all those centuries ago, just then, from the upper central nave several floors above the raised roof trusses, the choir begins their
practice run for the special holy ceremony to take place in the chapel today.

Queen Elsa wipes the tears from her enchanting icy blue eyes as the choir members, not seeing their royal sovereign in the furthest corner of the church pews where one's candlelight was her only company beyond the Lord, start to sing their parish's signature, most favorite hymn, Deilig er Jorden… 'Fairest Lord Jesus.:'

["Deilig er Jorden! 
Prægtig er Guds Himmel! 
Skjøn er Sjælens Pilgrims gang! 
Gjennem de favre 
Riger paa Jorden 
Gaae vi til Paradis med Sang!"]

"Lovely it is on the Earth! 
Glorious in God's Heaven! 
Wondrous is the soul's pilgrimage! 
Through the great kingdoms on earth 
We go to Paradise with song!"

"Please, dearest Lord, give Your blessing on my beloved little sister today, and all her days to come, be filled with Your eternal song." Elsa bows her head in prayer, before subtly leaving the chapel, making the sign of the Cross as she goes.

"For the first time in forever, there'll be a wedding filled with light!"

A pure sweet voice rings in perfect musical key through the pristine blue sky, as a young girl thrusts a window in the west side of Arendelle Castle open, to greet the summer morning, to the soaring birds floating above the sparkling waters of fjord.

"For the first in forever—this corset's totally way too tight…!" All the romance in the clear, crisp day's entrance is lost in a second, as Princess Anna makes a sour note to match her sour face. Her already too tight corset doesn't want to cooperate with her heaving and huffing body, in the attempt to fasten up the stays.

"Silly! I told you not to gorge yourself on all those chocolates and frosted fyrstekake cookies last night." Big sister Elsa comments with a small chuckle at her younger sibling's late night antics of stuffing her face full of sweet treats, till her cheeks were akin to a chipmunk's.

"But I was so hungry….and Gerda bakes a mean marzipan!" Anna whines, recalling the sugary confection her loving servant had a knack for baking.

"You can say that again! They were way too good to pass up! I must've had a half dozen myself!" A young woman with brown cropped hair pops her pretty perky head up from behind the bed where she had dropped a hairpin. "You've got to get Gerda to give me that recipe!"

"Yum…!" Anna and their Prussian cousin who hailed from the southwestern kingdom of Corona, come to visit for the big event, both had a secret weakness for sweets and sugary cookies and chocolate on top, to boot. "How could we resist?!

"I adore marzipan! Yummy…!" Both girls were delirious with sweet treats dancing in their heads
as they simultaneously sway back and forth all a-smile.

"Look at you two!" Elsa too smiles through gritted teeth, as she quite physically has a workout herself, giving another valiant attempt at lacing up Anna's corset laces. She even uses her own well-turned knee as helpful chameleon, Pascal, finishes looping the straps to keep the ties taught and in place before achieving closure.

"Well, I think those cookies were a bit too much for this corset! There!" Elsa gives a pent up sigh of relief as she bows the final criss-cross link on the corset shut.

"Wow, I wish I had a big sis to dress me up for my wedding. Price of being an only child, I guess. You're so lucky, Anna!" The brown haired cousin had been kept busy artistically arranging Anna's orangey hair with a wreath of gold-pressed flowers and a fresh spray of white and red roses, picked fresh from the garden.

"Whoa! You look like you're gonna pop, cousin!" Leaning over to see why the chatty young bride went uncharacteristically silent suddenly, Rapunzel notes after Anna's green eyes reflecting in hers, looking quite frantic.

"Can I breathe yet?" Anna barely whispers, her tone thin and wispy as she's been holding her breath all this time.

"Of course you have to breathe, Anna!" Elsa leaves her work on Anna's corset and takes her little sister's shoulders, gasping for air, with alarm on her own pale features when she sees her sister's normally ruddy and fresh face, all tinted purple from lack of oxygen. "Just take small breaths."

Whooosh!

Anna does as told and sucks in a tiny little morsel of breath, but after a few seconds of light-headed panic, she can't help herself from indulging in a larger exhale. The result of the larger amount of air her lungs had been yearning for, was not a pretty picture as Pascal's big, big eyes bulge out and he covers them with his hands, turning his body into a scared yellow color.

Pop! Pop! Pop!...Pop!

One by one, the corset straps indeed let go. Buttons and clasps flying everywhere, like bullets, as Anna nearly doubles over with the expelled relief, as the deflated corset sinks to her knees, much to Elsa's dismay.

"Who needs that stupid thing anyway?! I never liked them! I bet my dress will fit just fine without it!" In true Anna fashion, she impulsively kicks off the despised article of clothing, and it flings out the open window, carried by the wind and as if by cosmic design, it lands on the head of a certain, tall young man, messing his 'unmanly' blonde mane as he gives a high-pitched yelp, scaring a poor Sven when he realizes what the lacy, cream colored bit of cloth and bone represented.

"Don't ask me. I wear mine on the outside." Rapunzel sings as she tries to stay out of the sisters' lively bantering. She truly wished she had a sister herself, all those years in the empty past, spent in that tower.

"Oh, never mind...Anna, every bride requires her trousseau to be complete. It's part of the entire marriage tradition. Besides, you'll be on display before all of Arendelle today. Don't you want to look your best?" Elsa, though far from wicked vanity, always had an elegant style and deep sense of fashion, like her dear mother before her. Queen Idun, had been known throughout the kingdoms of Europe for her grand and sophisticated panache of classic clothing choices. And today was the
day Anna would wear her mother's most cherished garment - her Mama's wedding dress.

"Well, Kristoff is the only one I need to look at me today. And I know he wouldn't care if I was wearing Sven's smelly old dropsack! He'd marry me anyway! He'd love me no matter what." A hopeless romantic, Anna blissfully wraps a sheet from her messy, unmade bed around her nearly naked form, save for the traditional light blue undergarments, since ancient Norwegian suspicion demanded that both bride and groom had to wear for their wedding night to ward off the Devil.

"Ooh, that's a weird thought! Not Kristoff in pale blue undies, but the Devil being scared of it! ....Ah, don't go there yet!" Anna says aloud to herself while drooling over her would-be husband.

"I felt the exact same way with Eugene! Isn't love grand?!" Sigh

Rapunzel hugs her cousin's neck as the two share a dreamy sigh of their respective male counterparts. Neither realized though, in their feminine fancies, that the third young woman in the room knew none of this type of love's great mysteries. Elsa smiled with a trace of sadness on her as yet-untouched-by-romance's-kiss lips.

All those years we each lived in seclusion. All those years you were lost and still managed to find true love, shows that happy endings do happen to even sheltered girls like us.

She watches with proud sentimentialty as her baby sister recklessly leans out the window with that 'I'm a girl in love' look on her every feature, causing Elsa to capitulate that dreaded corset as a discarded miscreant not invited to the wedding.

She knew that the free spirit who was Anna epitomized the very essence of zest and vivaciousness, along with a plentiful dose of liveliness and verve to go with her boundless energy—none of which could ever be squeezed in by a confining corset.

Unlike dull me. I could wear my corset all day.

Elsa, though being the 'good girl she had to be', simply because she wanted to be good, every now and then, could feel days when corsets were too restricting herself.

Maybe Anna is wise than I in that respect as well.

Anna catches sight of a certain blonde fiancé, who thankfully, busy talking to himself, doesn't see her, as his clumpy boots pace back and forth in the gardens below her window, Elsa had watches her youthful sister with affection at her very Anna-like outburst.

Anna gasps, jumps back, and hides her reddened face in flowery sheets, giggling uncontrollably, trying to curtail her girlish fantasies and hurriedly pulls on her mother's ornate champagne colored brocade wedding dress over her traditional light blue bloomers, treating the special gown as if it were no more than an outdoor summer frock, rather than the exquisite fur trimmed gold crocus designed wedding gown she always dreamed of donning one day, and she shakes herself back to cold reality.

Splat splat splat

Literally.

"Olaf!" Unsuitably jaw-dropped in her dazzling formal attire, Anna screeches the name of her adorable snowman friend, who, through Elsa's kindness and honed control of her frosty prowess, had his own personal 'snow flurry' to keep him all in one unmelted piece, above his head continually.
Loving surprises, every morning as a wake-up call, Olaf would be mischievous enough, picking up a naughty thing or two from Kristoff and Sven's antics, to toss a few tiny snowflakes in through the open window, to land on Anna's freckled nose, as he greeted his favorite ladies every morning, rain or shine, and generally at the most inopportune of times. He made his snowy entrance their chilly alarm clock that late sleeper Anna usually needed.

But it was totally not necessary today! Anna squiggles her upturned nose at the melty snowflakes dripping down her face. She, as per usual, goes at Olaf in a spirited 'snowball' fight involving tossed pillows and stuffed toys laying amply about her room since childhood.

"I'm REALLY gonna get you this time, Olaf!" Careless of her handmade garb, and Rapunzel's unfinished hairstyling, Anna dashes away, weaving about the room and crashing into every piece of furniture with her big frilly gown, even as a chuckling Olaf bobs and weaves from her fervent grasp.

"Ohhh! So this is Olaf?! I've heard so much about you, Olaf! This is Pascal." The too-sane chameleon waves slowly, his two eyes blinking at the raucous snowman.

"I'm so pleased to meet you! I'm Rapunzel, Elsa and Anna's cousin." She smiles, offering a hand to his twigs.

"I'm pleased to meet you too—ohhhhh!" Olaf slides across the wood floor to smash into the mirror until fortunately it was he and not the 7 year bad luck glass that splits apart.

"Here, Anna, catch!" Playful Rapunzel tosses Olaf's squirming body away from his head that tumbles across the floor with a pair of spazzed out eyes rolling. She was enjoying this fun 'game' of un-building a snowman.

"Cousin Rapunzel! Anna! Olaf! Stop this! ANNA! You're going to ruin your—dressssss~!" A frustrated Elsa attempts to be the 'big sister' of the soon-to-be-bride and older, already married cousin, who were both acting like eight-year-olds, or less, with snowman buddy cohort.

Their elder cousin having joined in the fray of throwing things, as well as Olaf, through the air, didn't help one bit, as Anna and her snowman run around in dizzy circles about the room.

A tossed pillow sham landed right in Elsa's face, resulting in her tripping on Anna's dashing about, flailing gold trimmed train, causing the elder sister, sleek in her filmy purple bridesmaid dress, to go dangerously face forward towards the lit fireplace that was blazing, despite the unusually warm summer weather. (Actually 68 degrees today! Which was way warm for Norway at any time of the year.)

Elsa protectively puts up her hands to shield her face, and in doing so, throws out a quick flurry of soft powdered snow that not only subdues the raging fire in the fireplace to ash, but also coats the disembered firelogs with many layers of snow to create a cushion to break her fall.

_Oof!_

Elsa breathes into the frozen particles on her reddened, yet further unharmed, cheek.

"Wow! That was amazing! I wish I could do that!" Rapunzel comments, now seeing her cousin's superpowers that she'd heard so much about, first-hand.

"Elsa?! You okay?!"

"Yes, Anna, I'm fine." Elsa, with Pascal's web-toed aid, quietly rumbles as she dusts her long
lavender sleeves off, as a meek Anna and curious Rapunzel help her up, one arm each, guiltily sharing relieved, toothy and plucky smiles with Olaf, who raises his two stick arms quite innocently.

"But you three are in trouble now!" Elsa doesn't want to forget the fun of this final hour of being just two sisters unattached to anyone but each other, as she sends a cascade of ice crystals, so fine and well aimed, they'd not hurt a baby's soft backside, but they would be chilly enough to 'punish' her willful younger sister and over-friendly cousin, who acted just like another sister—another younger sister, at that.

A wily Rapunzel, who'd learned a thing or two from someone she was pretty close to about dodging and weaving, moves away from the flurrious attack, but Anna was not so nimble on her bare feet as her older 'cuz.

"Cold, cold, cold, cold, COLD…!" Anna squeals again as Elsa mischievously sprinkles the crystals down her sister's delicately designed rosemaling pattern bodice. Anna pulls the dress front half down as Elsa then turns to direct a blast of ice shards at a whistling out the window Olaf. The sneaky snowman was immediately shot with hundreds of ice bullets and he dramatically pretends to fall down dead in the windowsill, even though 'death by impaling' or mountain tossing couldn't kill this immortal man of snow; and in his overacting, actually does tumble from the high window of the castle's west wing.

"ANNA! Is something wrong up there?! I saw ice streaming from the window, and ice shards and snow flurries and then Olaf fell out the ledge! Are you all right in there?! Whoo…" Kristoff, from his pacing wanderings below, had industriously climbed and scaled the castle's spires to reach his affianced bride in unknown danger to courageously come to her rescue. But now, as he peers his big head through the window, he was in full view of seeing his innocent Anna needed nothing but to get the rest of her wedding dress back on.

"Yeah…you look all…all right…" Honest, simple Kristoff stumbles over both words and balance as he bashfully lowers his bewitched eyes from glimpsing his sweet Anna in such a state of undress that he clumsily falls back down from the roof he just heroically scrambled up. Luckily, he slides and bounces on his sturdy bottom until he reaches the safety of the ground, embroidered wedding bunda and black tie and all, atop a smushed snowman, fortuitously placed there to break his fall.

"…And my neck, if I had one." His prize carrot just sticking out, Olaf's deflated mouth chuckles in dismay from beneath the large man.

"KRISTOFF!" Anna rushes to the windowsill, her pale blue bloomers and undergarments on full display to the whole courtyard. Thankfully there was no one present but aforementioned bridegroom, who immediately gets to his feet and skedaddles along with the squashed snowman in tow.

"I'll see you later?! Bye, Sven, bye, Olaf!" Anna simply waves, wiggling her fingers at his quickly retreating form.

"Hey, he's cute! Nice legs! Extremely tight and muscular…" Peering out the window beside a dreamy Anna, Rapunzel compliments her younger cousin's choice in beefy groom as she quite sisterly then tickles Anna's open tummy, causing the girl to giggle gleefully, and the anxiety of the embarrassing moment passed quite into humor now.

Generous-hearted Rapunzel then reaches out to tickle Elsa, too, seeing both sisters could use an extra smile just then. Elsa smiles as she just manages to squeak out of being squeezed between a sisterly trio, with Anna thoroughly enjoying the open love and affection of her family.
"And he'll be brideless in one hour if we can't be more serious here! Anna, dress! Cousin, hair! Let's get this wedding on the road!" She lets herself giggle and chatter with the other two, like one of the girls, as all three lovely ladies busy themselves at the joyful task of transforming one sweetly charming, yet plucky and at times, awkward, littlest princess into a blushing, beaming, beautiful bride…

Speaking of blushing…

Kristoff still couldn't have turned any shade redder than the similar colored, vibrant, wild-gooseberries that grew big and juicy in the gardens by the back entrance to the chapel where he was dejectedly plopped on the ground.

"How was I supposed to know she was practically undressed?!" Large, manly hands shielded his mortified eyes that had seen too much, too soon, in shame. The burly blonde tries to justify to himself and Sven his recent embarrassing action to the summer skies empty blue ethers.

"But it's never good manners to peek in a girl's bedroom window! I thought Cliff and Bulda taught you that!" 'Sven' counters in his funny, warpy voice, as the droopy eyed reindeer continues to merely chew on the berry bush, one furry eyebrow raised in the guilty man's direction.

"I know! I know! But I thought she was danger! Cut me a break, Sven!" Kristoff answers (his own conscience) blaming the innocent beast for his self recriminations.

"Now Anna will think you're some dirty, peeping Tom! How's that to start a marriage!" 'Sven' queries Kristoff's frustration at his own awkwardness with the opposite sex.

"Now that depends on what you thought of what you've just seen." A smooth voice enters the conversation. Kristoff looks up over Sven's hulking dark taupe grey and beige fur form, chewing berries and his cud, above his confused, ashamed head.

"Hey, there, big guy. Nice knees." The tall, dark man, wearing a dark purple and grey tunic complete with a regal brown sash and debonair demeanor, appears out of nowhere. He leans down to greet the prone, blonde man lying in the grass.

Kristoff was wearing some traditional Norwegian fancy trimmed colorful cream vest, ceremonial black and brown and teal edged short pants and knee high white stockings that all grooms donned for their weddings in Norway, probably to accommodate all the raucous dancing to come at the reception.

Looking forward to that…

"No! I didn't see anything! Whoa…Hi…Where'd you come from?" At first denying any wandering eye misdeed on his part, then greeting this new stranger hovering over him, Kristoff jumps up, clumsily knocking his head onto a protruding tree branch as he jumps to his none-too-agile clumpy feet in those silly black shoes with big silver buckles, as he uses Sven as an unwilling pulley.

"Just been admiring the medieval architecture of your castle and lush foliage of its pristine grounds."
Kristoff, for some reason, didn't quite take a shine to this newcomer, who was standing cocksure and confident, good-looking and dashing, with a gallant smirk on his too-handsome face.

This guy really reminds me of someone...Someone I don't like...The knobs and buttons in his brain begin clicking and whirring but this morning's trials and the whole wedding ordeal was already too much to tax his less-than-cunning brain a tick further, so he lets it go with a snort.

"Yeah...it's pretty nice out back here in summer. Just been exploring it myself for the first time." Kristoff makes pleasant conversation, gazing out over the rows of Gerda and Kai's red and white rosebeds to the green, green meadows foreshadowed by the steep mountain ranges they were yet capped with snow overlooking them beyond the clear blue sky.

"But, I don't know much about this castle's architecture stuff—cause it isn't mine." Kristoff glances back towards the magnificent multi-spired marble and stone laid palace, complete with lighthouse and church chapel in all its creamy glory.

"Yeah, I didn't take a hard-working entrepreneurial type of fella like you for a palace pet, castle courtesan, royal rabble kind of guy, are you? Now me, I could get used to this kind of place. I could get used to this easy, laid back, no worries, breakfast-in-bed kind of easy life. By the way, the name's 'Flynn'...er...'Eugene.' The little woman wants to call me 'Eugene.' If you're gonna be family, I might as well let you in on my little secret."

Flynn Rider, oops, 'Sorry', Eugene Fitzherbert, sticks his gloved hand out for Kristoff to shake. The sly operator gives the slow-to-respond Norwegian younger man his most charming smile.

"Kristoff, right? You're wedding's gonna be a doozy, from all the servants bustling around the castle getting that wedding feast underway. Not to mention all those singers and musickers prepping in that all-inspiring in-palace church hitting some high notes. We need a choir like that in Corona—whew! A guy could be spoiled for beauty around here with that exuding elegance Snow Queen and that vivacious little sis of a princess you're getting hitched to. Major kudos on landing a cutie like her, Kris."

Boy, this guy's got a mouth on him! Doesn't he ever stop for breath?!

Kristoff, akin to his rocky northern family of trolls, pauses and blinks several times while silently listening in his honest simplicity to the stylish in his dark purple tunic Flynn, rattle off an entire wordy paragraph, without coming up for air in true smooth-talker flair.

Kristoff feels rather uncomfortable wearing his handmade woolen Bunda vest with the Lapland designs Anna insisted he wear for the wedding. He stuck out like a sore thumb in these royal settings wearing this colorfully trimmed with Sami designs cream vest that adopted 'Mom' Bulda, his rock, had painstakingly taught all the trolls how to help embroider for 'our Kristoff' as early wedding gift from his entire troll family.

"It's Kristoff. You must be Anna and Elsa's cousin...from Prussia?" A discomfited, though quite fetching in his bunda outfit, Kristoff comments at the 'commercial break', correcting Eugene's earlier diverting nickname.

"Uh...yeah...no, no, no, no. That's my wife, Rapunzel who's the blood relation. She's up there with your gal right now. You might've seen her—gorgeous brunette with the most adorable set of freckles traced above her little upturned nose. You couldn't have missed her. Well, I couldn't have..." Flynn trails off in his descriptive, mumbled ramblings. His eyebrows raise over his...
lowered eyelids rather amorously over the inward vision of his beautiful love.

"Rapunzel? Did somebody just say Rapunzel? Don't you LOVE that word? I've always loved the sound of that word! And the girl, too! I love Rapunzel! I've always wanted to grow some! The plant, not the girl! In summer! I love summer!" In his disassembled kooky way, Olaf awakens from his ten minute nap. He was a little distracted after staying up all the previous night keeping an over-excitement Anna company, with his snow jewels of wisdom from where he was aslumber atop a very peacefully chomping Sven.

"What—is—that—thing?" Flynn Rider's brown eyes bug out upon glimpsing the animated talking and walking snowman as Olaf takes a bounding leap from Sven's grazing back and does a clumsy showing off cartwheel, resulting in a three-part disembodiment of head, lower body and torso, rolling along the green lawn directly at Flynn's freaked out feet.

"Whoa! I should've brought that frying pan out here instead of giving it to you as a wedding present!" Flynn cries out, finding no weapon on his dolled-up self. "And boy, do I look good today!"

No weapon that is, beyond his shielding bare hands, ready to attack, karate-style.

So he does. "Hi-yah!"

Kick!

Poor Olaf is knocked apart again, just as he was getting it together, flying in all directions of the garden.

"Hey! Chill, Fitz! I know he's weird, but Olaf's a good little guy, and a good friend of Anna and Elsa since they were kids." Kristoff defends the three part snowman as he and Sven chase after rolling Olaf's runaway torso, then plopping the disattached magic snowman back together, sticking both branchy arms in place as if he was accustomed to reassembling this mystic, broken toy.

"Ooookay…..When in Norway, do as the Arendelle magic snowpeople do…Got it….." Sarcastic Flynn Rider considers his own dabbling with magic vis-à-vis his and Rapunzel's adventures as he incredulously adapts to any situation, even one where a kingdom of grown men play with lifelike snow.

You must've seen that coming…

"Sorry about that…Olaf…Old habit." Flynn covertly pockets an object from the ground as he speaks.

"Where's my nose?! Where's my nose?! My lovely big carrot nose! Did yousee it, Sven?" Olaf, reconstituted, save for his most favored facial feature, glares suspiciously at the big, carrot devouring reindeer. The two had already come to an understanding over the 'root' of their problem, or so he thought.

But before any further bad vibes were spread between a squint-eyed Olaf and behooved innocent Sven, Flynn produces the orange colored veggie from behind his back.

"Slippery hands can't help themselves…." Flynn, with his signature winning grin, plastered across his comely face, shoves the stolen carrot into Olaf's oval rounded head above his open mouth and
below his crossed eyes.

"Yay! Let's go!" Olaf happily bounces away, with a forgiven Sven and determined Kristoff right behind him, as they enter the church.

*Once a thief, always a thief...*

Flynn Rider ponders the vast question in more ways than one. He watches from a third person's point of view as Sven and Olaf prod and physically push an utterly dense Kristoff into the rear chapel's door towards his certain fate.

*Hmm...*
"Can I Say Something Crazy? YES!"

Act I

Chapter 2

Every corner of this Christian Church of Norway brims with celebratory joy and bright streaming sunlight through window after window of stained glass, whose refractions cast a multi-colored light show display on the altar, the aisles, even the ceiling, to the choir in the apse above—even as the gathering guests in the pews marvel at Arendelle's beautiful depiction of religious value, patriotic country spirit, and sisterly devotion. Queen Elsa spared no expense on this ceremonious affair—all rolled into the most glorious kind of festive occasion the beauteous summer season in Arendelle had to offer.

There were baskets of breathtaking flowers decorating every window, every pew. The chapel altar was bountiful of summer flora, for energetic Gerda and husband Kai, specialized in gardening skills since their youth together. Between the pair of well-wishers, this flowering church setting was flawlessly picturesque.

Achoo!

Unless you suffered from summer allergies.

"God bless you." There was something special about your sneeze being blessed by the highest Norwegian ecumenical authority, like the respected and aged Archbishop of Trondheim.

"Thank you, Your Majesty...eh, Your Highness...uhhh, I mean....Your Bishopness, Sir." A wide-eyed and awkward Kristoff was a jumbled mess of honorific titles for the elderly church official adorned with the traditional golden, bejeweled hat standing before him.

"Be at peace, my son. The blessing of the Lord be upon you." The older, short sighted clergyman lays on calming hand on the big young man's full of boundless energies crinkled forehead.

"But I was the one who sneezed! Shouldn't I be the one to get the holy bishop's blessing?! I think I need to be blessed by His bishopness!" A miffed, previously unnoticed behind strapping Kristoff's back was Olaf, yet under his private snow flurry, in frilly tie and dark suit jacket, making him look like a black and white penguin. Decked out and all, he was way too honest and a tad envious of the nervous groom getting all the attention as he whispers distinctly audibly from where he stood beside a sympathetic looking Sven who snorts to the rambling off at the mouth Olaf in reply.

Yes, Sven, after many entreaties and pleadings by the bride, and subsequently her queenly sister, finally gave permission, was allowed to not only enter this Holy Shrine for this auspicious occasion, but was also seen fit, as the groom's lifelong best friend and confidant, to stand in as Kristoff's 'best man.'

One couldn't expect Kristoff to tie the knot of this most import step in his life, without his loyal friend at his side. Besides, who would be the voice of Kristoff's conscience if Sven wasn't present?

So big, four-footed Sven the Reindeer, was to attend the wedding as special honorary guest of the
Queen, under the express condition that he be thoroughly bathed and cleaned until his antlers sparkled and his fur coat glistened before entering the holy shrine.

Each of his four hooves required leather sleeved bootings so as not to scratch nor mar the age-old stave church's polished wooden flooring.

A reindeer cloven hooved animal was something this Medieval church's post and lintel construction had never envisioned would be sharing in a hallowed Christian sacrament such as marriage beneath its raised roof trusses, support upper walls and huge grunnstokker beams, criss crossing the ceiling the central orchestra choir nave.

Just then, the sudden flaring music emanating from the central knave sector of the chapel causes a skittish Sven to nearly skid his unsteady legs in stockings in unsightly opposing directions. Luckily for him, responsible young man Kristoff was yet attentive enough to his best buddy's strive to wrap a steadying, strong arm around the teetering reindeer's fuzzy taupe neck.

"I got you, Sven!" Olaf in his naïve fervor has selflessly attached himself to the forest creature's furthermore hind leg in an attempted 'rescue.'

"Olaf, that's not helping. Leave him be, okay?" Looking dashing and dapper in his gold trimmed shirt and ornate vest, Kristoff, at first, chuckles at the heroism of the, by any scale, puny excuse for a snow person, as Olaf's two shiny black eyes tightly focus shut as his pair of scrawny stick arms strenuously push back at an already stabilized Sven's muscular rear shank, unintentionally shoving poor out-of-control Sven's shaky limbs towards the front altar's holy and royal regalia of Arendelle on proud yet humble before God, display.

"Whoa, there, big fella! W-whoa!" Kristoff starts to panic when his firm grip on Sven's shoulder falters. The reindeer, too panic, and heaves forward erratically, teetering himself on the close-by steps of impending disaster…

But Sven is fortunately saved again. But this time, though Kristoff alone was not able to hold up the hunking sides of oversized, snow-environed beastie, who was slipping and sliding as if was an ice skating rink across the altar, straight past the patient, half-blind and nearly deaf Bishop, who only notices a brief whoosh of air, that knocks his tower of a hat over his nearly sightless eyes.

Good thing a sharp eyed, handsome rogue does, as quick agile feet transport Flynn—Eugene—in no time flat from his front row pew seat to the climactic scene as he springs into action, all the while the attending audience gasps at the dangerous speed of large reindeer plunging towards their church and country's utmost treasures of the kingdom, arranged carefully along the altar table, about to be crashed into.

Flynn Rider not only manages to dash around the altar steps leading up to steady a tripping Kristoff, grasps the tipping scepter from falling off the table, and also manfully grabs hold of Sven's antlers and maneuvers the reindeer back to his spot where the relieved dizzied animal plunks to the safety of his flank. He also catches the dangling orb of Saint Olaf's from Sven's now stagnant antler before the holy object clatters to the ground as he then helps the kneeling in prayer, slow, methodical, and bewildered bishop to his feet, handing over both noted royal items with his breathlessly signature smirk in place on his face.

"I think these are safer with you, Padre." Flynn says as he turns back, straightening his purple tunic, to take his seat again, though flashing the ogling crowd his most charming grin and gallant bow.

"Wow, Kristoff! Don't you wish you were as fast and nimble and heroic in front of every person in
Arendelle as Flynn-er, Eugene?!” Basic Olaf had a simple way of naively stepping in it every time. "And he doesn't even have a fashionable Bunta on."

Kristoff gives the daft snowman a rolled-eye sigh, who got the new guy's name mixed up in a funny sort of way, as he was wont to do, as even the stately bishop is taken in by this shyster's shine.

The grateful audience even applauds for Flynn's heroism who saved their treasures and the cleric's blessing in the debonair purple tunic wearing man's direction.

"Let us each walk by faith and not by sight, on this most blessed of peaceful sacraments—a gift from Above." Though unable to see, the Bishop begins to speak a cherished verse on his lips, as he preaches his prepared sermon and falls to his knees reverently to retrieve his teetered headgear, giving the large golden crucifix affixed upon it, due homage before replacing the piece atop the crown of his aged noggin again, never noticing the chaos ensuing around him.

"Yeah, I'm really impressed by 'Flynn-er, Eugene', Olaf." Kristoff murmurs beneath his breath, the hair on the back of his neck standing up again when he watches that handsome devil wave to the nearly swooning young girls and old ladies in the pews.

But Anna's cousin married him, so he can't be all bad. Just...he's so familiar somehow...

However, before Kristoff could entertain another doubt, the music of the church suddenly flares to life and all thoughts disappear, but only of her.

The hymn playing trumpets, violins and harpsichord simultaneously cease—all but the singular voice of a customary lur—a long wooden horn instrument of ancient times—is played, to signal the arrival of the rest of the wedding party, the more eye-catching feminine side.

The rear door cracks open of the chapel, with joy evident on her face, as Gerda peeks her chubby cheeked head through the doors, waving a thumbs-up to the choirmaster that the bride and her maids were ready to make their grand entrance.

Anna had asked her beloved nanny, and close friend, since she and Elsa were but babes, true-hearted Gerda, to be her 'flower girl.' Though well past her girlhood, Gerda had that kind of innocence and joy in her soul that was as timeless as her love of all flora—especially made her the perfect and only choice for Anna to include in her wedding ceremony.

So now, pleasantly plump Gerda dances as if she was a young girl again, merrily down the aisle with a child-like purity as she scatters her own tended floral blooms, in all their fresh vivacity and colors, to the floor, inviting the bride to walk upon their flowery path of light.

But before the bride came the bridesmaids—Princess Rapunzel was touched and elated when her baby cousin wanted her to be a last-minute bridesmaid addition. At first, she didn't wish to intrude on the sister-sister only thing that Anna and Elsa had going on at this wedding but Anna reassured her fellow, impulsively headstrong and optimistic cousin that she would be a real 'stinker' if Rapunzel didn't join in this once in a lifetime festivity.

And after Elsa initiated the trio in a warm group hug, welcoming Rapunzel into their sisterhood truly, the whimsical brunette couldn't be a 'stinker' for long.

In fact, in all the church attendee's view, though having her own share of problems of the heart felt variety, Princess Rapunzel of Corona was glowing with that familial pride her own blighted youth was starved of—feeling really 'sympatico' with the two girls, as her Eugene would say. She was
still a blushingly beautiful bride in his eyes, as the fetchingly lovely Rapunzel marches in the wedding procession forward, flushing a brilliant shade of fuschia pink when her hubby gives her low-cut for the era, off the shoulder rose-colored dress, borrowed from Anna, an appreciative low whistle. Her large green eyes both berate but couldn't help but be bemused by his flagrantly flirtatious attitude in such exalted surroundings, but she was glad to see that look in his eyes again—for there was something about her Flynn not quite the same as of late.

As the next, and only other, bridesmaid now makes her way up the aisle, divine in her filmy alluring lavender dress and royal purple cape adorning her noble entrance, resplendent in her long skirt and high heels, the wedding guests—her nation's loyal subjects—all stand in respect of their beloved Queen.

But Queen Elsa wanted all of today's glory to go to the one who deserved their honor more than she. The girl who single-handedly saved the kingdom and brought the peace back to her soul, as Arendelle's sovereign puts up a pair of long fingered hands and motions for both the citizens and visiting foreign dignitaries, to be at ease with a kind smile.

For this was her dearest friend, her most loyal companion, her darling little sister's moment—to have every last bit of the shine she had to offer on this world—of happiness and joy, and by royal decree of the Queen, sweet, selfless, brave, indomitable Anna would receive every felicitude all her Queenly prowess and magical powers could grant her Anna for a fortuitous lifetime.

*Kristoff is a good man. I believe You brought him to Anna when she needed him most. Thank you, Lord.*

The elegantly poised Queen was a strikingly aesthetic beauty, as gracefully polished Elsa confidently strides up the center aisle in dignified procession, every citizen's proud attention was on her as she bestows an unquestioning trusted nod to Kristoff when she passes him in unspoken faith of his care that she would be leaving her beloved sister in. She knew this gruff, yet gentle, well-built yet sensitive man was every bit as lion-hearted and dauntless as Anna deserved in a partner.

*Oh, Anna, you're so lucky to have found such a love…true love…*

Elsa muses with no envy, just pride and unflinching hope for the two young lovers just beginning their journey towards a future together, as she watches with pleased eyes the pure delight and reaction on Kristoff's face as it changes into a gaze both ecstatically thrilled and contentedly satisfied to glimpse his new bride, as Princess Anna steps her first step into the flowery ornate chapel aisle…

In Kristoff's besmitten eyes, there could be no bride more beautiful than his Anna, as she slowly, after drinking in the breathtaking summer flora overflowing in the house of worship, begins her bridal walk towards him. Amidst the splendor her loving sister Elsa had worked for months in orchestrating for this wedding, Anna has a stray thought of how especially yummy her Kristoff looked in his traditional Norwegian chocolate brown trimmed festive outfit.

Complete in his embroidered vanilla cream groom's vest and its adorning double row gold chains with his Arendelle Royal Ice Harvester and the kingdom's crocus medallions dangling from his proud chest, the embellishments Queen Elsa bestowed that Gerda and Johanne primped at to doll the rugged mountain man up, gave his simple native garb all the glamour to befit a prince in his royal wedding. Unasked for, yet appreciated for all their kindness to a nobody orphan boy, plainspoken common man Kristoff Bjorgman was now gazing down the aisle upon his precious prize with such unrivaled longing and love in this once in a lifetime scene playing before both their bedazzled eyes.
Composer Felix Mendelssohn's recently written Wedding March in C Major showers down its lilting musical strains from the orchestra apse above, beneath the wooden grunnstokker beams, the glorious melody merges with the magnificent harmonies certainly inspired by the One who set such splendid music as this, to the rhythm and cadence as it was first born in Heaven, to play, and now to be softly sung below in harmony to a chorus the Lord himself would be pleased to call his own—just as a pure jewel such as Anna was His pride and joy as well.

Summer rose petals lined the path at her feet, and Anna's crocus inspired rosemaling pattern embroidered dress, that her dear mother once wore down this very same aisle, shimmers like champagne in the sunlight streaming through the stained-glass windowpanes.

Though resplendent in her full bridal regalia, 'bubbly' still did indeed best describe this energetic effervescent young lady who knew she was so lucky to be so loved as this. Anna of Arendelle was literally brimming over with loveliness and vitality, especially on this, her day of days.

Her golden lace trimmed sleeves had been shirred and tied with artistically placed bows, inlaid on the silk brocade of her shoulders, revealed more than a peek of her pristine fair skin of her 19th century wedding gown of yesteryear.

Upon her golden orangey head of hair, exquisitely bunned and styled with French braiding, done by hairstylist Rapunzel's artsy hand, rested a crown of roses—red and white and golden, too—waving in and out of one another until they formed a lovely floral wreath nestled in her pretty hair.

The tiny little bells in her wreath veil tinkled in her ears, as Anna smiles sweetly a beaming smile of gratitude for everyone's attendance—to each pew, overfilled with well-wishing spectators that made each one's trip here worthwhile. Rich and poor alike, young and old, were all invited to this happy occasion. The chapel was filled to its capacity and then some with the seatless standing near the windows to catch a glimpse of their adorable 'little princess' on her first day of her new life as a bride.

Then, her gaze travels the quickly shortening bridal walk from friendly faces of servants who were just as equally welcome as the visiting dignitaries, especially dear Kai, who'd always pick her up when she fell down the stairs, and sweet Gerda, baking sugary sweets to fill happy tummies, who had been part of both herself and Elsa's lives since before either could remember.

Next to them was helpful Johanne, Kai's little sister and her mother's faithful lady's maid. Anna saw a vision in the swift mysterious way memories transport us back into that moment again, for just a moment—where a tiny five-year-old Anna was playing with and accidentally tore this very dress—her mother's wedding dress, and the tall and stately lady's maid took time and patience from her busy schedule to both console the weeping child and repair the ripped, treasured gown, with skillful seamstress hands, and an even more skilled smile.

Never would Anna forget those kind, generous people who brought her up to be who she was today—so glad they were here today to witness her dreams of love and family finally come true.

Not all of you...Mama, Papa...I wish you were here, too...

Anna swallows hard, eyes filling with tears for her lost, missing parents who, sadly, would not be here to attend her wedding.

Maybe you are in spirit. After all, Elsa says you're both with God now, and since this is His dwelling place, His house, He's the number one Guest of Honor at my wedding, right? So I'd bet He'd bring you two along! Please, Lord, at least let them see how happy and safe and loved I'm gonna be with Kristoff.
As if in answer to her silent query, a spectacularly brilliant beam of light streams in through the highest window peak—from the highest spire, particularly poignant to Anna for it was always her favorite stained glass window, the one depicting the Nativity scene of Jesus' birth, with Joseph and sheep and shepherds and Wise men looking on, Holy mother Madonna and Blessed Child's golden halo is precisely where the bright sunlight's ray passes, nearly blinding to an emotional Anna as she basks in its glow.

Everyone watches how the wedding's star glimmers and shines, none marveling more than Kristoff. He thanks both God and his lucky stars that this radiant treasure would soon be his to claim as his own—he was absolutely sure he could not love her more, than in this moment of her ethereally smiling face up to the Heavens in silent worship.

Except perhaps for Elsa, the sister, the soulmate, who felt the warmth of Anna's unyielding selfless love, that once melted her frozen heart to be able to love again—for Anna always truly knew the meaning of love.

"Hey, Sven…Anna's crying! Why is she crying?! Isn't marryng Kristoff a happy thing? So why is she crying?" Olaf's simpleton whispered question, never quite understanding the layers of emotion that the human soul entertained is cut off when Pascal, unseen by all, save for the nearly blind Bishop, who offhandedly wonders which other of God's creatures would enter the chapel next, as Pascal scurries under the clergyman's robe on the steps to get in the naïve snowman's line of vision and give him 'the eye.'

An entranced Olaf immediately shuts up. His pea-like brain was confused under the influence of the intelligent chameleon's superior stare. Sven shares a sleepy-eyed nod at the currently purple shaded chameleon.

Kristoff was grateful, for as she approached he could see the emotion in his empathic girl's eyes filled with love, gratitude and joy—the same feelings he himself reflected this very moment when his, hidden beneath a gruff exterior, sensitive and sweet heart could open fully beside the vibrant blossom that was Anna—as the tears in her eyes were now in his.

Elsa, the beauteous maid of honor at her sister's side, smiles proudly at the palpably real, fearless love passing between the bride and groom as the Bishop, donning his white stole, begins the wedding mass, while the orchestra quietly plays a pianissimo melody in the background.

"Kristoff and Anna have come here to Arendelle's Church of Norway chapel in order to be married. We are gathered here to rejoice with you, and hear your voices to each other, and pray for God's blessing for you and your future home together before the Lord's table this day. Grace to you and peace from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

The Bishop gives his greeting blessing before ambling to his seat behind the altar table. Church bells ring for several moments as Queen Elsa takes her place upon the altar's pulpit to read the liturgy, whilst those dearest to Anna—Kai and Gerda and Johanne—light the customary candles near the altar as bride and groom take their seats, side by side in the front aisle pew.

Anna loved the stabilizing feel of having Kristoff's warm shoulder beneath his embroidered vest to lean on, as the two sit back on the pew to listen to Elsa's words.

The Queen of this great land was becoming accustomed to speaking publicly but it still was a nerve-wracking task for the quiet, introspective young woman who grew up in fear of being near others and concealing herself.

But her great love for Anna, after their trying ordeal was done—what seemed a lifetime ago, but
was just about two years today, had developed Elsa's reserved, frightened quiet into an unwavering, strong faith in the higher power of goodness, and warmth, and light—blessed from Above.

The Queen of Arendelle steps up to the church pulpit with all the poise and graciousness befitting the Sovereign Head of the Church of Norway.

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His love endures forever. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:1, 24." The velvety tinkle of her voice belies her emotional attachment to each heartfelt statement. Elsa in her penitent resolve had not only memorized many verses of the Good Book, but she had taken their truthful meanings deep into her heart.

Her eyes meet Anna's with utter pride and sisterly love. For even across the space of the chapel, a happy Anna feels fully embraced by her big sister's caring and loving attention after all those long years living alongside one another, yet still being alone.

"For God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 1 John 4:16." Elsa lifts her beautiful cerulean blue eyes, the love she had discovered to melt a frozen heart evident for her sister, her friends, her country as she gazes upon each of their faces with the greater hope they could each share in His Love's warmth, even far into the cold months of their nation's bitter winter after this sweet summer has passed.

As the striking beauty who is their Queen fulfills her duty borne of love, her smile is as dignified as it is picturesque and lovely. She leads the congregation in song, her powerfully high strains take the old Sami lyrics of joyful meetings and awakening feelings, set to a lovely Christian hymn's music to a whole new level of wonder.

Kristoff's jaw drops to hear the Queen of Norway speak in a tongue not only foreign to her, but also classed by nearly all to be beneath 'normal' Norwegian citizens, let alone the highest of the country's aristocracy to bend 'low' to the Laplanders.

He turns to Anna, only to hear the lilting giggles as she sings along, a giddy expression on her face at this surprise for her new husband—almost, not yet! Whee!—that her dear sister conspired in making possible.

"Sing, Kristoff, sing! Listen! I learned it good!" Anna proudly adds her joyful, trilling tones to the verse, messing up a dropped vowel or two along the way, but the blonde, orphaned Lapp boy from the Sami north, was impressed and touched, feeling every urge to kiss her pink, rosy lips, as he reaches out a bold hand to stroke a rose petal from Anna's forehead.

"Mnhm-mhmm-mhmmgh..." There was Pascal, playing conscience's advocate again, sitting on Kristoff's shoulder, reminding him of his immediate time and place.

"Oh, right, right...hands off, still." Kristoff chuckles, going back to listening intently to the specially planned hymn, then adds his mellow voice to the refrain, causing Anna to giggle with glee, making it worth every off-key note, as the tinkling, small spoonlike bangles in her hair produce soothing music to ward off evil spirits with each head movement as she laughs.

Golly, I love your laugh.

Kristoff thinks to himself, losing all embarrassment in being all knock-kneed in his tights—er, stockings—and fancypants tasseled and trimmed shorts, as open Anna, in her singing zeal whacks him across the face with some of her rose flowers from her head wreath. Poor Kristoff ends up with
a mouthful of flora as the song finishes and the sleepy Bishop stands to the pulpit to pray and give his homily's moral lessons.

"God has created us to live in harmony with Him and with each other. He has ordained that man and woman shall be one, and He has confirmed this fellowship by His blessing. Marriage is God's generous live together as man and woman is to live in trust and love, to share joy and sorrow and to faithfully stand by each other until life ends."

"God's Word testifies that marriage is holy and inviolable."

"It is written in the Book of Genesis:
So God created man in His own image,
in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.
God blessed them and said to them,
"Be fruitful and increase in number;
fill the earth and subdue it." Genesis 1:27-28"

"And our Lord Jesus Christ says:
'Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female', and said,
'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?
So they are no longer two, but one.
Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." Matthew 19:4-6."

"This is the Word of the Lord." The archbishop finally raises his eyes from the Scripture readings to meet the wedding couple's, assessing them with a kindly smile and sign of the cross blessing.

During each of the bishop's words in his sermon, Kristoff, who was listening intently to the helpful holy man to give some wedded bliss tips, God's love expert so to speak, only began to feel embarrassment creeping up his thick neck again instead. His unmanly fair complexion starts crawling pinks and reds at the forbidden thoughts that phrases like 'being fruitful' and 'becoming one flesh' brought to the surface of the strapping young lad's mind as he sheepishly squeezes his bare knees together as the bishop expounds upon the responsibilities and duties that came along with marriage in his long sermon.

Kristoff, though wearing his official "Royal Ice Master and Deliverer" medallion about his neck, felt a tiny bit insignificant and small again amidst the vastness of Arendelle's kingdom and assembly of noble ambassadors and royalty. He still felt like that lost little boy in the icy wilderness all alone save for Sven in the world until he chased one tiny girl's trail that eventually led him to his new family of wonderful friendly trolls who took him in and made him feel – loved.

Just like Anna does every time her bright eyes light up at him, like she was doing as she sits beside him right now.

That part of the ceremony complete, glorious music from the well-tuned orchestra begins to play uplifting hymns of praise that waft down from the wooden rafters of the choir nave—way up there, and Anna's large eyes never fail him as the Eucharistic prayer is soon followed by Holy Communion.

Each visitor and parishioner of good Christian standing take part in the sacrament, but all goes by Anna in a daze as she watches Elsa, and Rapunzel and Eugene and Kai and Gerda and Johanne
revolve around in a dazzling blur for her as she excitedly feels each moment ticking by in her senses.

She stands somewhat third person from the grandness of it all as sounds and sights and scents and touches start to overwhelm her as she awaits the moment that Kristoff and she would recite their marriage vows and make their pledge to each other forever thereafter in the sight of Almighty God.

But the slightly blind, somewhat lethargic elderly bishop takes his own sweet time returning to the center aisle's front step as far as enthusiastic Anna was concerned.

"Come to the altar of the Lord so that we may hear your vows to each other and pray for God's blessing on you and your home together."

As the members of the bridal party rustle from their seats to take their places for the ceremony, Anna is off and running. She yanks Kristoff's shocked hand and drags him along with her unceremoniously trotting lithe young body, as the couple clumsily dash to a screeching halt before the altar rail.

"Whoa—feistypants!" Kristoff bites his tongue after realizing his little naughty bantering term for the lively gal had slipped rather loudly and audibly out. The astounded dignitaries look to the leadership of Queen Elsa for their reaction.

But Elsa merely stifles an amused laugh as she elegantly flows in her regal royal cape and lavender draped dress to honorably stand as maid-of-honor at her sister's side. So all crudeness was forgiven instantly.

"Ha ha! 'Feistypants!' Good one. Heh heh...ahem...sorry. There's your reindeer. Here's your frog." Crass Flynn himself gets some stares as he helpfully delivers big, unsurefooted and abandoned Sven safely to his elected spot as 'best friend' versus 'best man' beside Kristoff. The sly dark brown haired, stubbly chinned man deposits the 'frog' onto his own wife's shoulder as she stands behind Elsa for the recessional as Anna's bridesmaids. Rapunzel rolls her eyes at men in general at the rude display unbefitting a church wedding.

"Are we all assembled now?" The bishop glances around at the unique, if not strange, wedding party gathered at the holy altar rail.

"Is that a reptile on that bridesmaid's shoulder?" Had he missed the big lumbering reindeer on the opposite side or did his logical mind refuse to see Sven at all?

"Yes! We're all here now." Anna sings out, a bit disturbingly for the elderly man of the cloth, who was calmed by his cultured Queen's more polished assent.

"Yes, please proceed, your Excellency." Elsa replies respectfully enough to smooth the poor man's tussled mind to sanity again.

The bishop clears his throat.

"In the presence of God, our Creator and before these witnesses, I ask you, Kristoff Bjorgman, take Anna of Arendelle, who stands before you, as your wife?"

Kristoff takes a deep breath before thoughtfully answering with a decided assuredness, as he looks into Anna's big blue-green eyes full of sparkling hope. "I will."

"Likewise, I ask you, Anna of Arendelle, will you take Kristoff Bjorgman, who stands beside you, as your husband—"
"I will!" Anna squeals out in full blown ecstasy of the moment, her hand thrown up high in the air, as if she was raising it to answer a teacher a question. "I mean, I will." She ashamedly recants her shocking enthusiasm with a more decorous response in a reserved, serious tone.

"Good." The bishop almost crossly retorts at the childishness unbecoming to a beautiful young bride. He softens upon getting caught up in the enticed entrancement of her bright eyes. "Then please join your hands as a sign of this."

The bride and groom bashfully face one another as they take each other's right hand. Kristoff marvels at how small Anna's petite princess hand and small digits disappear beneath his rather large fingered burly mountain man's appendage.

Anna, similarly, wonders how big and strong and powerful her manly man's hand looked and felt like entwined atop of hers. She sure knew how great it felt to be enclosed in his palm but she never stopped to think what it looked like before.

Wow...

The two lovebirds catch one another's curious gazes upon their interlaced digits and simultaneously chuckle at the silliness of it all—the crazy, undeniably, wacky silliness of two unlikely partners finding true love in the other.

This is true love… Anna mouths to Kristoff, both knowing the other was also recalling that first wild ride they took together before his old new sled's destructive demise, when the question of true love was brought up and her one meeting engagement to a tall, dark, handsome, did I mention, wicked? man she had defended then, and begged for her idiocy now, cropping back up in their minds in quick flashes of everything that had brought them up to here, in between.

You and me… Mouthing back in response, Kristoff points with his big left forefinger to Anna, then back to himself with a certain smile.

His bride-to-be rewards him with a little thumbs up back, along with a pair of adoring blue-green eyes.

"Ahem…" The rattled bishop was at his wit's end, never having to preside over such an unorthodox ceremony before.

Lizards, reindeer…Lord help us all.

"Kristoff, pay attention!" Ditzy Anna, as per usual, blames her intended, though she started it. Sven snorts a chuckle at his buddy's beratement before all the world.

"Did I miss something?" Out of the side of his mouth, a clueless Olaf asks Flynn—er Eugene in the front row pew, directly behind him.

"Not a thing, snow buddy." Flynn whispers back, trying to catch his looking gorgeous in rosy pink wife's eye, but something was amiss in their relationship and she doesn't even notice him.

You always had special peripheral vision for me before, Blondie. But it's my fault we're like this…I know…It's always my fault...

Appeased that the uproarious couple was settling down, the Bishop lays his hands atop the joined hands of bride and groom.

"In the presence of God and before these witnesses you have promised each other that you will live
together in matrimony, and have joined your hands as a sign of this. Give each other the rings, which you shall wear as a signs of your vows to each other."

The bishop pauses here as they each withdraw their hands. Anna turns to Elsa, squeezing in delirious joy both of her big sister's elegant palms as Elsa slips her the specially made, extra large, male-sized gold ring, engraved with Kristoff and Anna's names entwined into her younger sibling's palm, with an emotionally joyful smile on her trembling purplish lips for her Anna's shining moment.

Kristoff similarly turns to his 'best man', neither Sven nor Kristoff trusting airheaded Olaf enough to entrust him with Anna's matching gold wedding band, so Sven, handless though he was, placed the invaluable piece of engraved jewelry into the safest spot he could find on him—or rather, in him. Anna's wedding ring, for most of the ceremony, resided in the cheek of Sven's cud-chewing muzzle, to be exact.

Thin-skinned members of the wedding audience may have been appalled as the loyal, faithful reindeer, who had been Kristoff's childhood friend for as far back as he could remember, opens his big reindeer mouth and produces on his wet tongue, the ring—all warm and gooey, yet unharmed and safe.

Kristoff, raised as a rugged ice harvester, living off the harsh tundra covered lands, with nothing but his trusty reindeer to rely on, saw absolutely nothing wrong with Sven's approach.

And neither did Anna. She loved and appreciated the big, hairy, cuddly and huggable reindeer partner of her guy like a dear friend. And if Sven and Kristoff could share a slobbered on carrot, why not let thereabouts be a nifty hideout for her wedding ring?

She really couldn't think of anything more fitting or sweet, even as Kristoff swiftly polishes and rubs the gooey saliva filled golden metal band on his silk shirt to dry it a bit before triumphantly producing it to the bishop.

"Ready!" Both Anna and Kristoff sing simultaneously. "Jinx!" They link their pinkie fingers as they then both produce their rings practically under the bishop's nose.

"Yes, indeed." The bishop was so past annoyance at this point, he was starting to think this whole situation was God's little joke on him—a test to see if he had a sliver of a funny bone left in his entire ecclesiastic devoted body. And now that he thought about it, humor was the Lord's gift to overcome the sorrows of this world.

"Yes, my children, yes, I believe we are ready. Repeat after me, please." He looks to Kristoff. "'Anna, I give you this ring.'"

"Anna, I give you this ring." Kristoff, no longer nervous, tense or even ashamed. (The whole short pants, thigh high stocking thing working for him now, because it was so hot in the stuffy chapel, during this long ceremony in the spotlight.) He grasps Anna's left hand as tenderly as his big fingered hands could allow.

"As a symbol of my vows of love and faithfulness." The Bishop gently prods.

"As a symbol of my vows of love and faithfulness." Kristoff meets Anna's loving eyes as he softly slides the golden band, a circle of their eternal love for one another, onto her elated ring finger. Anna wriggles it with girlish joy as she recites her memorized vows.

"Kristoff, I give you this ring." Anna quickly jumps right in, without any prodding. The now
affectionately bemused bishop lets her have a go at it herself, for Anna enjoyed blazing her own path forward.

"As a symbol of my vows of love and…umm.." The pretty princess stumbles in the memorization end of her lines, perhaps because she was having such a difficult time putting the ring on Kristoff's well-flexed fingers, so tense they had expanded, until she gives the golden band, symbolizing their love a tremendous shove in place. "...and faithfulness! Yeah, got it!"

"Owww…” Kristoff manfully holds back a howl as the pert girl nearly draws blood from his hand's webbing with her force.

I think I'll have to take care on our honeymoon...

That word still brought a deep reddening to Kristoff’s cheeks as he gazes upon his new wife, Anna peeking back up at him.

"Let us pray." The un-amused Bishop takes his cue from the considerate Queen, prepared to let Anna and Kristoff begin their new lives together in a timely fashion. She knew they had traveling plans that would need the sunlit hours of the afternoon to travel by. The bishop directs Anna and Kristoff to kneel at the wedding altar.

"Merciful God, we give You thanks for Kristoff and Anna and for their love for each other. Bless their life as husband and wife.

Help them keep the vows they have made to each other, so that their marriage may be filled with trust, care and joy."

Anna gazes up to her beloved sister with a big, happy sigh, believing she looked so much more 'beautifuller' with each passing day.

Oh, Elsa, I am so happy! Her eyes say wordlessly, and Elsa nods her agreement with their wisdom.

"Grant them the ability and will to build their home in peace, so that it will be a place where children may grow up in safety and family and friends may find fellowship."

Now it was Anna's turn to have her eyes bug out at the thought of having kids of her own already. She still felt like a kid in love herself—to even entertain such a weighty subject herself.

"You are the Way, the Truth and the Life; let them walk in Your Truth. You forgive and heal; help Kristoff and Anna forgive each other. You are the source of love; help them and all husbands and wives grow and mature in love. The Lord bless and keep you. May He make His face to shine upon you and give you peace. Amen."

The wedding audience begins the tradition of lighting candles, whilst the choir sings the final rousing version of the Norwegian classic "Come to the Wedding" orchestrally overlaid with 'Fairest Lord Jesus' as the bishop, now kindly smiling, leads the entire chapel in the Lord's Prayer and the freshly married couple stand from their humble kneeling before the Lord's altar and begin the recessional down the center aisle to leave through the chapel door.

With pride and joy intertwined, with a touch of lonely sadness with the reality that her Anna was moving beyond the close sisterhood the two had been enjoying these past two unburdened years, Elsa watches her baby sister gleefully trip down the aisle (actually, literally tripping) on her long trained golden cape, hanging from their mother's champagne colored wedding gown, as she giddily spins back and forth, twirling as they enter the palace floors.
Luckily for the clumsy girl, Kristoff was there to catch her. Anna smiles as she rests her spinning head against the nook of her big, strong husband's arm, where she dizzily catapulted against in her rush to race them both into the Great Hall.

"That was like, a crazy trust exercise!" Anna nostalgically repeats a memory up at him.

"Did I pass this time?" Kristoff, a real softie beneath that tough exterior, was feeling his oats as he peers down into her dreamy eyes up at him.

"With flying colors…" Anna whispers wistfully as she snuggles her face into his armpit further, too overwhelmed by everything today meant to pass out at his overtly 'pungent' smell, as his troll loudly family claimed.

But after all, you couldn't blame the guy because that just meant that Kristoff's potent hormones were working overtime.

*Something to look forward to tonight, Anna…* She blushes to herself.

"Sooo…are we gonna skip the reception and get you two a room? Cause I was really looking forward to that kransekake cake your Heaven's angel of a cook has whipped up for you two lovebirds."

"Eugene!" Rapunzel breaks her silent treatment to yell at her crudely insinuating husband.

Eugene gives his brunette wife an amused grin as he suavely continues to charm his way out of trouble, wrapping a flirtatious arm around Gerda, who, in her proud plumpness, had been taken in by the devilish man as she's been talking and bubbling over bragging rights to the finest kransekake cake she's made in ages, about to be served for her 'little Anna.'

"Well," Gerda giggles at the polished young gentleman's attentions, "my frystekake did win the best pastry in show category at the Autumnal Festival last year." Sweet Gerda was still innocent enough to take a consummate con at his wheedling word, though Kai was a bit less naïve as he protectively shoves a hurriedly prepared tray under the charismatic rogue's very nose.

"Nah, I don't—" Flynn was about to decline the plate of Scandinavian tasty comestibles, but decides on another tack. "That is—how can I decline? When such lovely skillful hands turn themselves to delight my palate?" He smoothly cajoles the Arendelle castle housekeeper, who was dangling and cooing on his every word as he kisses and caresses the pudgy woman's offered appendage, flagrantly and slowly chewing on one delectable morsel that she had created with her hands alone.

"Maybe, because it was these here 'lovely hands' that skillfully spooned that canned liver pate on some crackers, sir." Kai's younger sister, Johanne, puts her two licks in. She, in her tease, thwarts Flynn's subtle endearment of the soft-hearted head of the Arendelle royal household.

Johanne extends her thin, bony hand out to the rebuffed man. Flynn was forced to comply as the more authoritative Johanne uses her tall, intimidating appearance to subdue the roguish charmer away from her brother's mate.

"Oh, Johanne! You're not supposed to reveal to all the guests *all* of Arendelle's little secrets!" Pleasantly, Queen Elsa steps in here with a cultivated humorous statement to her longtime ladies' maid who was just helping out in the kitchen for today, as Anna and Kristoff had spirited away towards the now open and lively ballroom on the castle's second story.

The newlywed couple lead the dancing party, and Elsa's own feet begin to tap in her stylish high
heels, to the rousing tune, echoing from overhead, as she watches with a smile, then laughter, at her vivacious sister, filling the ballroom with her light.

"Ah, what would a wedding be without a proper dance-off?" Flynn, too, conversationally remarks as the guests, including his un-escorted wife, all migrate upstairs towards the cheery sounds of happy laughter, fused with music and blithe accompaniment.

As Flynn's heavy lidded eyes scan the Great Hall, as if looking for something, Elsa silently considers the tall and dashing man at her side, who, after Gerda and Johanne are reluctantly called to duty to attend the ballroom by a wary Kai, seems to be her only singular companion left in the throne room.

*There is something about your eyes...* She thinks to herself in study of him.

"Do you dance in celebration of weddings in Corona, too, Eugene?" Elsa, though still reserved and shy when speaking to others—to strangers—her immense sense of family gave her reason to try. After all, he was her closest cousin's chosen life partner so she must make an attempt to be sociable with him. Although, she still found, that even though she adored her late father, who cared so deeply for her welfare as he trained her up to be the nation's next leader, and faithful Kai was practically a member of the family, men, as a whole, were more difficult to converse with for the young woman, just coming out of her traumatized shell.

Perhaps her recent reticence concerning men stemmed from her most terrifying memories of standing, cold and tossed and battered, and being told that her beloved Anna was dead—by her own hand.

By of the duplicitous *man* who deceitfully blamed her for it.

She still had haunting nightmares of that incident. Elsa still acutely felt the guilt, the pain—the frozen ice grip her heart with the shadow of that power hungry, sneering man seared into her mind. Her accuser, looming over her, pushes her down, striking at her helplessness—but strangely, there would be other nights, when that same villain, whose antagonistic evil sneer was transformed more into the benevolent gaze of a protagonist—a shining hero with an encouraging smile, who was reaching for her to help him now, across the icy cold waters as he was floating adrift on the waves of a cracked, frozen iceberg, alone and vulnerable.

And desperately needing her to rescue him from sinking underneath the crashing waves of the icy depths, to be lost forever.

His handsome face was never clearer, nor more distinct than right now. At last, she recognized whose eyes were pleading to her across the ice drifts, not just for help, but something far more mysterious...

"—personally, dancing has never really been my thing, but Blondie—eh, I still call her 'Blondie'—don't ask any questions, suffice it to say it's a long, long story—she must've been born tapping her cute feet. I tell ya, that girl can dance. Hey...you okay, Queenie?" Flynn wasn't aware until this very moment that Elsa had only heard less than a third of his rambling speech. Not until he tore his eyes from discreetly peering into the ballroom they were moving towards at a certain brunette twirling and swirling her magical rhythm from stem to stern of the party room, to gaze seriously at the spaced out, preoccupied woman beside him.

"Prince Hans..." Elsa breathes the revelation to herself quietly, as if saying the name aloud would dissolve both nightmare and dream, as her mind whirls torridly, trying to discover why she was both taunted and haunted by this despicable man of all monsters.
But even now, she knew she couldn't break away from being entranced by the pools of his green eyes reflecting back at her.

"The name's 'Eugene' and I'm no Prince. But you can call me anything you like, Beautiful."
Disrespectful Flynn with a charming roguish smirked wink, goodnaturedly mocks and dismisses her odd behavior for a female's natural tendency to be fanciful.

That's why we men love them—either that or the shape of their legs...

Now if the gang saw you at the Snuggly Duckling... whoo hoo! A platinum blonde with some rather un-Victorian fashion ideas... You would drive the men there wild—

"Shall we dance, Eugene?" Interrupting his impudent thoughts, Elsa abruptly asks and the timid, even voice tones that she normally spoke in were dashed in a second of spontaneous, rebellious defiance.

"No, no, no, no... no. I don't dance." Though narcissistic enough to believe himself irresistible to the entire female race, he is flabbergasted as he is violently yanked by a folded resisting arm to a waltzing position with Elsa herself as his partner.

"You do now, by order of the Queen."

Flynn swallows hard as her glowing, icy fingertips threaten as they alight upon his chest. She seemed to enjoy being a bit naughty—and not always strictly adhering to the 'upstanding, good girl she had to be' with harsh rules and austere regulations restricting her entire existence. She was ready to toss that aside, for there was something about this man that enticed her to be a normal young woman, not merely the elegant untouchable figurehead, frozen in regal ice.

Like Anna can be herself... I want to be free to be me.

"Let's go melt the ice."

Was it the fact that this 'Eugene/Flynn Rider' boasted many of the features of the man in her dreams? Tall, dark, and devastatingly handsome, with charm oozing from his every pore—yet still retaining a tender air of vulnerability and inner well-disguised sadness?

Elsa didn't understand it all—this conundrum unraveling in her haunted mind quite yet. But for today, she'd let it go. None mattered, save for taking part in fully celebrating alongside her best friend, her true conscience, her darling sister on this happiest day of Anna's life—the day of her marriage to the man she had found real, true, genuine love with.

"I can let the dream go, today. Until the night, when the dream comes again..."

As soon as she steps into the ballroom, everyone takes pleasant notice of their Queen, and Elsa surprises her loyal subjects and visiting dignitaries—not to mention a delighted Anna, and Kristoff, with exhausted from dancing puppies, by her unexpectedly skilled dancing skills, as she exquisitely waltzes a compliant Flynn around the dance floor, with the full intention of reuniting him with the forgiving wife he loved so terribly his heart was breaking.

Their eyes speaking words that voices never could utter, Flynn finds himself once more in Rapunzel's welcoming arms, wishing he'd never had to let go in the first place. She leads, being more of a dancer, as they spin around in a ballroom that now had more than enough love to go around, as he buries his head in her no longer magical hair, yet the act of nuzzling a slow dance was still healing in her loving warmth.
Elsa, growing in her own emotions, had empathically sensed that, too. She never claimed to know the inner workings of the human heart fully herself, but when she could, she did try to help love's course run smoothly, as she allows sweet Olaf to replace Flynn as her 'able snow bodied' dance partner. The pair of ice queen and snowman were practically skating alongside an energized Anna who nearly dances a contented Kristoff off his pear-shaped square feet in their happy wedding dance jollies, where the forever optimistic bright-eyed girl finds that true love she'd been waiting for, at long last.
The rest of the afternoon for Elsa was spent in frivolity and fun—dancing, singing, sharing in Anna's boundless laughter and joy of living. Elsa and Anna had lived all those long, empty years in the span of time that most sisters spent in twenty or thirty years, but they squeezed together all the love and friendship and closeness in the past two.

As the uproarious dancing, partying and feasting on a 'roast and ice cream', not to forget Gerda and Johanne's rivalrous presented award-winning treats and culinary delights, the party was near to its happy end.

But there was one more Scandinavian wedding tradition as yet left undone.

"Miss Anna!" Gerda comes trotting up to her precious, littlest girl, now all grown up. "Oh, pardon me! Mrs. Anna!" The rosy cheeked palace housekeeper corrects herself of the new honorific she'd have to learn to attach to the young girl from now on.

"Yup, that's me! Mrs. Anna Bjor…Bjorg…" Though a married woman now, Anna was still dizzy enough to flub her own new last name. Her face was quite vexed as she stutters on her new husband's surname.

"—Bjorgman." Kristoff lifts his eyes to the Heavens as he supplies his new wife (Wow…) with the rascally, tough on the tongue word.

"Bjorgman! Yes, that's it! Of course, I knew it!" Anna coyly gives her audience an all-knowing smirk, while Kristoff can only chuckle at her cuteness.

"I am now Mrs. Anna Bjorgman. Doesn't the sound of that fit together perfectly, like—like—"

Again she struggles for a proper term. "-Chocolate and brown eyes." Anna finishes with a literal drool up at her new yummy hubby.

"This is the kransekake wreath cake that Gerda and I have been perfecting for hours," Johanna just arrives, carefully pushing a serving cart tray, stacked to reach about the imposing height of Elsa's ladies' maid, Johanne, with ring after ring of Angel's Food cake 'glued' together with white icing, to keep the almond embedded sugary confections attached to one another.

"A wreath cake? How artistic you two are!" Impressed artist Rapunzel throws an arm around each of the conversely short and fat, skinny and tall, servants who had obviously both worked hard on the wedding cake, for all its prettily decorated ornamentation of Arendelle's symbolic purple and blue crocus flowers emblem.
"I LOOOVE kransekake wreath cakes!" Olaf comes puttering across the ballroom floor to get a closer look at the towering baked good.

"Have you ever had it before?" Flynn asks the snowperson drolly, with a raised, suspicious eyebrow, already knowing the answer.

"No. But I'm sure I'll love it! Look how yummy and tasty those pretty little sugar flowers are—OUCH—!" The sweet toothed Olaf, well, his one and only tooth was certainly a 'sweet one', yells out as his wooden 'knuckles' are firmly rapped away from purloining a saccharin blue crocus treat by the usually kind Gerda's golden plated serving spatula.

"Ooooh, I'm sorry, Olaf!" She immediately apologizes, kindly rubbing the snowman's branches that served as his hands.

"Wait, not too much friction, please!"

"But this special cake can only be first touched after it's been presented at the wedding reception to the bride and groom!"

On her knees, Gerda explains to not only the snow muffin at ground level but to all the remaining guests within earshot.

"Okay." Olaf nods in understanding. "Why?"

Or not.

"Well, tradition has it that when the bride and bridegroom lift the top layer of the kransekake cake together, the number of rings that continue to stick to the top layer is said to be the number of children they will have."

"—W-ha—what?!" Kristoff nearly spits out his drink of Akvavit wine, the explanatory Kai had just poured for him from the bottle placed decoratively in the center of the twelve layered rings.

"Now that's just freaky." Flynn speaks too quickly sometimes for his own good. Rapunzel and many other court ladies give him some rather terse looks for ridiculing their ancient Norwegian marriage tradition.

"...If you don't like kids, which, I, for one, do. I love kids..." He squirms his way out of the awkward moment.

Elsa marvels with a headshaking giggle beneath her hands at how masterfully this man could spin any situation.

"That's good to hear."

Elsa was also standing close enough to Rapunzel to catch her mumbled beneath her breath response that no one else did. The Queen's intelligent mind swiftly put together all the angst and uncomfortable unease between the visiting couple, who obviously loved one another, together in a flash.

I see now.

But she didn't. Not really. Elsa, in her calm, resigned way, recognized that a normal life of home and family, arguments and reconciliations and finding common ground with one another through the constant of love, was not destined to be hers.
Being the sovereign Queen of this nation, with all of its welfare, strife and daily concerns must be kept at the forefront of her duty at all times. There would be no consideration of any other sort of life for her.

*All for Arendelle. I'll live in eternal gratitude to serve my God and my country and that's all I'll ever want or need. For my people, I will stay vigilant and pure of heart.*

Elsa's once cold, frozen heart now beat the steady drumroll of piety, justice, wisdom and simplicity—taught to her by her loving father, the King, about the noble and right, very first crowned King of Norway. She would walk in St. Olaf's steps and never allow that precious privilege to serve her people be corrupted by a usurping other presence on the Arendelle throne.

"It's sticking! It's sticking! Count, count, count them! Hurry before they fall, Kai! You're brilliant at numbers! You count!" Anna's shrill voice screams excited orders and brings Elsa out of yet another daydream.

The young Queen gazes out over the scene with so many mixed emotions, for though Gerda and Johanne's multi-ringed cake, was full of nuts, dates and decoration—it couldn't compare to the variety she takes in of all the joyful sights and sounds around her.

There was, as was the tradition of kransekake demanded, only the newly wedded couple's hand on the tall cake's uppermost layer as they lift it straight upwards together, to gauge their fertility prospects.

Of course, it would help if Anna were a few inches more endowed, to reach a hand able to touch—never mind, lift—the dozen storied ring cake.

"I told you, Gerda! Twelve was too much!" Johanne reprimands her fellow chef.

But even that was no longer a problem, as, after assessing the size of it all in a few short seconds, strong, burly, experienced mountain climber Kristoff, picks up his sturdy as a little-Norwegian-fjord-horse-gal under her armpits with one arm, until she was nearly lifted right off the ground from her tippytoes. Anna stretches up, UP! to simultaneously lift that highest top ring of the prophesizing kransekake that Kristoff also holds up with his other free hand.

"One, two, three, four…oh my! Five! And—" Kai's voice cracks about the unbelievable large unbroken count, just as the ridiculously awesome sixth ring also cracks in half and begins to wobble from the lifted mass of other rings.

"Awww…!" The interested onlookers sigh at the prediction.

"All right! Five and half! Does that mean your last kid's gonna be a midget?" Flynn comments snidely as Rapunzel harshly elbows him in the deserving gut, from where she was taking a dancing break atop a kneeling down Sven.

"So I guess we're rounding it up to six?" Flynn squeaks out, massaging his aching gut. "Six is a good number."

"Six…?" Kristoff gulps at the impending prediction, rather frightening high number for a new husband to marry, not even yet on his honeymoon night. He gently puts a thrilled Anna back down to the floor safely.

"Six? SIX! That's all my fingers can count up to! Oh, no, wait, I have eight. Forgot my thumbs…You'd better start making those babies soon if you're gonna have that many." Olaf naively holds up all of his finger branches, not quite understanding the whole 'making babies' process.
As Anna blissfully sighs, six stars of new hope popped up in her wistful, dreamy eyes, they twinkle to meet Elsa's before returning to share a sheepish grin with Kristoff. The entire audience of wedding guests and well-wishers burst out in frolicking laughter, smiles and applause.

"Now be sure to wear your rubber soled galosh boots and those extra pair of thick stockings I packed in your trunk, Miss Anna, for when you arrive in that Valley of Living Rock place." Johanna repeats for the hundredth time, since she, along with Cousin Rapunzel and Elsa's assistance finally finish packing Anna's luggage for her honeymoon vacation in the North.

"I will! I will! I promise!" Accepting the farewell kiss to her cheek, Anna holds back the urge to tell her authoritative older friend the truth about the so-named 'rocks' there were not really describing the landscape's terrain, as in treacherously rocky and rough, but rather something more mystical in nature.

"I don't know why you couldn't have stayed for your honeymoon here at the palace. Or at least in one of the cabin holdings on the palace grounds…" Johanne murmurs, obviously never married herself.

"Kristoff's family lives up there and they wanted Anna and Kristoff to take part in another marriage ceremony of their own culture." Elsa fills in considerately for Anna. Her little sis had already explained to her how the kindly trolls she'd met in her youth had a troll-style wedding already in the works planned for their beloved adopted son.

"Wait. Two weddings? Isn't one enough trouble for a self-respecting guy to go through." Flynn regains his humor, not kindly averting his eyes, as he aids his helpful wife in her attempts to get a sticking lock suitcase opened again to add a forgotten set of feminine underthings that Anna had mislaid and Elsa had fortunately reminded her of at the last minute.

Rapunzel slaps her naughty hubby's wrist, as she quickly shoves in the blue and green lacy lingerie and nightgown pieces into the case far away from his wandering male sight.

"—Ahem…I prefer a woman in rose, myself."

"Yeah, well, you haven't met my family." Kristoff fondly smirks at the vision in memory of his noisy, crude, loud, often inappropriate, yet really family-oriented and loving, clan who had raised the orphan boy and Sven since they were mere pups.

"It's a shame they couldn't make it for the wedding here. They would've been more than welcome in my kingdom." Queen Elsa offers graciously, lamenting not being able to become reacquainted with the helpful and wise troll king—who had saved her precious Anna from her foolish accident when they were children.

Elsa was eager to show him now that she understood and grasped his kind warnings about her own fear being her worst enemy, now that she was the master of it.

"I gave them your invitation, Elsa, but Pabbie figured that if one or two of them came to the wedding, they'd ALL want to come. And you don't want to know how heavy that'd be." Kristoff blows air to whistle between his lips.

Elsa nods in understanding as Flynn slaps on the back the now changed into his riding gear—and long pants—getup as he returns from loading up and hitching Sven to his still spic and span, well-cared for, freshly waxed, Official Ice Master and Deliverer's sled that he was still so proud of.

"That's families for ya!" Flynn answers as if little orphan boy Eugene Fitzherbert knew a lick about
Kristoff leaves off the fact that Flynn probably misunderstood his meaning of 'heavy' by overbearing, meddlesome and intrusive, rather than literally 'heavy' in the true meaning of the word—enough to crack and break the polished marble tiles and decorated floors of the castle's front hall.

"Well, when you two do get there, tell your Grandpabbie, and Bulda and Cliff—and the whole clan—that they are welcome here at any time." Elsa had heard so much from Anna of the troll's familial love that she felt she knew them already.

"Just give us a warning and I'll have the town's builders and masons reinforce the castle foundation pilings." Elsa astounds all gathered, now dumbstruck by her construction and building knowledge.

All except Kai, who looks proudly on as he stands, holding the doors open for Kristoff and a usually lazybones Flynn, to carry Anna's bags to Sven's waiting sled. For Kai had been teaching his young monarch in the years of time they had alone, the nuts and bolts type of things concerning the castle's maintenance that her dear father and friend Kai enjoyed tending to as a hobby—as males of like age found camaraderie with each other in doing.

At the thought of her father, whom she had loved and lost along with her sweet mother, all too soon, Elsa's pleasant smile grows a tad melancholy. But the thoughtful young woman swiftly recovers, to give Anna, who had just finished hugging Rapunzel and Flynn and Kai and Johanne a happy goodbye.

But Anna, close as she and Elsa had become in the past two years again, after their years of separation, caught that tiny little change of inflection in Elsa's demeanor.

"Are you gonna be all right on your own, Elsa?" Anna's big eyes were widened in concern, for she had always been a tender, sweet and compassionate girl. She intuitively felt the sudden emptiness of being the first one of the Arendelle sisters to leave the proverbial 'nest' for more than a day or two.

The castle had been both home and fortress for as long as the two sheltered girls had remembered, and she knew when Elsa was disturbed in her heart, now that Anna knew how to listen.

"Hey, I'm the big sister here. Don't worry, all right? I've got this." Elsa smiles reassuringly as she was the one to reach out for Anna. The cold fear of ever touching another human being had long melted away.

"I soooooo love you!" Anna practically wails out, throwing both her arms so tighty around Elsa that the tall, thin girl believed she might actually snap in half.

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But I'm not made of ice anymore.

Elsa simply hugs her little sister back, just as fervently.

"Awwww, they're so cute! I wish I had a sister!" Tender hearted Rapunzel coos to a rolling eyes, jaded Flynn.

"Hey! No fair! Why do the hugs always come out when I'm busy somewhere else?!!" If anyone wondered where Olaf had gotten to, it being way too quiet around this castle front entrance to see Anna and Kristoff off, he was down in the palace kitchen and larder helping Gerda prepare the large basket of warm beverages and cold meat meals, goodies and sweet treats that would stay good, and keep the young newlyweds well fed during the long journey to the Valley of Living Rock, where the trolls lived in the far north of Norway's countryscape.
It was a long trip, but with the summer weather being so seasonably warm—it actually reached 65 degrees Fahrenheit this afternoon—and the countryside so lovely to sightsee, with its green trees and flowers, the company none too disagreeable—after all Kristoff had along with him his lute guitar to play music and sing with Sven during the ride, whilst the perky Anna would often take the helm of sled driver.

This journey promised to be full of wonderful memories of their first days together as a married couple, although Bulda had strictly instructed her baby boy, cutie Kristoff, that he and Anna wouldn't be completely wedded until they were trollfully married by Great Grandpabbie himself.

So that meant hands off the little lady until after the second ceremony. The platonic relationship would just have to stand until the Valley of Living Rock was reached, and with all due speed, Sven, if you've got anxious new husband Kristoff's drift.

"Oh, come here, Olaf!" Elsa's hand extends to the neglected snowman, needing both hugs and attention. She and Anna bear his snowy touch with sprinkles of personal flurry in a three way embrace.

"Warm group hug time!" Anna sings out with gusto. Her emotional rollercoaster of a day soared to the new high of a loving smile that the magical reflection of a happy memory between the two sisters that Olaf epitomized and always brought to the scene along with him.

"See? I'll be fine. I won't be alone. Olaf's always with me." Elsa whispers in her sister's ear as they part the hug.

"I love warm hugs. Make sure Kristoff gives you lots of warm hugs, Anna, cause I won't be there." Olaf explains to his friend in his simple, unembellished way, as if she'd miss him on her honeymoon as much as Olaf would miss her.

"Kristoff! You have to give Anna at least three warm hugs per day. I always do and she'll miss them!" Olaf loudly yells out the palace doors. His comical voice rings through the castle the silly order that makes Anna laugh hysterically and Kristoff blush as deeply as the red sunset over Arendelle at the thought of he and his new wife being intimately close in any tempting way between here and troll land.

"Here you go, my little Annie! I hope I packed enough food for you and your new hubby!" Now it was Gerda's turn for a warm hug.

The big woman made cooing noises as she lifted the overflowing basket so full of goodies that its wickered lid was popping up to reveal a bulge of jam, cookie tins and waxed papers full of carved, cold hams.

"Gerda! There's enough food in there for like an army—for like a month!" She helps Gerda to carry the heavy load in place of Olaf, Anna has only to take one peek in the crack of the unsealed basket lid to see that generously concerned for her dietary well-being Gerda, had really outdone herself this time.

"Well, you never know if the roads will be closed or there'll be a sudden thunderstorm and you can't drive your sled on, or you'll be stranded by an avalanche and you can't get to any food or water for days!" The doting servant worries prematurely, and hopefully, unnecessarily.

Anna nods with big, freaked out eyes and pursed lips at each disastrous unpleasant situation the housekeeper/cook just saddled her mind with.
"Don't worry, Gerda. I won't let any bad stuff happen to her. Official Ice Master and Deliverer's sworn promise." Kristoff manages a salute to the impressed woman, who was now ooh-ing and ahh-ing at his strapping brute strength as he then hefts the overpacked food basket with one hand up into the sled's cargo hold rear without his well-built, finely displayed muscles breaking a sweat, as they flex admirably in his short sleeved shirt, before her bedazzled eyes.

"Is that even a real title?" Kristoff flashes the badge he always kept tied around his neck, directly into Flynn's face that it nearly whacks him on his prized nose.

"Yup, it's real!" Anna happily answers for her husband, something Kristoff had better get used to with this saucy girl, as she dashes up and grabs his hand, just expecting him to be ready to launch her lithe body's bouncing momentum over the side rail and into her seat on the sled.

And without missing a beat, he does.

Rapunzel marvels at the couple's compatible rhythm, as they wordlessly and simultaneously lean in towards one another, with the kiss of their married life's new beginning—both in body and mind—and it seemed, even into the soul.

*I'm positive that my Eugene's body and soul belong to me... He's proven that in so many ways. I'm just not so sure about where his mind wanders sometimes...*

The beautiful brunette considers her own shaky, now tenuous, marital status after only five short years of bliss.

As if hearing her thoughts, Eugene's eyes meet her across the sunset with a tentative grin.

*See? What is that? What do I see hiding behind those puppy dog sad eyes of yours, Eugene?* Rapunzel forces herself to smile back just as tentatively, as he reaches across the front palace steps, where they were about to wave the newlywed couple off, to brush back a loosened hair lock askew upon her forehead.

*God, you're still just as stunning in this amazing sunset playing magic tricks on your hair, Blondie. Flynn's deft hand caresses her closed adoring eyes and her soft freckled cheek for an everlasting moment, Rapunzel reveling in his sparsely adequate touch of late.*

*I just wish I had a few more magic tricks up my sleeve.*

As a distant foghorn blows in the distance, Flynn's tender palm just as suddenly falls away, his attention to the loving insecure girl following suit as his hand sinks and his handsome ever present stubbled face turns away from the blissful scene of the two young lovebirds and their well-wishers bidding them a fortuitous journey amidst the quickly fleeting sunset's final rays.

"I promise to take good care of Anna from now on." Kristoff pledges to Elsa's already lonely yet brave eyes, as the bridal couple ready themselves to depart on their new adventure.

"Thank you." They're the only two words left for Elsa to say as the Queen stands up on her tippy toes to give her sister a goodbye kiss.

Seeing this, Kai rushes over to give Elsa's feather light body a boost—just as he did when they were little children, when they wished to reach something too high up on the Christmas tree.

Anna's lovely face was in full bloom—just as glowing now as it was then, when her sister embraces her fondly, Kai looking on proudly.
"Bye, Elsa! Bye, Olaf! Bye-bye, everybody! Here we go! Jeg elsker deg! I love you!" She cries out, as they drive away into the sunset.

"Jeg savner deg…" Elsa whispers to the warm summer winds. 'I miss you…'

That low bellowing foghorn from some distant sea vessel blows again a second time more urgently and Flynn's gaze roams towards something unseen beyond the fjord, something even beyond the sea into the darkness looming black and thick, even as Kristoff and Anna's happy sled of spirited love, pulled by Sven's strong furry body drives along the Northwest path until it disappears into the final embers of the short summer sun's last rays in the thankfully opposite direction of those foreboding shadows to the southeast of Arendelle castle.

Its unsuspecting queen waves a fond farewell (along with a light coating of ice to easily start hardworking Sven's path) to her precious littler sibling on her way to a bright future ahead.

There were only traces of tears behind her brave eyes as she gives a silent prayer for her baby sister.

God go with you, Anna.

With a peaceful smile from within her now tranquil warm soul, Elsa watches the happy couple ride off into the glorious sunset to begin their lives together as one, no longer two.

Upon Arendelle's peaks, faint hints of the Northern Lights sparkle their revolving dance of prismatic magic all around Elsa as she stands alone, left behind by the dusky cooling summer breezes swirling their mysteries all about her…

Chapter End Notes

Jeg elsker deg! - 'I love you!' in Norwegian

Jeg savner deg - 'I miss you' in Norwegian
"Relics of a Dream"

Act I

Chapter 4

As the July moon rises high above the Arendelle castle, a lone dark figure scales its creamy brick and stone walls across the shingles of its raised roof trusses until his furtive slim form reaches a certain high peaked window of the structure's center tower.

Without much trouble, for he found this particular window entrance unlocked, the intruder opens it to slip through the tight window leading into the castle chapel's upper choir nave. He attaches a roped cord across a huge grunnstokker beam, securing it closed with a professional touch that only experience taught, before expertly swinging down, using momentum to bounce back and forth from rafter to rafter, over the pentice and aisles until he stealthily slides down the rope. Its end was securely tied around his ribcage to hover over the chapel altar and the historical, holy treasures that were still in candlelit display, as per tradition of royal weddings and baptisms.

A surreptitious black gloved hand reaches down towards the hallowed altar and wraps sly, thieving fingers around this country's most cherished symbols in all the land—Saint Olaf's sacred orb and kingly scepter. The pair of ancient 11th Century artifacts once wielded by the very first ruler of a united Norway, were lifted to the thief's suspended eye level...

It was late that night, once the wedding festivities died down, the wedding guests departed and the extra hired servants and ecclesiastical church members retired for the evening, that Queen Elsa finds her exhausted body from the rigorous labors of a strenuous, yet wonderful day, quite unable to sleep.

She was restless again—as often she felt in times when she was alone. The entire castle and its overworked staff were too tired for a bout with sleeplessness—even Olaf, who had thoroughly worn himself out all day and night, dancing and partying in his special way, was also now sound asleep, snow snoring in his porcelain snow 'bed,' specially crafted to catch the stray snow flurries from his personal cloud and create and insulated pillow of fresh powder to rest his sleepy snow head on in Anna's bedroom, which he shared.

Anna's former bedroom...

Elsa smiles to herself, wondering how far Kristoff and Anna had gotten to tonight already—traveling distance, strictly speaking—as she envisions the surprise for them when they return of the sectioned off wing of the castle she was secretly having redecorated and refurbished to be the newly married couple's 'private' quarters—where they'd have the freedom of being left alone to their own kitchen, dining, and sitting rooms, not to mention several bedrooms, replete with double
bunk beds. After all, the kransekake did predict at least six beds needed to be filled.

Elsa suppresses a giggle at the thought of six pairs of pitter-pattering feet skipping and playing and racing up and down the spiral staircase in this castle that had been aching for attention and love that only happy children's sounds and sights knew how to fill.

_Creak Creak Creak_

That wasn't merely a figment of her fertile imagination filled with blonde-headed little ones skittering and sliding around the palace, come to life now.

Elsa stops still in her tracks. Her keen ears perk up as she pauses before entering her usual sleepless night and early morning house of refuge—the Holy Chapel of Arendelle, which served as this repentant Queen's haven of peace and stronghold of tranquility. And now, this sacred bastion of her trusted sanctuary—

-was being raided by a common thief in the night.

"Who are you?! Unhand those sacred relics immediately!" The frightened young girl of yesteryear had been forged by ice, not fire, to stand up for what she believed in. She was raised to be a monarch under Christ, so neither her faith, nor her duty to country would tolerate this holy violation.

But when the dark hooded caped thief ignores her royal order, and scurries up his rope connected to the roof to escape, Queen Elsa, sovereign ruler of the Kingdom of Arendelle, singular monarch of the United Country of Norway, and appointed Head of the Church of Norway, in St. Olaf's pious, yet righteous footsteps, takes matters into her own more than capable hands.

Summoning up her normally stored cryokinetic energies, she sends an intricate pinpointed volley of icy blasts across the Holy shrine at the unknown, fleeing miscreant.

From the distance they had between them, the ice blast makes direct contact with the lower part of the thief's arm. He cries out in pain of instant frostbite and his injured hands lets go of St. Olaf's scepter, sending it clattering down to the altar table, then bouncing across the wooden slatted floor.

"Stop! I order you to stop and return that sacred Orb! Or I will be forced to completely freeze you and you may die." Elsa recognized her powers well enough to know how deadly they could be. She swore to herself, before God, that she would never use her special gifts to harm anyone ever again, but what of justice in preserving all that her kingdom held holy? She pauses before loosing her pent up powers. Her hands were both aglow with the ice's pale bluish light as she rushes towards the altar, her aim sure to be precise now.

But the soul-searching question burning in her ice-unleashed angered heart is answered seconds before she was to let go of her fully powered ice crystal fractals targeted to stop this criminal from desecrating their exalted king's artifacts, placed into her care, for the lifespan of her reign.

In the midst of it all, she hears for a split second that voice echoing in her head: _Don't be the monster they fear you are!_ 

And her heart stops beating in her chest. The master thief clinging to the cord of his escape route upwards, with his one good arm, was also capable of _stealing_ one's heart as he calculates the inner kindness and benevolence of this nation's leader—no, the tenderness of a young woman.

Using this moment of her indecision, and realizing the extent of her powers—that she could carry out her threat—he throws back his head, the black hooded cape falling back to reveal…
"Tell her…Tell her she'll always be my dream." And with those heartwrenched final words, said with a resigned lump in his throat and overwhelmed regretful tears transparent in his brown eyes directly locking with Elsa's shocked ones, Eugene Fitzherbert returns back to the thieving, lonely life of Flynn Rider. He quickly climbs the remainder of the rope and bolts from the uppermost window, disappearing as a shadow into the night.

Flynn had calculated correctly. In allowing him to escape, Elsa's appalled brain spins with every emotion—even ones she'd never experienced before in her young life, on this level.

Shock, betrayal, sorrow, confusion, shame, hurt, loss, suspicion, fear. Always fear.

And yet amidst all of this terrible, unforeseen implausible situation—there was still love clearly apparent in Eugene's eyes when he turned his face to her.

"Queen Elsa! Are you unharmed?!" Soon, rotund Kai comes barreling in, tugging on his dark green coat with several palace guards in all states of undress and unkemptness, for their benevolent Queen had given the entire palace attendance force the rest of the evening off in honor of Princess Anna's wedding.

Elsa never imagined such a happy, peaceful night could be broken by this distressing upset.

"Yes." Turning to face the sleepy palace guards and a worried Kai, Elsa's mind races to keep up with the speed of her pounding heart's unfurling decisions that only she could adjudicate in these few rapid, life-altering moments.

"Please forgive me for alarming you all. I am so sorry to have disturbed you vigilant good men from your precious off-duty time." She starts the white lie with a disarming apology and matching sincere smile to each servant's relieved face.

"Your Queen was just a little clumsy and tripped as she was finishing her evening devotions and prayers, while returning Arendelle's regalia back into their holdings for safety." She says in some honesty, but now for the little extra rimed frost on the truth's edges.

"St. Olaf's Orb is…away, already." She bites her lip, hoping none would pick up her word-wielding deceit. The holy object was literally 'away,' just a different kind of 'away' than Elsa was inferring.

More like getting away...

"Ah, there is the sacred scepter I dropped. Beloved St. Olaf, do forgive your descendant's late night, unintentional and uncoordinated accident." She truly was sending up a prayer as she falls to her knees. Kai and every other servant in the room follow suit, with similarly solemnly bowed heads, to the statue of the sainted past king. She honestly regretted this purposeful misleading of her good and loyal subjects—and also for losing his sacred Orb, which she herself, along with every other past ruler, was coronated with as a symbol of the nation's dominion over this great land.

She lifts above her genuflected head, from the chapel's floor where it had dropped from some twenty foot height, the royal scepter. She, too, maintained it as a symbol of power and strength—and courage...

Elsa closes her eyes and swallows hard as her mind forges a difficult path ahead that this kingdom's heir knew she must travel alone.
"I heard the Sea Wolf howl tonight." The man in a dark hooded cape places a hand to his mouth as he speaks, both projecting the words and muffling their indecipherable coded meaning, except to the intended listener's ears, as he stands alone in the small dinghy he had rode around the fjord's bends to this particular shielded cove.

"How many times did she howl?" A raspy, deep voice from somewhere on board the ship the smaller craft had docked alongside, calls back in responsive code.

"Thrice." The dinghy's lone occupant answers the query, obviously correct, for a rope ladder soon thereafter is tossed over the class schooner vessel's edge.

Click Shuffle Click Shuffle

The sun just begins to peek over the forward deck of the well-worn ocean faring ship, so named the 'Pearl Lady' by her illustrious captain. Although her moniker belied the older vessel's history of bloody, fierce sea battles, in her heyday, the 'Pearl' was widely feared throughout the seven seas she traversed. Boarding and raiding unsuspecting passenger ships, looting and pillaging and plundering its way through the high seas it had circumnavigated the globe in search of ultimate treasure.

For the past three centuries, at least concerning Western culture's waters, the term 'pirate' has made a fearsome name for itself to any soul who traveled the fathomless depths of waters, criss crossed between land masses.

Creative and cunning, charismatic and cruel, this diverse spray of ruthless individuals had been renowned and feared all through the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, when they each made their mark on history, upon the waves with their soaring bravado and antagonistic attitude on their quest for ill-gotten fortune or misplaced fame that each pirate ship captain enjoyed for a specific short-lived period of time in their respective waters.

Though nowadays, clashing with the 19th century's more civilized, God-fearing exploration and implantation of society as newly discovered worlds and unchartered territories become an interest of the past—even to the point of changing the fearsome name of 'pirate' to the more palatably pleased 'privateer' or debonairly dashing 'corsair.'

Neither of which this clinging to past glories, last but not least, scourge of the high seas, Dutch Captain Houtebeen II claimed to be every bit as cruel and crude and rough as his similarly dubbed early buccaneer turned pirate in every true meaning of the word, great-great-grandfather before him, Cornelious Jol. He had been the first in a long line of Dutch seamen, but where son and grandson, and great grandson abandoned the life of piracy on the seas to merely join the Dutch navy as officers commanding it, this aging descendant would be the one closest to keeping their family's revered patriarch alive.

As ill-luck and crippling accident (plank giving way) would have it, this seafaring Jol would also share something else of his great-grandpappy beyond the big, burly red hair and rough and tumble adventurer's lust—namely his Houtebeen, translated in the Dutch to 'wooden leg.' It was a fitting nickname to his predecessor pegleg and also applied well to this Captain Houtebeen II.

Eyes gaze up as he climbs the rope, seeing by the deck's edge a bit of the wooden notched leg and a menacing sneer that greeted the newcomer, whose able body bragged of its fitness, save for a
slightly frostbitten arm as he finishes climbing the rope ladder to throw his long legs over the Pearl Lady's railing to land squarely upon its neatly swabbed deck.

But there was no trace of the peg leg anywhere in sight.

_That old coot can move fast for having only one leg and one eye..._ Flynn thinks as he glances about the deck.

"And what took ye so long, Flynn Rider?" A dark skinned, muscular man with a dark moustache and a just as dark brandished pistol, stands in for the over half a century-old patch-eyed peg legged pirate captain and glowers at the handsome thief over the gun's sighting.

"You've had over three days to get the goods, thief. The Cap'n don't be taking too kindly to bein' landlocked and docked for more'n a day's shore leave. Makes 'im reckless." The first mate himself was giving slick Flynn a suspicious once over, the dangerous weapon in his hand still aimed at threatening eye level to Flynn's unflinching head.

"I'm feeling a little restless myself with that weapon trained on me. Do you mind?" Flynn infers, putting his two hands up disarmingly before the first mate, who merely smirks, keeping the gun fixed on him.

"We might be beginnin' to think ye weren't goin' to show up at the third sound of the Pearl Lady's foghorn blasts!" The dark man expounds as he lowers the business end of the firearm ever so slightly.

"Well...here I am. They say third time's the charm." Flynn responds, running off at the mouth as usual with his bravado kicking in when he was feeling stressed.

"Let us go below deck to the Cap'n's quarters. He'll be itchin' to have ye there. I just hope yer luck doesn't run out." The first mate ominously comments as he leads a wary Flynn Rider down into the Pearl Lady's darkened holdings beneath, with naught but the now blocked out moonlight to show the way.

"I'll be warnin' ye, the pegleg's in a foul mood tonight." The dark man whispers in the pitch darkness as he somehow, from years of sea life, identified which door led to his captain's aft cabin and knocked three times, strangely rhythmic upon it.

_Foul is the key word for this place._ Flynn thinks to himself as upon the gruff voiced 'Enter,' he is swept inside the dark quarters of Captain Houtebeen, with all its pungent odors and dank sights.

"Vat took you so long, Rider? Ye not tinkin' of goin' back on our deal, is ye?" He wipes his reddish, yet now grey beard with the back of his hand before slamming it threateningly on the wooden table he was seated at.

Pointing the fork and rather large knife laid on the table, the Captain seemed to be preparing for a meal as he squints at Flynn with his one good eye.

"Well, you know...stuff happens at weddings. Dancing, kransekake, Snow Queens..." In true 'Flynn-esque' style, he starts rattling off, but that wouldn't fly here as the impatient Dutchman grabs the knife from the table and aims it at Flynn's chattering neck.

"Sit down and be silent! Ye don't speak of food ven Houtebeen hasn't had his breakfast yet!" The aging pirate orders grumpily.

With 'help' from the first mate's firm hand, Flynn obeys and sits with a splat on the chair facing
opposite the Captain, feeling rather discomfited to be eyed greedily by a big man wielding a fork and knife hungrily.

"Vere is dat lazy boy?! He's late! Find my breakfast, Job. Don't let dat toff slack off. –Oh, here he is."

Just as the ill-tempered Captain was to blow a grumpy-old-man headgasket open, much to his long suffering, patient first mate's shaking head, the 'lazy boy' in question gives some well-mannered, quick gentle taps to the open door before entering with a balanced tray in hand.

"Pardon my tardiness, Sir." The auburn-haired lad was learning lessons of submission and concession in a hands-on type of way, as he was becoming accustomed to bowing and scraping his noble head to others nowadays.

"I hope this new hashed and browned, sautéed potato recipe with your eggs is to your liking, Captain." Without even lifting his reverent head, Hans still manages to make eye contact with a wide-eyed Flynn, who was mildly surprised to see, on this dirty old pirate ship, a civilized, though hardly well-dressed or cared for, European young man. His flustered hair was askew on his sweaty brow, grease and dirt and food cutting residue left on his tattered shirt sleeves—although through the mess and stains and dark-eyed weariness, there was yet an air of grace (And sideburns... gotta love the sideburns.) about his handsome (not half as good-looking as me, mind you) face and thin, worn out good postured stance, even as he bows his way to back out of the Captain's room.

"Mmmhmmm...this is rather tasty. At least dat boy can cook a proper potato. Ye can always judge a man by how vell he handles a potato." The Dutch-born captain sentimentally recalls his culture's roots in a momentary bout of nostalgia. He thoughtfully chows down on the new-fangled dish that his cook/cabin boy/deckhand/slave just invented.

"Now there's a proverb to stick to a man's ribs." Flynn's sarcastic joke goes not well-received though. The Captain's short turn of good humor at the delicious meal he was enjoying evaporated in an ephemeral seafoam cloud.

"Ye do not please me! Ye scabbanes dog!" The anger rose in this Houtebeen's face and was in contrast to his fading mass of graying red long hair and beard as he ferociously shoves the remainder of his meal—plate and eggs and tasty hash browns and all—to the floor, as he seethes at Flynn.

"I have this strange effect on people." Flynn murmurs at his own personality flaws, with a frown, then recovers swiftly.

"Soooo, here's your silly trinket. I've kept my end of the deal, as a gentleman thief. So I expect you to keep yours as a...you know...'gentleman' of the high seas and leave Corona's king and queen alone in peace. And we'll just call it a day." Flynn prattles as he carefully unwraps from his satchel Arendelle's treasured Orb thingy and plunks it on the table with a hopeful smile.

The rounded gold and Christian cross decorated relic of blessed St. Olaf gleams in the few rays of sun just piercing through the cabin's aft windows to give the ancient eight centuries' old artifact a glow of holiness, so much so that First Mate Job, still watching silently in skulking shadows, gasps and makes the sign of the cross in deference.

"Ja! Aye! Dis is a key piece to de puzzle! Yes, all should be revealed here." Captain Houtebeen's bedazzled eye glimmers as he delicately scoops up the jewel-encrusted gold artifact and begins to study its outside perimeter critically as he holds it up to the rising morning sunlight.
"Great! I'm glad you like it! Fits right in with your décor here...and since you got what you wanted, and promised to give me what I want...I'll go now and we'll hopefully have to never see one another again." Oozing charm to cover up his nerves, Flynn gets up from his chair and starts talking his back out of a corner, so to speak, aware that the ship's first mate, the big muscular dark man named 'Job,' was still blocking the passage.

"Aye, ye young scalliwag. Cap'n Houtebeen is a man of his word!" The yellow, partially attended toothy grin on the old pirate makes Flynn both smile and cringe at the sheer hideousness of the creature.

But as long as the old geezer was so taken with that Orb, it'd be all clear sailing from here. Excepting—

Or not.

"Ye've not been a man of yours, ye filthy, lying, double-crossing, dirty cur!"

Flynn had no idea how a man with only one leg could maneuver so swiftly, but Flynn was laid out flat, with his back to the wall, as the merry, greedy grin on Houtebeen's face just moments ago, warps into a menacing one-eyed glower directly in Flynn's face.

Breath mint, anyone?

"What have ye done wit de royal scepter? Our deal vas for dat piece, too! If yer holdin' out on me, I'll swear I'll tear ye heart out and feed it to me pet piranhas, here." With unbelievable force, the aged Captain slams Flynn against his pride and joy fish tank—which housed several full grown and fully hungry flesh eating predator fish of the deep sea.

"Yes, me boyos, he does look a tasty treat, don't he?" Houtebeen torments Flynn by discussing his demise with the eagerly hopping in and out of their water tank piranha fishies.

He motions for Job to press Flynn's head dangerously close to the tank's water surface.

"L-look, wait! I don't have it—I swear! Get me up!" Flynn cries out as he feels the grazing teeth of one high-jumping fish on his poor, stubbly chin. Job's strong arm, after a glance to his Captain, stiffens and relents, yet holds Flynn in place.

"Well, master thief, how did dat particular valuable piece get left behind? The pair of relics have always been kept together in dat kingdom."

"Have my sources of yer alleged skills as a thief been wrong? Don't be sayin' ye merely forgot de scepter, ye blackguard!" The Captain cruelly quizzes the man now firmly clutched by Job's strong arm as he's permitted to stand again, to face the angered Captain in the one eye.

"I didn't forget it. Look, I had both pieces for you in my hand. But when I was shot at, I had to drop the Scepter. I kept going with the Orb, as not to get caught, so you'd have at least one item, okay? Simple enough." Flynn answers honestly.

"Ye lying dog! If ye're shot at by de guards, de alarm would've got out across de kingdom! And it hasn't yet, for yer arrest, has it? Yer story be soundin' fishier and fishier to me, Flynn Rider." Captain Houtebeen motions for Job to push Flynn back down toward the fish tank's danger and this time, all the way.

"I don't know! Maybe they don't want the publicity of losing such legendary regalia." His garrulous mouth tries to stall. "Maybe word gets out slower here..."
Job shakes his head and continues to plunge Flynn downwards and he already started to feel the jaws of death salivating greedily for him.

"Maybe the Queen didn't want to tell anyone that she tried to shoot me down!" Though hysterically desperate to save his face (and beautiful nose) from being devoured by the ravenous critters as Job continues to press harder towards dunking the struggling man headfirst under the waters, Flynn almost whispers that last excuse.

He was almost reasoning inside his own head that a good, loving cousin like Elsa may just rather cover up his misdeeds than confess them to her poor, beleaguered cousin that he claimed as his wife.

Rapunzel, you married a scumbag, you know that? Might not need to worry about me embarrassing you much longer, though...

He smiles at the thought of her, despite the dire circumstances of Job's large, powerful hand around his neck.

"Ye say de Queen of Arendelle herself was de one who spotted and attacked ye?" Houtebeen raises a hand for Job to pause again, out of curiosity. "Vat sort of high and mighty monarchy has dere Queen armed and dangerous at all hours of de night in a church wit no guards to protect her?"

Captain Houtebeen has seen many a fierce battle, even concerning and Kings and Queens within their ship cabins on vessels he's raided.

But he'd yet to see one toff-nosed snob of a royal house lift a weapon at him, never mind fire it.

"Let's just suffice it say that Queen Elsa doesn't need anyone else's protection. She's got her own back and I wouldn't mess with her if I were you." Flynn adds, wishing that piranha had bitten his rambling tongue first.

But this pirate had been spending most of his time in Caribbean waters and had not heard the rumors yet of the 'Snow Queen.'

"Interesting kingdom…with a dangerous Queen in charge…a clever lady…" Captain Houtebeen strokes his grey beard as the wheels and rudders in his mind slowly turn over the decision to seek and destroy this mysterious woman, who could best a well-known master thief at his own quickness and cunning, to claim the missing item.

But fortunately for Elsa and her innocent Arendelle, the rising sun on the shining waters of the fjord illuminate the Orb that the Captain was brooding over. His examining eye catches a symbol well researched that indicated a secret button latch upon its surface.

"Voila!" The world traveled man cries out and with unmitigated joy, the golden Orb, so weighty and balanced, it appeared to be made of solid gold, pops open its lid to reveal a fist sized stone with an array of ancient carvings upon its granite rock—symbols and runes placed on the stone in a pattern that could only mean, to a trained eye—a map.

Captain Houtebeen, the aging pirate, had plundered and tortured and ruthlessly desecrated holy areas to move heaven and earth for such a find.

"Luck be smilin' on ye, thief, for the scepter is unnecessary it seems. Everything I need is right here. Job! Hoist de sails. Weigh de anchors. But first, put dis cur in de brig."

"Heey~!" Flynn cries out as he's now shoved towards the door.
"He's only fulfilled half our bargain, so I've work fer him yet. But fer now, I have vat I vanted…"

The capable one man crew of Job silently does as instructed. He strong-arms a smart-enough-to-know-when-one-was-bested-by-a-larger-man-who-had-the-savvy-to-keep-Flynn's-'magic'-hands-bound-the-entire-journey-down-to-the-ship's-bilges Flynn, and into the brig where he is unceremoniously tossed to the ground and locked in a cage. Job adds several extra deadbolt locks to stymie the master thief from thinking he could ever pick its lock.

"What? No complimentary breakfast in this…eww…well-rated establishment? A man's gotta eat to be good for anything. Even if the scents around here are rather odoriferous for my usually dietary —ouch…!" Flynn wrinkles his nose from the smelly dirt floor it was rudely shoved against.

Always the nose…

He struggles to get up after his tall, big captor ensures his submission by roping his legs together tightly as well.

"I'll see what I can do, Master." Slapping a pair of metal handcuffs around Flynn's wrists, the former slave turned mercenary gives the cynical man, prone on the floor a lordly smirk as he then proficiently adds the deadlock on the cell door. He purposely pockets the skeleton keys of the multiple locks, securing the stall cage door, preventing Flynn's escape.

"Whew…! Another fine mess you've gotten yourself into." Once he's alone, Flynn laughs at his penchant for unintentional trouble as he struggles about the filthy floor in an attempt to loosen his bindings.

"Whew, that big guy can tie a whopper of a knot!" The stubble-chinned man whistles under his breath. His nimble, thieving fingers were trying their darndest to free his tied legs, but to no avail.

"Argh! Now what?" Flynn thrashes about in vain to free his legs, then closes his eyes to recall his backup plan, for when everything went wrong, that he always had on hand.

Some time passes with no sound but the crashing waves as the old pirate ship leaves dock.

"Nope. Nada. Nothing. All that wedding cake and wine and partying last night is really slowing me down. Either that or I'm just getting too old for this kind of—wahhhh!"

After giving himself a good talking to as 31 year 'old man' Flynn Rider was wont to run off at the mouth at all times—even troubled ones.

His eyes snap open to see a fellow cell occupant staring straight back at him, dead in the eye.

And when we say 'dead', this other caged prisoner was reduced to nothing more than a skeleton. The bony skull of which, poor unlucky Flynn had ended up in his wriggling, to be mere centimeters from, face to face.

"That's not even remotely funny." He comments on the side to no one, giving his skeleton friend, who cheerily was displaying what was in Flynn's future, a rolled-eye smirk.

"I've gotta find a way outta here! Before I go stir crazy!" The free spirit of liberated man Flynn Rider valued his freedom and independence more than anything.

That and my girl, Blondie…who freely gave me that freedom.

And I just threw it away.
"What are you laughing at, Smiley?!" A frustrated Flynn so dubs the nameless skeleton head, whose jaw did seem to be in a rather jocular position (if your imagination got away with you in the darkness, that is).

"He always looks like that." A calm voice cuts through the brig's still darkness. Flynn's ears prick up as he hears keys being turned and cage door being opened.

"Even if you tell him a bad joke."

Flynn's eyes struggle against the single lamp lighted in the filmy blackness at the man who entered, balancing along with him a rather full tray of food and drink—silver service, dainty folded napkin, golden teapot and all.

"Whoa! Maybe I shouldn't have lodged a complaint with the management here, after all! Where did you learn to serve a meal like this, pal? Not onboard a pirate schooner, I dare say." Flynn sits up, with some difficulty, and again takes notice of the puzzling cabin boy/ship's cook he had seen serve breakfast to that rascally one-eyed peg leg earlier.

"I dare say." The handsome, young man answers pleasantly, yet reflectively rhetorical. He quietly changes the unhappy subject as he clears a makeshift table and places the tray upon it, spreading out the flatware and tea service as if attending to royalty.

"Do you take one lump or two in your tea?"

Flynn was starting to be able to make out the features of his new 'jailer' as his eyes adjusted to the dim lamplight.

The man wasn't much more than in his mid-twenties, though he had all the airs and graces of a gent of forty. His oval face, surrounded a shock of auburn hair, complete with sideburns, was pulled back into a tidy little ponytail, though his eyes looked sad and worn with worry.

Yet still, his high cheekbones, long celestial nose and strong chin were undeniably of proud heritage.

_Not too bad looking a fella behind that girly apron. A snob for sure, but I won't hold that against him._

Flynn muses as the man cuts off the rope at his feet to pull up a small stool to the upside down wooden bucket table and motions for him to sit.

"Five stars for your exquisite dinner setting, handsome. But I don't think silverware and I will be exactly 'sympatico.'" Flynn holds his cuffed and bound hands up to the light.

"Well..."

The man seemed to be turning the consequences over in his mind. Flynn's eyebrows were raised hopefully up at him.

"Are you predominantly right handed or left handed, Sir?"

_Strange question. Okay..._

Flynn's right eyebrow cocks ruefully as he decides to play it out.

"Right handed like most regular blokes." Flynn answers nonchalantly, warily eyeing his captor.
"Fine." The cabin boy purposely displays the handcuffed keys before Flynn's eager face. "If you promise, as a gentleman, not to endeavor to escape from this prison cell—"

"Ohhh, I do, I do, I do! I mean, heck no, I won't go. You can trust me, buddy. Scouts honor." Flynn gives his lenient companion his most charming smile, banging his own precious nose with the handcuffs in an attempt to salute like a good, little obedient soldier.

"Good...as long as we have one another's utmost trust." He unlocks a handcuff until the ratchet falls and unhinges Flynn's left hand and it was free.

But much to Flynn's chagrin, the man clamps the loose end of the cuff he'd just removed, still attached to his right hand, to one of the cell bars above the 'table' and places a fork in Flynn's shocked left hand instead.

"Now. Was that one or two sugars in your tea? Do eat while your hash browns and eggs are somewhat warm."

Flynn just looks up at him and blinks with his mouth hanging open. Then he smirks.

"What would you say if I told you I was lying when I said I was right handed?" Flynn clutches the fork and spins it around in his deft fingers as if wielding a weapon, struggling to gain the key ring from the turnkey's belt strap, as he hooks the fork into his opponent's loose apron strings about his neck, yanking his head towards the metal bars with a bang.

"It wouldn't matter because I know you are truly ambidextrous as well as an inherent liar." The self-possessed, observant auburn red haired man grunts out, rubbing his bashed, aching head with his right hand, after dropping the cup of hot tea in it to the table. (Thoroughly ruining the fine eggs and hash browned potatoes meal—alas.)

"Unfortunately for you—" The cabin boy and master thief were about to be at a standstill in one hand to one hand close quarters combat, as Flynn's forked hand is surprisingly thwarted by the slighter man's strategy of quickly pulling his head through the apron that Flynn was yet fork-entangled in.

He then spins the thin cloth around and around the cell bars, until Flynn was completely pinned to it and now both his appendages were bound to the cell.

"—so am I." When he finishes his swift victory with a flourishing, haughty bow, his fully functional left hand shows off as he uses it to pour another cup of the scalding hot tea from the heavy off balance pot and set it down on the soggy table as his right hand simultaneously lets himself out of the cell and uses too useful left hand to tightly shut every lock with a ring full of skeleton keys galore.

"What? cough cough Ambidextrous? - Or a liar?" Flynn, even in humiliation of his face pinned against the cold, iron bars, both hands fettered, shackled and restrained, recognized that he might have just met his equal in cunning, ingenuity, and ruthless hand to hand combat.

"Hmph...I deserved that." Comes the thoughtful, remorseful reply. "Touche". He concedes, and turns back to loosen the fast slipknot he had tied the apron strings around Flynn's one free arm and neck, catching the guilty fork with his confessed ambidextrous other hand as he does so.

He hands the cutlery back to a sore necked, but otherwise uninjured Flynn through the cell bars and offers him a conciliatory smile.

"By the way, my name is Hans Westergaard. Not that it matters to anyone anymore."
Hans sticks his hand through the bars in gentlemanly greeting. Their little scrap didn't deflate his opinion of this man one iota—in fact, some respect was earned on both sides this strange morn.

"Flynn Rider." He eyes the hand of the apparent nobleman before shaking it.

"And I take four lumps. I prefer things sweet." Flynn utilizes his one free hand to plunk four sugar cubes into his tea cup, letting the brew mix as he swirls the dark waters around.
"Chin Up, Sailor"

Act I

Chapter 5

As the Pearl Lady begins to move quickly across the waters beyond the Arendelle fjord with the new morning's wind in its sails, and a stolen map in its Captain's vile hands, the kingdom's Queen stands at the Castle's balcony to watch it go with a deep heaviness in her heaving breast.

She sensed inside that this was the ship taking her country's treasure along with Eugene away with it across the sea.

Should I give chase to retrieve our nation’s relics into the wild unknown? Or must I remain here at my post—steady and sure and forever shamed? Who can I tell of what occurred last night? Who should I ask for counsel and assistance? Faithful Kai? Loyal Johanne? Or truehearted Gerda? All three of them would think of my own personal safety first and only—after all, that's what those dear, sweet people have always done for Anna and I. I wish you were here, Anna. You'd know what to do...

Well, at least we'd be doing it together, whatever we decided. But I remember that Papa said there are times a good leader must stand up and be counted. Even when the dangers ahead are innumerable, if it is God's will, we will succeed.

Isn't that the lesson valiant St. Olaf fought for, died for, was martyred for, as he allowed God to determine his path.

"Dear Lord, please guide my path. Although it may be a difficult road you choose for me, I will bravely face this pilgrimage as would my father before me, to restore Arendelle's heritage."

Elsa had fallen to her knees in fervent prayer at the symbolized cross and statues placed reverently on her night table. Both her hands cling to the Scepter belonging to their revered St. Olaf as she steels her mind and heart to keep her immense powers roiling inside her emotions in check, just as she has been training to be able to do and take on this terrifying new task alone.

No guards nor soldiers of the realm could be involved in this tawdry affair of betrayal she'd rather be kept secret, especially from his—

"Knock Knock! Oh, sorry for just barging in, Elsa. That sure sounds like a pretty intense prayer first thing in the morning. Wow! You guys really know how to give praise and glory to God around here! Gotta try that when we get back home. It must be wonderful to be so…I don't know…assured. Well, it looks like it's really working for you, so I'll leave you to it. Sorry…!" A cheery, bubbly and overtalkative cousin Rapunzel, the very person Elsa did not want to be confronted with just now, innocently pokes her cute little nose in Elsa's bedroom door, mistaking her relation's soulful agitation for devout prayerful customs.

"No, not at all, Cousin Rapunzel. I'm fine. I was just finished. Is there something you wish to see me about? Are you all right?" Elsa switches her question with a more sisterly smile, still working on that 'human approach' her more demonstrative younger sibling was always egging her 'stiffness' about.
But years of lonely study, of proper etiquette and form, in practical solitude, cut off from the normalcy of informal human idiosyncrasies in behavior could do that to a girl.

"Ummm..." Rapunzel was, like Anna, an expressive young female, sometimes in need of an outlet for her surging emotions. And she was just about ready to unload after a night filled with self-recriminations and anxiety. "Have you seen Eugene around anywhere? I've been looking everywhere for him. I mean, after the wedding and the reception and then we saw Anna and Kristoff off in their sled, and then we all went back inside. But Eugene said he needed to take a walk and get some air...And I just said 'Okay.' I just said okay..." She repeats emotionally.

"He never came back to our room. He never came to bed. I was waiting up for him all night. Do you think...do you think he's okay? Do you think he got lost or even worse, hurt out there? On his own? Do you think-" Rapunzel lets all her pent-up emotional fearful rant spill over with the tears that accompanied her small, insecure voice nearing the end of her tiny percentage of a questioning heart. For her beloved Eugene was acting peculiarly lately—all secretive and disappearing for days on end and never explaining why.

Hence the tension between them as of late.

But none of that mattered to her anymore. Not the strained silences, not the curious awkwardness, not the hurtful secrets that'd been bothering her still, at times, insecure mind.

She just wanted to have him back! The way they were before, for the past five happy, glorious unbelievably wonderful years together.

Rapunzel just wanted to love him again, unquestioningly, as young love should be.

_I should have trusted you. I shouldn't have asked so many times where you'd been..._

That initial argument from some two months ago that started all this unease and discomfort between the previously crazy-in-love pair weighs heavily on her heart.

"Do you think Eugene left me?" The tiniest voice of them all speaks of the once self-assured girl's fractured state of mind. Rapunzel overcome with emotion, bursts out in the unmitigated tears she's been trying to hide from everybody of the lonely aching idea of her funny, clever, beautiful Eugene, her best of friends, her affectionate, teasing ardent lover abandoning her when she needs him the most.

_I'm so scared to be without you anymore, Eugene._

"NO! No, my darling. He would never, ever leave you."

As she moves to tenderly hug her weeping friend and cousin close, hot tears fall to her once cold chest, Elsa discovers that her no longer frozen heart was compassionate and warm enough to truly empathize with someone she and Anna had become as close to as another sister.

She feels Rapunzel's pain intensely, especially since she herself had personal knowledge of Eugene's 'activities' the previous night. Though she didn't understand at all his reasons or motives for stealing Arendelle's crown jewels, so to speak, Elsa did clearly see love and deep caring for his wife plain in his eyes and in his touching words of the last message he wanted expressed to Rapunzel.

"Eugene loves you too much to just let you go. Anyone can see how much he cares for you, in his eyes." She explains, stopping to wipe the tears from the girl in her arms.
"Really…?" Rapunzel needed that type of assurance right now—a glimmer of hope peeking through her clouded with self-doubt and worry eyes. Pascal, who had been seated on her lap, his pupils large and sympathetic, changes his skin to a melancholy blue shade.

"Really." Elsa smiles, on the verge of backing down on her own decision to pursue the criminal thief in order to retrieve St. Olaf's Holy Orb. The Queen was already set to grant amnesty to the poor misled man who took it right before her eyes, and a full pardon when he returned—with or without the golden bauble, if it meant he would reunite with his adoring, wonderful, loving wife again.

"I even heard him say that you are still his dream. Wasn't that a sweet thing to sa—" Elsa hardly expected such a romantic notion of sentimental phrasing to cause such a violent response from her older cousin, as Rapunzel abruptly yanks her crying head back and gasps, grasping Elsa's shoulders with a pair of tensed, clawing hands.

"What did he say?! Elsa! Repeat to me exactly what Eugene said to you!" Rapunzel was near hysterical as she nearly shakes the arms of her taller relative out of their sockets. Poor forgotten Pascal skittered to the floor in her panic.

For all the noise her cousin was making, Elsa was grateful it was Gerda's noisy washing day. The dear woman always had a song on her lips when doing the laundry and it was loud enough to fill the palace, too.

Every one of her palace guards would have come running at the frantic tone of Rapunzel's panicked voice.

"It was just that! I—uh, let me see…he said…'Tell her that she's still my dream.' That's all. What is wrong with that statement, Rapunzel? What does it mean?" Elsa shivers at the effect those seven simple words had on the chestnut brown haired girl. The Queen herself was now starting to become alarmed.

"It means Eugene's in danger. And he doesn't think he's gonna make it back to me! Oh, Eugene! Wait for me, I'm coming! Elsa, we have to find him! Please help me! We have to save him!"

Alerted by those few words to full panic mode, for she knew her love so well after all, Rapunzel starts dashing about the room like a madwoman, because the last time her husband had uttered those particular, sincere words—it was on his deathbed.

And the near tragic self-sacrificial scene replays in Rapunzel's chaotic mind, over and over until her entire body was shaking with fear for his safety, as she clutches at the dammably short cropped strands of her powerless, magic-defunct hair.

But she wasn't the only royal princess here in this room that was born—no, blessed—with mysterious magic running through her imperturbable veins. She was full of reined in passion, duty, sisterly devotion, and yes—yes, there was even repressed love.

Perhaps I have a dream, too…

A vision of vulnerable green eyes in her mind's eye, Elsa holds the Royal Scepter high as both women stand on the balcony to gaze at the ship sailing beyond the horizon…
Summer’s tropical fruits of coconuts and mangoes and the like line the sands surrounding the blanket laid upon the summer beach’s hot burning summer sand.

The shining blue waves gently crash to the shore as the summer wind's breeze across the sun-drenched morning’s summer landscape.

Summer seagulls rhythmically caw their contentment with the peaceful ocean-meets-sand world below the perfect summer sky.

Is it me or do you see a certain seasonal pattern here?

"Doo da dee da do de…” Sitting in a colorful, floating raft, rubber ducky in tow, orange sliced ice drink in hand, Olaf the snowman suns himself on a little cove inlet on the fjord that had been created just for him by his dear friends at the castle for his turning two years old birthday present.

"I'm two years old this year! Yippee! I think I've grown a lot already since my birthday last week. I'm gonna be a big snowman soon, when I get even bigger and taller, I'll be an even happier snowman! Oh, oh! Maybe I'll need a better, bigger, snowier, personal flurry! I can't wait till Anna gets back to see me. She'll think I've grown so big!" Olaf was humming blissfully to himself with these delusional self-satisfying thoughts, wishing he had brought a ruler or measuring tape to gauge his stretching what must be inches taller already, heightened form. He pokes upwards with a stick hand at his now believed 'tiny' snow cloud that would no longer be adequately icy enough to match his 'humongous' birthday growth spurt.

"I'll talk to Elsa about getting me an upgrade." Olaf listlessly sways back and forth as he dips his fingers in the warm waters at the fjord's shore edge. "I love summer…” He deliriously announces aloud to the sun and sky above his prone form (and not melting, courtesy of tiny snow flurry) and puts his dark sunglasses over his eyes for a morning siesta while happy dreams are made on his new raft upon the gently swaying, still waters.

But this pleasant, idyllic summer world for a dreamer of a snowman was about to come to a chilling end.

Happy Olaf, daydreaming Olaf, drooling Olaf, lazily sips his tall glass of fruity beverage from a pink flamingo shaped straw as his raft calmly floats along the currents before he dozes off. Eyes closed tight for a summer nap, he was having so much fun in the sun as he hums a tune, spinning in circles, his wooden arm serving as a rudder—that Olaf fails to notice his multi-colored floating device was getting caught in the swirling current's downdraft. The indiscriminate waters were pulling him towards the docks…

"Psst! Psst! Elsa! Psst!" Rapunzel's hissed whisper was a littler louder in volume than she intended as she hunkers down behind a set of barrels perched at the dock's edge for their pick up.

If anyone had seen her, they surely would not have recognized the pretty brunette princess of Corona. Her already short hair (that Flynn Rider is a darn good hairdresser, amongst other desirable traits) had been chopped even shorter. She was wearing a pair of tall white knicker
stockings pulled up over her grey trouser pants. Her plain, brown button-up shirt covered her tied down bust and loose fitting open vest made her look rather peasant rustic, plainly casual—and definitely boyish.

The drab colors of her attire helped, but the clincher for anyone to believe the wide-eyed cutie was not of the female variety was the loosely, and quite artistically placed, if I do say so myself, dark red bandanna draped across her forehead and draped over her ear as if to shield a painted on, partly revealed scar injury across her eyelid and down her made-up to be more manly toned, cheek.

Her other eye's squint was easily passable as a scraper of a young boy in his barefooted teens.

"Who are ye callin' for, boy? Shouldn't ye be in schoolin', this fine morn?" A toothy old man roughly grabs the incognito Rapunzel by her shoulder and spins her around accusingly for playing truant.

"Ohhhh! I mean…uh, yeah, you bet, Mister. cough cough" The startled girl remembers to suddenly change her rather high-pitched girlish voice to a rather lower toned masculine one. She succeeded more in her theatrical delivery than her vocal levels.

"What's wrong with ye, young fella? Sore throat's gotcha? Nothing catchin', I hope." The busybodied old coot suddenly recoils. His hypochondriac phobia of contagious disease lets go of her arm as if it were plagued and begins to back away. He suspiciously eyes her dilapidated face cover and slight, perhaps leperous, form getting to his overactive imagination full of newly discovered germs and sickness—all leading to death.

"No! Err, nope, I mean…” Pascal the chameleon peeks out from inside his girl's vest pocket, vacillating his colors with her every word, as the man cocks his head at her fishy story.

A flustered Rapunzel starts to freeze up, right at the start of their journey. She stares at her bare feet, toes facing in, looking for a good excuse to dream up.

"Clear the way, Sir! This boy's skin mustn't be touched by anyone not yet vaccinated." The deep bellowed voice held a command that captures the older gentleman's attention immediately. The tall, blonde haired pale young man with a golden moustache, donning a cap and uniform of a commanding officer in the Norwegian navy, owned all the confident airs of an urbane, self-possessed gentleman.

The man who was an old soldier at heart yet, stands his bent over back up straight to salute this far more convincing male presence.

"As you were." Elsa, yes, our elegantly graceful poised and aesthetically feminine fetching Queen of Arendelle—was posing as a lower timbred, well polished authoritatively impressive at her five foot ten inch height male naval officer.

And doing a fine darn good job of it, too.

Her calm, inner reserve and great powers of observation served her acting skills well today. Her long flowing hair was knotted beneath her naval hat's disguise.

"Come, boy. The ship is awaiting your immediate voyage." Elsa assuredly salutes back to the harbor man before leading 'boy' Rapunzel away by the elbow towards the dock where several ships were preparing for early morning departure.

Pascal sticks his tongue out at the nasty man who sticks his tongue right back as they walk away.
"That was absolutely amazing, Elsa! And here I thought I'd be better at this—knowing a thing or two more about men's behavior, having had one around all the time to study..." A reflectively melancholic Rapunzel trails off in her mumbled accolade for Elsa's compelling performance back there, as the pair of 'ladies' walk towards a certain docked ship with blue, deep red and white flag colors flying—the Saltine and Canton symbol of the royal Norwegian navy.

"Just remember to keep your tone low and even at all times. And take long purposeful strides forward—rather than short, clipped steps when you walk." Though secretly petrified herself of boarding a sea vessel, Elsa helpfully instructs her elder, yet not wiser, cousin under her breath and false moustache.

Rapunzel did her best not to laugh at the tall, beautiful, sophisticated woman now sporting a distinctly male feature such as facial hair. Elsa resembled her father greatly from the portrait Rapunzel had seen in the portrait room of the castle.

She herself attempts to improve her stride in longer steps—a difficult thing to do in the ill-fitting footwear of men's boots she pauses to yank on. They had been stuffed with stockings to add to her short height.

"Let me do all the talking once we get onboard the ship. My father taught me everything there is to know about the Navy. In his youth, he was an officer on board this very ship, after all, and I think I still know someone here."

The girl whose veins once ran cold with ice gazes fondly down at the dark navy blue uniform she was proudly wearing. It had belonged to the most wonderful, most noble, most gallant and valorous man who'd ever lived—and she wished her dear father was still alive right now to tell her if she was doing the correct thing.

So all I can do is pray.

"Permission to board the Valborg, for inspection, Ensign?" After giving and receiving a proper salute, Elsa feels nostalgic, for she had last visited this very same ship a long time ago, when she was a small, small girl with her father, the King, who had been awarding medals and commendations in a ceremony for the crewmembers valor in sea battle.

She remembers every little detail of that day—from that serious expression on the Kommander's face which turned a kind eye to smile at the young girl and tickle her chin, as her father, looking handsome and regal in his own Lieutenant Colonel Oberst garb commended the Kommander/Captain's service and loyalty to the Crown.

Though she was very young then, Elsa could still see the naval seamen all standing at attention, down to each Loytnant (Lieutenant) or Fenric (Ensign), looking with eager eyes as her dignified parent waved the holy scepter of St. Olaf over the Captain and his vessel in blessing and symbolism of their nation's dominion over the seas the ship sailed upon.

"Permission granted, Sir!" Though confused about the inspection date being ahead of schedule—strange too, just on the verge of the ship's deployment—the new recruit was intelligent enough to recognize a commanding officer by his uniform's markings and the multitudes of bars and stripes adorning Elsa's jacket, earned respect enough not to be questioned.

"As you were." Elsa's deepened voice and distinguished attitude instilled confidence to whomever she spoke. Each lower ranked officer gave her deference until she is led to the Captain's planning room, near the bridge of the vessel. She motions for Rapunzel to remain outside the bridge's helm, while she enters with a salute at the man inside.
"Kommander Rustung, I know you to be a man of many heroic credential and great consideration from your many years of valued and loyal service to the Crown of Arendelle." Elsa begins her speech before the experience Kommander of the ship could pose a question.

"I thank you…Colonel…for your kind commendations. Although, I am afraid I do not quite recognize your face, though the uniform is strangely befuddling to me." The elder Captain was carefully considering sounding the alarm, for he, as personal friend and former Captain/Kommander of the only officer ranked Lieutenant Colonel, just below his office ever decorated for all three citations of valor above and beyond the call of duty, knew that honorable man to be dead.

"Then, Kommander, I am to rely solely and entirely on your great discretion and willing silence, as I ask you to embark on a special mission." Securing they were all alone, she looks him directly in the eye, still seeing that light of innate kindness aglow there, that told her he was a trustworthy good man still.

With those enigmatic words, Elsa turns around, carefully removing the false moustache, along with the hat which was confining her mass of blonde hair in a tight bun that she releases as she turns around to face Kommander Rustung.

"My Queen…!" The reverent officer bows his head deeply to his Sovereign and she smiles at his expected, dutiful response.

She then lifts his sweet, old chin with a familiar hand.

"I still remember when you did just the same to me, when I was a little girl." Elsa bites back the good childhood memory emotion on her starkly, unmade up and naturally beautiful facial features —especially dazzling when she smiled.

"But… I don't understand? Why all this?" The bewildered captain of the schooner class Valborg queries the girl as she recoils her hair back into a tight bun.

"I don't expect you to understand, because I don't even fully comprehend it. It's all too complicated to explain what must be done—right now. But it must be done in secret." Elsa looks to the gentle man, who had proven to be her father's truest and dearest friend. "I'm just asking you, as a great favor to me, to help me locate a man. Please."

"And who might that man be, my Queen?" Kommander Rustung asks, as Elsa finishes replacing her hat atop her head—her beautiful blond hair hidden once more.

"A good man—like yourself, Sir. A good man who has lost his way, trying to protect the one he loves." Elsa gazes from the ship bridge's wide window to the calm, calm blue sea outside.

Something that glistened there caught her interested eye.

"In that case," he pauses, gazing at the girl in his office with a sight he never thought he'd ever see, standing before him in uniform, looks her up and down critically concerned, then shrugs his dutiful shoulders with his decision.

"I am at your service, Sir."

The Captain salutes his ruler and her pure of heart motives.

"Just as I served with your noble father before you, without a second thought, I would take you to the ends of the earth if you wished it."
"Thank you, my dear Kommander Rustung. Let's hope this journey doesn't prove to be that far-reaching." Elsa smiles a bit wistful and hopeful up at him. "And Kommander."

"Yes, Queen Elsa?"

"My true identity is to be concealed from the crew...for the time being." She reattaches her 'man making' moustache beneath her nose. "No one must find out I am involved in this endeavor, or all could be lost."

Feeling the great weight of leaving her home country, the Kingdom she and Anna had lived in such a sheltered life, for the first time leaving its shores to travel into the great unknown...

That 'something' that glistened on the rolling wave of the peaceful sea that disturbed Elsa earlier was so rocked to sleep by the gentle tides that he was snoring.

And nothing was worse than a snowman's snore, for all the air expelled around his mouth turned into ice fractals shimmering in the sun like diamonds that might perchance to pierce and pop the new innovation of a rubber raft he was snoring upon.

Snowman plus warm ocean water, without a raft betwixt, was never a good idea.

But brainless Olaf was not widely known for entertaining good ideas.

"Well? What did he say?!" Almost tripping in her oversized boots, Rapunzel quickly skirts away from uselessly eavesdropping at the door of the bridge, anxious to hear how Elsa had fared in convincing the schooner's Captain to take the pair along in search of her missing husband.

"Kommander Rustung is a dear, dear old friend." Amidst scanning the waters in the distant east, as they leave the fjord to enter the Skagerrak strait, Elsa smiles encouragingly to Rapunzel, who appeared to be a bit green around the gills already as she suddenly clutches her dizzy head.

"Are you all right?" Elsa asks, concerned, though her mind was being pulled elsewhere in this moment.

"Yeah, oh sorry...Must be a little seasick again. Had it bad on the way here from Corona. Eugene laughed at me at first, but then he was so nice—so warm." Rapunzel fights back both mal de mer and her own aching torment of being apart from her true love when he was most certainly in peril but it wouldn't become the tough 'boy' she was portraying, to start weeping. Pascal's colors change from pink to puke green on her shoulder in sympathy.

"We're on our way to find him. Just wait right here. Someone needs a wake up call, first." Elsa squeezes Rapunzel's shoulder as she sits her down on a deck bench before weaving between many rushing men on deck, aft and starboard, as she moves to the far end of the craft. All sailors were on hand to ready the vessel to leave the fjord for the strait.

Each man was performing his duty on the newly remodeled, three-mast schooner's deck as they raise the top sail and the gaff-rigged bowsprit high into the cloudless blue sky with the nation's history of proud naval precision behind them.

Whilst everyone's attention was on getting the ship in shape and Bristol fashioned for its departure, Lieutenant Colonel Elsa finds a rare, quiet spot near the ramp behind some wooden crates beside the life boats where she kneels down, removing one Navy issue white glove of her father's uniform.

Zzzsht
A silent, delicate webbing of ice forms into a net that she expertly manages, with cryogenic powers now at her trained command, to wrap around the occupant of the colorful raft, fortunately yet unseen, in the Valborg sailors’ hectic work at the ship's riggings, to scoop him up, just moments before the tiny raft is sucked into the surging pull of the powerful vessel's deadly spinning back steel rotors.

"Huh? What? HEY! What happened to my—?!” Elsa slaps a quick ice muzzle over Olaf's loud mouth as he is rudely awakened, nearly napping through his choppy trip to the Big Sleep.

"Shhhh—! Olaf! Speak more quietly, please." Elsa whispers fiercely, in warning, to the disoriented snowman, swinging in mid air above the crashing waves as her ice magic delivers him over the ship's railing via her frozen net, surrounding his rounded body to land into her reaching arms.

"I love warm hugs!" Olaf happily murmurs into her chest, indulging in the embrace as Elsa hugs the frosty little friend in relieved greeting.

"Olaf, you have to be more careful on your raft. If you float out this far, the ship's engines can pull you in and—" Elsa's cautionary words are hammered home solidly as both she and snowman gaze over the Valborg's rail to see his multi-colored raft and all its creature comforts on board (thankfully, minus one silly snowman) are sucked under its rapidly revolving, back rotor wheel, leaving only a trail of shredded pieces and painted scraps in its wake.

"My new raft…! That was my best birthday present…" Pitiable Olaf stifles a regretful snuffle as his cocktail glass bobs to the water's surface listlessly empty.
As Hans Westergaard emerges from the prisoner's brig kept in the pirate ship's lower bilge decks, he gazes around the kitchen gallery and the tiny connecting area with a single bunk style of bed and simple basic living accommodations he'd been subjected to for the past two years—since his brothers practically sold him as a slave to the highest bidder.

This unpalatable situation reminded him much of the Biblical Old Testament story of Joseph and his clan of jealous brothers who banished their younger sibling into slavery bondage, as Hans was taught in church Sunday school when he was small.

Ah…why didn't I keep to the lessons I learned then? I was given every opportunity to be a righteous and moral, better man.

Hans remorsefully reflects on the torrid turns and bitter bumps his wicked heart had taken him on. It was a cold and calculating road, as far away from his childhood's church teachings as the Good News of their moral Scriptures he was drilled in as a rebellious young boy could be.

At night, this was always repeating in the dank darkness in the back of his contrite mind. Sometimes only those ethical precious parables that the adult man had rejected in his wanton pursuit of self-worth and ruthless greed, fueled by power hunger, still existed.

So I hardly can compare my story to Joseph's, besides the fact that I have twelve older brothers, not ten and one younger. I'm the unlucky number thirteen. Joseph was always a good man, despite his distressed circumstances. I was exactly the opposite—and just too much of a liar to admit it to myself before...

Hans hears that Flynn Rider's words from just before as well. Something about the Captain's new prisoner interested him greatly. He couldn't explain exactly why, but he wanted to know more about him.

Perhaps because he was clever enough to be a worthy match.

"Look at me. Still thinking I'm clever." Hans chuckles to himself, as he stares into the small mirror hung on fishing hooks over the wash basin he used for shaving, primarily. (Even an indentured servant must be clean-shaved and fit to see the Queen, sideburns and all.)

One impermeable virtue, and perhaps a touch of vanity for his good looks, was still ingrained in the oft-dejected young man's brain.

He examines the slight bruising on the side of his head's cranium and upper cheekbone from the earlier scuffle, and dismisses the light injury, brushing a hand over his mussed and askew hair.

For some reason, in the looking glass, you could see more of the truth about yourself than you could normally see in everyday life.
Hans notes in the reflection his once pristine, white hands—always kept safe beneath unburdened leather gloves—were now worn and tanned, with rough calluses from nonstop physical labor.

Yet somehow he didn't find the hard work so abhorrent anymore, as he first did. And from that fight with the physically fit thief, he serendipitously just discovered that these two years' worth of harsh tasks gave industry to his now strengthened hands that had previously known only hunting and fencing and fishing and the like, for gentleman's sport—all soft and effeminate.

But now, he realized, he could survive without such menial trifling activities, nor servants, nor luxuries—from swabbing the decks, to rinsing the laundry and cooking, of course, to every other mundane domestic task that his spoiled, haughty youth would have never before deemed worthy. He had even learned to rig a ship's mast, weigh anchor and hoist sails when an extra hand was required. All this now made a man out of this mollycoddled 'baby' of the family in small ways that he didn't even recognize with his head to the proverbial plow practically all day and all night aboard this aging ship in servitude of the aging Captain and his 'crew' of just one other able-bodied man—a patient man, suitably named 'Job' to take up the slack.

And though his twelve brothers meant this sort of harsh life as punishment, perhaps in the end, Hans would see—just like Joseph after all—that it was all meant for his good, as God's Hand often worked in mysterious ways, placing the right star in the correct heavens at the right time.

The stars were indeed aligning as the modern three-masted Naval warship, Valborg's crow's nest lookout spots the ship that fit Elsa's description of the craft she was searching for, as it pulls into the same dock for supplies.

Elsa and Rapunzel and their two companion stowaways, disembark from the Valborg alone, although Kommander Rustung highly voiced his concerns. Elsa was quite certain in her authority, afterwards embracing the older gentleman with a surprise kiss to his cheek as the 'Pearl Lady' docks for its supplies at a port on the mid-Norwegian coastline.

Elsa had insisted Kommander Rustung hold back his vessel from overtaking the smaller, older craft, and to break off the search once she and her friend secured passage onboard.

By hook or by crook—or so the saying goes—and Elsa was not quite sure which of these foreboding choice terms she preferred.

"Where's your father's uniform?" Rapunzel whispers in the darkness from beneath her too-long dark hooded cloak as a similarly turned charcoal black Pascal rummages about to find a comfortable nook in the cloak's deep pocketed folds.

"I asked Kommander Rustung to take good care of it." Elsa whispers in the pitch black darkness that she and Rapunzel were both ensconced in.

The stately, tall, beautiful blonde was now wearing a tight black shirt and borrowed tight black pants from the Valborg's vast uniform supplies. Elsa's slinky dark choice originated from the underwater diving section of the clothing department, meant to fit beneath heavy diving gear.

But who would argue with this scintillating Queen in black?

"How are we going to get onboard?" Rapunzel asks, as she watches Elsa finish tying up her hair in a black cap, impressed at how quick change an artist her tall cousin was proving to be. Elsa slinks in the shadows to the pirate ship's edge and back again with her report.

"The ship's getting ready to leave." She says.
"Do you really think Eugene's in there?" The worried wife bites her lip, fearful of what might have befallen her kidnapped love.

"Of course Eugene's in there!" Olaf whispers with enthusiasm. "Who's 'Eugene'?" Fitted out with a black cape and black hood, with cut-out eyeholes of his own, Commando Olaf was a dark sight to see. His pure blizzard white body was deemed too stark against the moonless night that it might be seen. So a quick costume was created for his peculiar sized, two-humps plus head body, by a girl who grew up sewing clothing fashions for strange-bodied little friends in her spare time. Rapunzel had become an expert seamstress whilst waiting for her life to begin.

And right now, her life has taken off in dramatic ways she'd never envisioned.

*Oh, Eugene! Please be okay, okay?!

Rapunzel takes a deep breath to quell the worry in her queasy stomach as she looks to strong leader Elsa to show them the way to save him.

"Right, this is it." Elsa's cat like eyes had adjusted to the night's dark clouded summer moon above the ship—enough for her to make out the towering, tall form of a dark, well-built man emerge from the lower plank of the Pearl Lady.

Job climbs down the wooden plank he'd just lowered to the dock with large empty casks, flagons and jugs roped around his sturdy shoulders and neck, to be refilled with some certain brand of liquor or 'moonshine' to the Captain's liking.

"We don't know how long that man will be, so we must quickly sneak on board and conceal ourselves somewhere on the ship below deck, where we won't be noticed, so we can begin our search surreptitiously. Silence is life or death here. Olaf, can we trust you to keep quiet at all times, so as not to reveal our whereabouts?" Elsa turns to the weakest link on the talkative chain.

Olaf's two black as coal eyes blink before his branch hands shove themselves up under his hood. The two girls hear the tinkling sounds of an icy zipper now coating his soundless lips.

"I didn't know he could do that." Rapunzel whispers in the pier's still darkness.

"Neither did I." Elsa doesn't waste another thought on Olaf's interesting new aspect for now. Right now, she had other fish to fry. "Follow me." Words thrown over her elegant shoulder, Arendelle's Queen picks up the snowman in black and races like a sleek black panther across the empty docks.

"Okay, I can do that. I think…Eugene could…Come on, Rapunzel!" Rapunzel takes a deep breath and copies her swift as the wind cousin, dashing in and out of the shadows of various structures and posts that were lining the pier, like a frantic gazelle until she too reaches her destination—the dark and foreboding mouth of the pirate ship.

She pauses before its menacing yaw a second before blindly thrusting all of herself—hopes, fears, doubts and faith—into the unknown fearful belly of the proverbial beast with a courage only spawned from her great love.
In the darkness of the pirate ship's prison hold, a man was hard at work trying to utilize a useless fork. Its clinking sounds of scratching at hard metal were drowned out by the vessel's sounds as it lurches back to life from its short stop at some dock.

"No, no, no, no…! I'm missing my chance!" He furiously twists and spins the already bent fork, poking at his own wrist more than at the uncooperative tumblers. But inside his head, he already knew it was too late to make an escape. The ship was already on its way.

He stops.

"I am really losing my touch." Flynn Rider had, from years of finely honed skills of thievery, trained his left hand to be just as useful as his right, being able to open doors and grab small objects, to picking locks.

So why is this particular handcuff being so darn persnickety?

He sighs, slamming back his trapped right hand, still linked to the iron cage bars, in anger.

"That felt good." After a seething fit, Flynn pauses to collect his cool. He gazes down at his still captive, and now painful, right hand sourly. His wrist was raw from the constant pulling and tugging from trying to wriggle out of it. But it was useless.

"This should've been a piece of cake! Come on, lefty! Do your magic finger thing! Stupid hand!" He berates his inadequate appendage, studying its ineffective fingers distraughtly with a frustrated sigh. "Stupid! Stupid…" That exhausted hand rubs his stubbled chin, as was his habit, in an attempt to get his brain's motor started.

However, another piece of metal bound around his fourth left finger, that as bad luck would have it, scrapes against his already bruised jawbone from his hand-to-hand metal bar smashing combat with that guy before.

I can't believe I was beat by that dandy fop!

"Ouch! That felt good, too…" Flynn sizzles his breath at the extra pain that the ridges of his wedding band caused as his left hand moved across his battered chin.

Staring at the ring encircling his left fourth ring finger, Flynn lifts his hand in the dim lighting from where he was sitting plopped on the scratchy wooden floor of his prison, his right hand still strung up.

"Rapunzel…Let down your hair…" Flynn Rider, out of options, out of energy, out of luck, allows his distracted mind to reminisce, recalling that tower, that witch, that mirror and his adorable little lady lovely locks, who was willing to sacrifice her freedom to give him his. He lets his pathetic head fall back against the cold bars.

"I don't have any left. Sorry…!"

Was he dreaming? Of course, he had to be hallucinating.

"That's okay, Blondie. Just wanted to say your name aloud, 'cause I miss you badly." He murmurs a smiling answer to his illusionary companion. His eyes were still closed as his head was raised to the ceiling.

"Oh, Eugene! I'm so glad to hear you say that! I'm so glad you were kidnapped and didn't run away from me! I've missed you, too!" But Rapunzel's snaking in arms through the bars, around his
shocked neck in a choking embrace was disturbingly real.

Flynn's poor yanked back down body and head, snap around so fast he could've gotten whiplash.

"Rapunzel! What are you doing here?!" He voice reduces furtively, though increasing in frantic state.

"It's me!" She sings out, perky and exuberant, lifting her eye sling so he would recognize her. "We came to save you!" She squeals out triumphantly, waving her arms high in the air, then lowering her volume, after her husband's left hand gives her excited yell a tempered lowered hand gesture.

"...we came to rescue you..." She repeats in a whisper, letting her crimson bandanna fall back in place over her big eyes as Pascal emerges from her dark cloak to squeak through the bars and give a weirded-out Flynn a slow motion, two fingered salute, before going to work on his handcuff's lock. The lizard's entire arm actually slipped into the lock's sticking tumblers.

"When you say 'we,' you're not telling me it's just you and frog, right?"

Locksmith Pascal pauses to give his client a dirty look. Flynn's one eyebrow raises in response at his sardonic expression of hoping for more cavalry than that.

"No, not just us!" Rapunzel's sweet giggle fills the dank prison. "We wouldn't have gotten anywhere nears this far-docks and ships and sailing for days-looking for you without—" Rapunzel begins to rapidly explain the incredible journey, she and one other—not counting Olaf and Pascal, that is—had embarked upon, in search of him.

"Let me guess. Elsa." Flynn's eyes look quizzically up at a dark hooded and cloaked Rapunzel through the bars, both serious and guilty. They then look past her, to the other dark woman, all clad in black, just slinking in to the ship's lower bilge deck, to look around pensively first before her true blue eyes alight on him.

Quite fetchingly, too, Queenie...

"Eugene." Neither Flynn nor Elsa were willing to speak freely of the royal theft that brought them both to their present situation on this pirate ship at the moment.

Flynn gleaned, from the way Rapunzel was acting, and what the pirate Captain had stated, that Elsa hadn't shared some of her knowledge with his wife, concerning him.

"Are you hurt? Why did they take you? Oh, Eugene! I've been so worried! I thought I lost you!" Rapunzel was on the verge of tears again. The tough little soldier from before had melted into her overwrought emotions within the harbor of his eyes.

Wanting nothing more than to wrap his weepy girl in his arms, Flynn's one free hand reaches through the bars to touch her cheek. She kisses it to her moist lips as she closes her eyes and presses her relieved head to it. Her hood slips down to reveal her nearly entirely chopped off, short cropped hair—her tomboyish disguise.

"Your hair...?" Flynn was utterly surprised that she had cut her already too short prized possession.

Her eyes become sheepish up at him.

"I love it..." He whispers, running his hand's fingers through her diminished locks, when suddenly his hand, as well as his entire body stiffens. The uncanny sixth sense of a master thief kicks in to feel imminent danger drawing near.
"Rapunzel! Hide!" He orders her in a frenetic whisper and pushes her body back. She quickly takes to her feet at his rare, authoritative command to dash around the far corner and dive into the relative safety of a dusty, dark coal hopper.

"I've only found one other route up to the higher decks behind this—" It was just then that Elsa returns from her scouting reconnaissance expedition. Her serious blue eyes grow wide with fear when she returns to the hold to find Rapunzel gone and Flynn waving a panicked, warning hand of someone coming down the main steps.

Now, there would have been just enough time for her as well to find a covert spot to hide amidst the many strewn wooden crate boxes and barrels, especially since she was wearing all black and able to blend in the dark surroundings—had there not been a stumbling block in the way, namely a black clad snowman named Olaf, waddling in his half-blind hoodie-ness, directly to pause in front of the stairwell opening.

He puts a stick hand over his black balaclava covered mouth when he spots Flynn in his cage. The snowman points to him emphatically, waving up and down.

"Psst! Elsa! Psst! Rapunzel! I think I just found Flynn-er Eugene!" A pleased as punch with himself Olaf, talks out of the side of his crooked zippered mouth.

Elsa had left him on 'guard duty' to alert them if anyone was coming into the cargo hold from where they first entered. She had figured it would be the safest place for the less-than-inconspicuous snow creature.

Olaf had wandered down into the prison bilge deck, (actually, rolled down the ramp by accident) to help hunt for the missing man and have the chance to prove himself a courageous hero.

"Olaf!" Elsa proves her own courage when defending her friends as she runs like a madwoman to frantically scoop up Olaf, push him into an empty rum barrel, and pulls the lid on top most of the way before turning to find herself a concealment when—

"Who goes there?" A hand roughly grabs her startled upper arm from behind. Elsa, cool and collected up to this point, was able to hold back her panic—and thusly her powers—but the cold fear of being apprehended by ruthless pirate men gripped her soul. It was almost too much bear.

"Let me go!" She cries out in a shrill voice. The ice shards instantly build at her fingertips, ready to fire a deadly volley directed at the man's heart.

"*Queen Elsa! Don't be the monster they fear you are!*"

She hears his voice, repeating once again, in her provoked mind.

"Go ahead, goodness knows I deserve it." The voice echoing in her head was the same voice as the man standing before her.

Elsa's wild-with-fright eyes were unable to grasp for a moment the ever-spiraling destiny that God used to shape a human existence.

"Prince…Hans…?" Disoriented and dazed, the frozen ice that permeated her every pore longed to lash out against this despised bearer of evil intent upon her country's Crown, with vicious attacks on herself, and most particularly, the attempted breakage of her Anna's golden, pure, warm heart.

"Especially for what I did to you, Queen Elsa." He recognized the singularly beautiful queen despite her disguised appearance as the woman who haunted his dreams as well.
Hans whispers, as his falls to his knees at her feet. His green eyes tremble back at her, not with fear, but with emotion that spoke more of regret and repentance than any word of apology he's tried to put together for the past two soul-tortured years since they'd last met. He boldly takes her icy hand and presses her cool touch to his forehead.

"Please forgive me." His whisper causes Elsa's entire body to shudder as she gasps for breath, unprepared for this encounter with this purveyor of both nightmare and dream.

The brittle ice rimes formed upon each of her long fingers begin to defrost, as the calm reserve she's been honing to control her cryogenic powers comes into play. She gazes down into Hans' openly humble and well-mannered supplication.

Was this cunning, persuasive man playing her like a fiddle, as he did sweet Anna, in the past? Or was the past in the past? No one understood the need for atonement and restitution more than she.

But before either Elsa or Hans could utter another word of forgiveness or judgement, the eerie sounds of slide, clunk, slide, clunk echo from somewhere not too far behind the ramped doorway Hans had just appeared in.

Hans drinks in Elsa's wide lustrous blue eyes as they dart around to the other room, back to Flynn's cautionary hands and then finally back to Hans in panic.

Hans was fully aware of the extent of the Queen's formidable powers, having seen the vehemence of her crystalline prowess first hand. Certainly her massive skills had only increased since then, so why wouldn't she use them to attack the cruel pirate captain with her deadly ice powers?

Why didn't she use them to kill me just now? Why not take just revenge on me for my past transgressions?

Hans' sharp mind could not keep up the multiple questions passing though it. He only knew, from the past two years' astute observance of the way this dirty old man of a wicked pirate would react, to find on board in his possession, not only the Arendelle Crown stolen regalia, but now also the royal Queen herself, come to reclaim her nation's treasures. Hans knew what unspeakable things old peg leg Houtebeen would do to this handsome woman, if he knew who she was. Especially if he knew who she was.

But I don't believe those lovely eyes would ever hurt anyone purposely again. Too bad, for your own sake.

His own alert eyes glimpse not only Captain Houtebeen, but also strong man Job descending the ramp from about, about to converge on them.

In those few moments he had for reflective thought, circulating around his still savvy, intellectual brain, Prince Hans of the Southern Isles takes thoroughly unexpected action into his own observant, capable hands.

Literally.

He shocks awake Elsa's every single sense by suddenly embracing her lithe, slender body, rendering her stunned utterly speechless as his dissembling handsome face moves in to claim Queen Elsa of Arendelle's first kiss.

And it was not just any kiss. After the first few astounded seconds, each participant of the full mouth liplock throws abandon to the wind. Hans purposely messes her coiffed hair as she wraps a wild arm around his neck, as repressed emotion runs the gauntlet between their recklessly
impassioned past. Good and bad collides with dreams and nightmares, as all of her ice melts away with the heat rising between them.

"Boy! Vat is de meaning of dis!? How dare ye sneak dis damsel on board!" The blackguard Captain didn't need much explanation for a lonely seaman's basic necessities, but he didn't permit his minions extra dalliance time on his 'well-run' vessel.

He pushes the breathlessly kissing pair apart with his walking stick.

"Oh, do pardon me, Captain, Sir." huff huff "But, my Elsie... was too... huff huff... inconvenienced when the Pearl Lady pulled from that last port after we made up our quarrel. She didn't get the chance to disembark quickly enough."

Hans was as manipulating as ever, when it came to applying himself to a necessary lie. The way he had expertly mussed her tresses made his story believable.

The worldly old Captain's suspicious frown at them transforms into a naughty, simpering grin. He never quite took this stuffy, well-mannered chit of a slave for having his way with the ladies.

And never one so tantalizing as this tall beauty, all clad in black, delectable to this pirate's roving roguish eye.

Putting on his most charming smile, Captain Houtebeen carefully balances himself on one peg leg as he reaches one admiring, grubby, knotted old hand out to tactile touch the beauteous pale maiden. He hadn't glimpsed one so fine, so close up in such a long time...

Just as he expected, Hans could see what was about to happen. He weighed in his calculating mind the consequences if he were to gallantly intercede—

WHACK!

Hans is flabbergasted by quick Elsa's fierce slapping hand, connecting violently with his surprised cheek, rather than striking the odious Captain to fend off any unwanted attentions.

"Ohh! She's a sprightly one! Ha ha! Ye'll have yer hands busy wit dis lively lass, me boy. Me reckons ye could use yer little bit o' spirit to put some vigor in those pallid cheeks, ye rakish roustabout! Ha ha! Ye're such a hard workin' lad and good cook. Yer Captain can see his way to givin' ye a scullery maid for de galley...and a bit of fluff on de side for ye, poor lad. Dis lovely lady will work off her fare for passage on board de ship for whatever services we require, ye smarmy bilge rat! Take her down to the galley and put her sassy hands to the washing up. Just don't let it affect yer cookin' for me or we'll toss yer pretty guttersnipe overboard, ye hear me? And don't ye say to any sailor, Cap'n Houtebeen ain't been kind to his crew! Har har ha!"

After a blinking second to absorb all that just happened and marvel at what Elsa had ingeniously achieved, Hans Westergaard, master manipulator, had been upped one by a Queen. Hans touches an astounded hand to his long-fingered impressioned red cheek as the chuckling, maniacal Captain pushes his way between the reticent shocked pair of reunited 'lovers'.

Hans had to give Elsa some extra credit for managing that situation even more than even he envisioned.

Elsa, for her part, was both part exhilarated from the successful con, and part mortified at her own out-of-control unleashed passions in that impromptu kiss she just shared with that insipid man who would now add his exciting kiss to her nightly dreams as well.
Anyway…

A flustered Elsa gives the self-possessed man, who had been studying her confused face, a deer in the headlights look, before turning to follow the old pirate back into the prison bilge area, where he was headed to speak with Flynn.

She was afraid Rapunzel would get caught on her own.

"Captain said you two belong in the galley. Not here. So GO!" Job's deep voice bellows as he comes out of nowhere—as he always did, unheard and unseen, from the edges of darkness to ensure Captain Houtebeen's orders were carried out.

Though protective Elsa was unwilling, Hans understood that Job's words shouldn't be questioned, if you were wise, as he gives the young woman before him a faint smile and a tug on her elegant arm to lead her up the ramp into the nearby pleasurable, pungent world he's been enslaved to—his deep, dark, dank kitchen.

"Please sit down. I'll make you something to eat." He politely offers as they enter the galley. Elsa gazes down incredulously at the squalid living conditions this haughty, high-class prince had been enduring. Her eyes land upon him in a newly awakening light.

"Don't worry, I won't let them hurt you." He says in an even tone, as he cracks a few eggs into a sizzling frying pan.
"Hidden Treasures"

Act I

Chapter 7

"Soo…to what do I owe this pleasant visit from the big man himself to my humble abode?" Flynn Rider drawls in his off-hand style, in part not to give away his hidden wife's whereabouts and cover it in a blustery bluff, and in pat not to reveal the fact that handy dandy Pascal had accomplished his nimble toed task of unlocking Flynn's handcuff just a mere moment before he was stashed under the teapot dome.

"Ve have set a course for our next destination, Meester Rider. And Captain Houtebeen wishes to discuss our new arrangement." Speaking in the third person again, the peg legged Captain struggles to take a seat opposite Flynn, inside the cage once Job had multi keyed open the multiple deadlocks on the cell door for the Captain to enter.

He props his aching old wooden appendage upon the food strewn table that Hans had 'set' for Flynn earlier.

"My, my! Aren't ve a messy eater? Are you not an enthusiast of ze fine potato dishes my cabin boy's culinary creations?" Houtebeen had no idea of the confrontation that had ensued before between Flynn and Hans, as his one eye surveys the large amount of egg and hash brown potatoes wasted on the filthy, dirty ground—cracked plate and all.

"It seems your 'cabin boy' has a good eye for all kinds of 'dishes,' if you know what I mean." Flynn insinuatingly comments. He, even from the dusky distance, could still make out that man and Elsa's silhouettes locked in a passionate kiss, and then the Captain's order for her to be taken away by the younger man.

The little bit of chivalry that resided in Flynn Rider was anxious for the tall blonde's feminine safety at the mercy of that underhanded, slick customer.

*I don't trust that guy…He's got too snazzy a hairdo.*

Flynn was more than skeptical of relying on the virtues of that sly cabin boy with excellent sideburns.

But there was nothing he could do about it right now — after all, his hands were tied.

*Ha ha…that's a joke. I'm a funny guy.*

He longed to flex his already freed wrist, but the farce had to be maintained for the time being. Flynn expertly covers up the cracked open end of the cuff around his right wrist with wavering digits in sleight of hand disguise.

"Har har har…Agreed, ye blackguard! His lass is a 'dish' at zat! Har har—now to business." The joviality of the elderly Dutchman abruptly turns serious. He squints his singular eye at Flynn in scrutiny.
"I've deciphered ze map ye've brought to me, so now I be knowin' ze location of ze treasure. But when ye arrive zere, the map seems to be indicatin' zat ze'll be a locked door or holding vessel, or somezing requiring a key to be opened, prior to finding ze treasure — as seen here and here." The usually dour Captain appeared to be abnormally excitable—almost gleeful as he deems to reveal to Flynn a section of the map sketch he'd plotted and drawn markings on, representing some type of underground catacomb he'd gleaned from the marble stone.

Flynn looks to the part of the map that Houtebeen's bent, gnarly finger was pointing at. Beyond a slew of indecipherable numbers, up top amid ancient rune letters that Flynn couldn't read at all, the map was pretty straightforward. Stairwells, subfloors, secret passages, whose symbols were all leading to gravestone markers where 'x' marked the spot—

"Wait, gravestones? I'm a respectable thief. Not a graverobber. I do jewelry and gold thingys. Digging up old bones and decayed bodies just doesn't go with my stunning complexion." Flynn uses his one free hand to vainly brush back his still stunning hair coiffure.

"Enough of yer bloody, bilgeous foolishness, Rider! Houtebeen still has yer favorite in-laws in his crosshairs—ye mark me words. Yer beloved king and queen and yer fancy Corona Castle best be watchin' zere sainted backs for ze rest of zere lives if ye wrong me again. And don't ye be thinkin' zat gone soft as a squashed open sponge Hookhand and his motley crew of worthless, washed out fop pirates ye've befriended will make a scrap of difference to ze great Houtebeen! Corona's king and queen are marked if ye don't do exactly as I be wishin' now." Never one to suffer fools, the Captain pokes his walking stick into Flynn's chest.

"Ohh!" A smothered gasp escapes the coat shoot not so far away.

"Vat be zat?! Job!" The pirate captain's old ears prick up and he cries out for his first mate to come and investigate the area.

"That was me, Captain! Sorry about that slip of the tongue! But I've been known to throw my voice around the room, you know, thieves' tricks of the trade." Flynn's panic for his wife's unhappy discovery was none too evident in his smarmy voice as it rattles off.

"In a woman's shrill voice, ye blackguard?" Houtebeen's one eye slits at Flynn in skepticism.

"Yeah, well, if I'm feeling really stressed, sometimes I tap into my feminine side! Ohhh!" Flynn's quickening voice does indeed rise to the high-pitched level of a squeaky female that entire sentence, finishing it up with a quite convincing 'Ohh!' mimicked to girlish perfection and thrown across the room, before the Captain's dubious eye, followed, of course, by a Flynn-esque slick smile.

"Ye'll be squealin' like a little girl if ye don't follow my orders, Flynn Rider! Job!" The gravelly throated Captain dismisses the effeminate antics of the master thief as long as he had Flynn's submission and fear under his dirty old thumb. "Get me away from zis lunatic freak! He makes me head to ache!" The old man's beckon comes just in time, as Job was about to uncover the coal shed's blocking lid…

"Yes, Cap'n." Good thing the dark man was instantaneously obedient. He turns on his big heel, mid hand opening the lid, and just drops it again.

"Whew!" Flynn could breathe again after holding his breath so long in nail-biting trepidation with each step Job took towards Rapunzel's hiding spot, his eye was trained upon. Flynn exhales in relief as the dark man moves away from her secret cove.
"But maybe I'll be havin' a cup of me cabin boy's excellent tea first, before I leave. Houtebeen be a-thirsty." Captain Houtebeen's anger is quelled by the pleasing scents of Hans' cooking and familiar golden teapot placed invitingly upon the 'table.'

Job quickly enters the cell to pour some brew for his boss.

"Noooo! I mean, I already drank it all. Pirate ships sure give me a powerful thirst." A swallowing hard Flynn now attempts to halt Pascal's discovery while the chameleon was now cowering under a teacup as Job flips it over to pour some hot, scalding tea for his captain's pleasure.

_Cough cough Choke Cough!

As Pascal's skin goes all porcelain white to meld with the inside bottom of the China teacup he was clinging to, just as Job was about to pour tea into it, Flynn begins to cough and choke until he was nearly convulsing across the table, where he knocks the cup, quite by 'accident' right out of Job's unsuspecting hand. It's sent skittering across the floor.

"Steady zere, lad." Captain Houtebeen gives Flynn's choking back a harsh whack.

"Argh!" Flynn doubles over at the punishing smack from the pirate's 'helpful' cane.

"Don't wallow in the shallows yet, matey. Ye've the greatest treasure yet to pilfer for me before yer journey's over." And with that, after firmly locking all the locks on the cell door again, Captain Houtebeen and Job depart, leaving an aching, bruised back now to add to his part frostbitten arm, to poor Flynn's infirmities.

"Oh gee, thanks for the save…" Flynn murmurs in his highest feminine voice as he rubs his painful back and falls to the floor with excruciating pain.

"Eugene!" After a lengthy pause to ensure both pirates were safely out of earshot range, Rapunzel comes popping out of the dusty coal bin she'd been hiding within and barrels across the bilge deck towards her injured love.

"Eugene! Oh, Eugene! How could I ever have doubted you?!” The remorseful girl feels so very guilty for her months of distrust eating away at their relationship. She flies like the wind to his hurt-in-shielding-her-presence side. But there were too many cold bars of iron locked shut between them.

She reaches her hands through the cell bars to touch him at least, hold him like a child, rub his injured back and then caress his wincing in pain face in both palms.

Tears stream down her blackened with soot cheeks, creating tear streaks down her wobbling jawline.

"I wouldn't blame you, Blondie, if you did…Argh…I've kind of been doubting myself lately. Zzzsttt!" Flynn 'sizzles' at the pain through clenched teeth, as Rapunzel continues her tender ministrations on his back.

"I'm so sorry, Eugene! I should've realized you were only being so distant for my own good—for my parents' own good. I should've believed in you more. I'm a terrible wife!" The pent up tears of relief and joy at finding his motives for their relationship's rift were exemplary in his caring. Plus, the sympathy for his painful wounds that she herself and her loud mouth was at fault for causing, brings Rapunzel to her knees, hugging Flynn to her through the iron bars.

"I love you, Eugene…." She whispers the truth of her soul. Her fierce embrace unfortunately
squeezed at his stinging, frostbitten upper arm muscles. His face once again cringes, causing her to worry again.

"And I...love you...my Rapunzel." He smiles away her fears, as his face lifts to meet her gaze, with that ever present smirked, naughty look on his good-looking chiseled chin face.

"Oh, Eugene! I was so scared." She whispers, tears forming in her eyes as Flynn uses all his might to sit up and move his face closer to hers, with only the bars between them.

"Shhh...shhh, Blondie. I'm here." Eugene's voice loses all the bravado to give his girl all the tenderness of his heart, as he reaches his one free hand through the bars to stroke her sooty, wet cheek dry with a smile.

He then starts to fondle her hair, finding the nearly shoulder length brown locks were reduced to being feathery short.

"I thought cutting your hair was my job." Caressing her through the bars into a nuzzle, Flynn was trying to lighten the situation that looked pretty darn bleak in actuality about now. He had absolutely no idea on how to get her, and Elsa for that matter, off this dingy old tugboat in one piece.

Never mind me, Blondie, I'm a lost cause.

"Eugene," Rapunzel recalls all that happened on that fateful day, what seemed forever ago, when her guy was so selfless that he even cut off the healing power of her hair before allowing her to lose her newfound freedom to save him—all out of love.

"You're still my dream, too."

She presses her face to the cell bars and whispers before her tongue engages his lips so close at the other side of the bars she could feel his hot breath mix with hers. The pair of reconciled, passionate lovers find some solace in one another's stabilizing 'kiss' amidst the churning seabound craft's darkness.

"Now, I've got an added incentive to open the locks in this cage. Pronto..." He whispers mischievously, seductively in her ear that he had managed to chew loosely upon before showing off like a strongman to break apart the handcuffs that Pascal had freed him from earlier. He sits back and runs his hands beneath his black suit, searching around his muscular form's secret places as his thin fingers whip out a thin wire—Namely, a lock pick tool of a professional thief, tucked near the safety of unmentionable places.

A hungry Rapunzel smiles at her smooth operator's moves, as his deft fingers begin to spin their craft.

"Please, hurry!" Rapunzel kneels back on her haunches, elbows up, hugging her knees to her, hands balancing her interested cheeks as she rocks back and forth to witness her 'brilliant' Eugene begin to pick each one of the locks—one by one—with an urgent enthusiasm she hadn't glimpsed in him in a long time.

"I'll, uh...be...right...Yes!...with...you...No...Well, maybe not yet..." Flynn's gyrations as he industriously applies himself to the lock jimmying task were quite comical. Rapunzel was pleased anyway to see him be so...himself again, and she giggles.

"So you think I'm funny, Blondie?" Flynn, his pride at his thieving skills being doubted, was
wounded by his little wife's laughter on his magic fingers' failures, and he steals an upward glance at her with a snickered, incredulous glare without moving his head.

"No, I think you're wonderful." She patiently sits back as Pascal, shaking himself conscious again in a pink shade, and hobbles over to aid Flynn in his multiple, difficult, old rusted lock picking from inside the cell cage.

"And I think you're adorable in that new hairdo. It'll be all the rage someday — you just mark my words." His snigger melts with her giggles, as ever together, they cope with the suspenseful tension closing in around them as the vessel cuts a specific track forward amidst the surging waters…

Tension was an understatement to describe the atmosphere setting in the ship's galley, on the deck just above the bilges.

Beyond the sizzling and clanging of pans frying meats and potatoes, there weren't many other sounds passing the still air between the two lone occupants of the kitchen.

Elsa was uncomfortable to say the least. She sits primly at the table, her hands folded as she tries to reason out everything that had just happened to her. Calm and collected, she holds her own counsel.

But each time she glances at his back busy cooking at the stove, she touches her pursed lips, remembering the feel of his lips on hers, and her mind draws a blank.

_Why did he kiss me? Just to escape the pirate's wrath? No one's ever dared touch me like that before. And he knows the danger of my powers…my powers…Please Good Lord, let me be able to control them this time._

Elsa silently prays, as being trapped alone with the man she feared most on earth was coupled with her integral fright of ocean travel—for it was the sea that had claimed her beloved parents from her.

It was all becoming too much for her emotional control now at the limit. And to top it all off, Elsa knew not what to do to rescue both national holy treasures — and Cousin Eugene as well — now that she was actually here and face to face with the danger.

_What kind of leader am I for my kingdom? And there's no one left I can consult for counsel. Papa, it's now I need your guidance most…_

"Queen Elsa? Why are you trembling?"

Elsa didn't realize in her quiet contemplation of introspective dread, she had involuntarily begun shivering. Each lonely fear she concealed inside with detached isolation laid a shard of ice across her already heavy heart.

Lost in her own thoughts, Elsa is more startled that his warm hand, placed compassionately upon her shoulder, was not instantly repelled by her own raw instinct as she would have conjectured their reunion would have been.
As she looks up at him, her trepidatious eyes upset him greater than he'd care to admit. Hans quickly removes his hand from her person guiltily and swallows hard as he looks down at the spiced potatoes he had been sautéing in the frying pan in his hand, feeling equally as blistered by her disquieting perturbation directed up at him.

"Do I frighten you still, Elsa?" Hans asks in an unusually small voice. His gaze was down and he occupies himself with serving out the prepared food onto her plate.

"I—I don't know…" Elsa surprises herself by answering him in all honesty.

"Hmm…" Hans smiles inwardly as he returns the frying pan to the counter stove and returns to pour her a cup of hot coffee. "This should warm you up." As he looks at her, Hans' pale green eyes seemed to be trying to assess the quiet, pale woman's bent of mind towards him.

*It couldn't be benevolent. It shouldn't be kind. You should hate me. But you don't look like you despise me…you didn't kiss like you despised me. Maybe because your eyes are too beautiful to despise anyone…*

His eyes trace hers.

"Thank you for that." Is all Hans actually says, with a bowed head in gratitude towards her.

"For what?" Elsa asks, puzzled by the urbane man's mannerly statement to her.

"Being honest. As you know from personal experience, truth is a hard commodity for me. And they say a person admires most what he himself is lacking." Hans modestly capitulates his own failings with a sad smile on his lips, as he stares at his callused hands blindly.

"They also say a person can better himself in the search for that which he is lacking." She looks across the table to say. "If his heart was sincerely reaching for it, God will provide an answer."

Elsa hears echoes of her own questioning soul, as it stood almost two years ago, when the storm that raged inside her was yet fresh on the eaves.

And then Anna's endless faith and relentless forgiveness gave her heart hope for the warmth of love to grant her heart peace.

*Maybe we just need that one person to believe in us…*

"It's funny—that's what Sister Bernard told me in the parish school when I was ten years old. Strange what you remember vividly." He muses reflectively.

"Your heart's a peace now, Queen Elsa. I'm glad of it. In fact, I envy you." Hans meets her eyes with a resigned smile.

"How's Anna?" Hans was really treading on dangerous iceberg entrenched waters here. But by now, Elsa's edginess was washed away by the young man's surprising sedate demeanor.

"She and Kristoff were just married. She's very happy and in love, and very lucky to have him as her friend." Elsa takes a sip of her coffee. It indeed warmed her cold insides as she was a bit proud in relating that particular piece of good news to the man who once aspired to marry her sweet little sister.

"Happy and in love with her best friend. Sounds idylic, like a song from a storybook fairytale." Hans was envious, but not in the way Elsa could have imagined.
"It must be wonderful to love and be loved back like that." Hans offhandedly ponders the weighty subject aloud. He realizes that not a single person on this earth cared for him to that degree.

Even his twelve brothers, who were supposed to be family disliked his combination of brains, good looks and charm — and they always treated the 'baby' of the clan like an outcast for it.

His bitter father became a widower on the detestable day of his birth and he had blamed the vulnerable little boy named 'Hans' for it, and reminded him every day, in subtle demeaning ways that his other sons had picked up, until the poor child was bullied, singled-out and shipped out to boarding school without visitations by anyone. He was cruelly ignored by his own relations, who shunned any effort on his part to join them in any familial way when he came home, once graduating the military academy with honors in every category.

The all-male clan had little or no compassion to the one who stole away the life of the only woman who perhaps could've taught her boys anything of kindness or gentleness, or about constantly not treating her youngest child as if he were 'invisible' his entire young life.

"So…how long have you been here?" Elsa could sense some inner demons being battled. She nervously (after a small, polite sampling of the eggs and salt pork bacon he had whipped up especially for her, for etiquette's sake) dabs at her mouth with a dainty napkin and then rises to collect the plates and silverware from the table to bring them to the wash barrel on the floor, still half full of soapy water and dirty dishes, left undone.

"Long enough." Hans, his back to her, begins gathering the basic ingredients from the larder cupboard near the floor, to prepare the Captain's luncheon, as he did everyday he was here, by rote by now. His points one thin-fingered hand back and up towards a 'calendar' he had devised from some wooden carton lids. Each carved checked mark signaled each passing day since he'd arrived, Elsa presumed.

On quick assessment, there were well over five hundred slice cuts into the wood piece hanging above the kitchen cutting board butcher block.

"But the better, more pressing question is, why are you here?" Hans had never envisioned coming face to face (never mind lip to lip) with such a queenly beauty in his hellhole (Pardon the expression, my lady.) of a dirty old pirate ship.

"I…" Elsa considers sharing what she knew with this former, convicted enemy of the state, to the full extent of her journey's objectives, as she rolls up her sleeves and mechanically dunks her ladylike digits in the soapy, ice cold waters (not a problem) and begins to doggedly apply herself to scrubbing the remaining soiled dishware with the roughened sea sponge she finds inside the barrel.

It was the singular sort of task that this well born, sheltered royal princess turned pampered exalted Queen was never to have undertaken. But Elsa was learning that life—real life—was something best experienced hands on.

"Whoa—what?! Ouch…! Queen Elsa, what do you think you're doing?! Oww…!!" Hans, who had been on all fours on the ground, collecting some root vegetables and food supplies from the hidden box stored behind the larder to keep them cool and preserved for long ocean voyages, uncharacteristically, clumsily, bumps the top side of his head at the same sore spot, of course, as he jumps up with a start upon hearing suds and water amidst scraping dishware clattering about.

He was up and on his feet in a matter of seconds, quickened steps across the small kitchen room bring him close to Elsa's dishwashing side. Hans falls to his knees again to her own kneeling form to the wash barrel, as he boldly grasps her hands up from beneath the swirling soapy waters they
were submerged in.

"Queen Elsa! These hands were not meant for such hard, physical labor! Please, allow me." He chivalrously says, gently lifting her bare palms and wiping them dry, all the way up her exposed wrists and forearms with his chef’s apron.

Elsa pauses at his caring touch, then remembers herself again.

"Prince Hans, the Captain permitted me open passage onboard this ship in trade for work as a scullery maid's services rendered. I must learn to adapt to my new occupation and bide my time wisely — just as you have." Elsa, too, finds herself unafraid to employ her 'too delicate' hands to turn his over in order to display the rough callused, rugged yet manly tone of his once similarly spoiled royal white appendages that she had felt, and secretly admired when he touched her before, with much regard.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And with that holy statute on her lips, spoken directly to his eyes, Elsa extricates her hands from his grip to industriously take on the large pile of dirty dishes, used teacups, caked dried-food silverware, and greasy pans in the wash barrel at the ground level she'd been kneeling down to scrub.

Hans watches with growing respect in his gleaming eyes for the beauteous blonde ruler, as she puts her entire backbone into this new indefatigable task.

All of a sudden, Elsa finds the large barrel full of splashing water, rising above her, to be set upon another taller cask. Hans had also pulled a handcrafted wooden stool just at the correct level for her to sit upon as she washes.

"At least let me try to lighten your burden in whatever way I can. Besides, it is an unfit offense for a Queen to be on a level lower than her humble servant." Hans extends a diffident smile and strong hand out to Elsa.

She gazes up with her wondrous big blue eyes affixed to his as she accepts his gentlemanly lift from where she was kneeling on the floor.

In this moment, Elsa never knew how sublime it could be just to touch another human being's hand.

*His warm hand...*

Elsa muses with a small smile as she gets back to hard work, elegant elbow deep in scrubbing dishes clean, upon her stool's workstation.

Hans wordlessly gives in to her sovereignty as he returns to digging up his stored potatoes with a newfound smile on his lips.
"Lucky in Love"

Act I

Chapter 8

"La la la la sweet potato pie…la la la la piled to the sky! La la la la la la LALAAAAAAA!

I wanna eat and eat and eat and eat and eat until I die!"

"Potatoes'll make a good lunch! Especially when they're sweet!" An enchanting young girl who had not a care in the world (unlike her poor sister) sings out to the noonday sky above the moving sled she was perched precariously upon. Her high, exuberant voice serenades the vibrant hills and snow-capped mountains, the busy green trees and summer grassy flowers—and each one of nature's woodland creatures found in the middle of nowhere, scurrying about the verdant valley in the back of beyond, as her bedazzled eyes take in the scenes greedily.

But as all the beautiful splendor of a flawless blue sky and green trees and colorful flowers she'd always dreamed of rumble past her upon the road, Anna's eyes filled with pure love, catch glimpse of something she now believed was even prettier.

"I am just so, so totally—" In her lovestruck distraction, Princess Anna of Arendelle, whose wistful gaze had turned from each of nature's wonders to rather set her sights upon what must be classed as nature's eighth wonder of the world—her handsome, rippling musclebound sturdy husband, who, since their true honeymoon began (last night!) was all she could think of, all she could hear, all she could see.

"I am so, so totally—" But every time her mind, so lost in her proud ogling of one section of his body or another does so, Anna generally begins tripping over her own feet. Maybe this time, the jostling of the sled could be mildly to blame as it hits a rock in the road, though Anna's dizziness was more attributed to her being so deliriously in love with her hunky ice harvester.

"Right." Instantly dropping Sven's reins, neither man nor reindeer was in a real panic. Both were getting used to these necessary quick saves. His girl had a clumsy streak, but Kristoff didn't mind if the intimate rescues gave him extra opportunity to hold his wife close.

My wife!

Kristoff, in his calm, level-headed way, still was in disbelief that a big nobody Lapland oaf like him, could've landed such a rare, shining gem such as Princess Anna.

I guess it's like Bulda said—we're 'meant to be'.

The big, strapping lad quite skillfully manages to lunge across the sled to where Anna insisted on being a balancing ballerina. She dances over on her tiptoes to their ample food supplies, so she could play 'good little wife' and make a neat little packaged lunch to go on their road trip for the pair of not so weary travelers.

"I gotcha." Kristoff manfully grasps her tiny waist as the girl was about to tip off the rear end of the moving sled backwards.
"—so lucky to have you…!" Anna breathlessly finishes her klutzed out observation right in Kristoff's smiling face.

"Anna, what part of 'not standing on the sled when it's in motion' do you not get? Do you even hear me when I'm talking to you? What if I wasn't here to catch you?" He tries to lecture her but the eyes spinning around in her pretty head to land crossed over her cute little nose was too mind-numbing.

"But you were!" Anna snaps out of it, getting her wind back to positively sing out loudly in his poor ear as he lifts her up to him, and Kristoff goes deaf for an ear waxy second.

"Yeah, and I guess I always will be." The big blond Ice Harvester runs a smiling hand through his 'unmanly' hair. His powerful arms then spin Anna's spry little body as if she were thoroughly weightless, around to sit on his lap. He dangles both their legs over the sled's edge and a his little woman leans her head against his chest, toying fingers automatically beginning to count each one of his upper pectoral muscles. Her hands slide up beneath his shirt to admire his well formed intercostals in a flash.

"Good idea, Sven." Kristoff abruptly calls up to the half-interested reindeer, who, driverless, begins to stop for a graze of some sweet honeysuckle on the path.

"Why don't you two stop for a picnic in the field on this fine day?" 'Sven' says in his slurring, comically deep voice, while the real Sven merely rolls his eyes at the silly games humans play.

"I think a picnic lunch sounds wonderful, Sven! I thought you'd never ask!" Though enjoying every moment of their hours' long ride spent chattering and singing with Sven and his musical lute, Anna had that kind of bubbly personality that embraced every opportunity life dished out, with enviable vivacity and pluck.

After finishing reaching around his ticklish torso, (yes, he is deliciously ticklish!) she hops from Kristoff's lap onto the grassy knoll to spread the blanket her hands had grabbed across his toned railroad obliques from behind his tight bum, onto the tall windblown grassy ground with true busy bee flair.

As she skitters back and forth from the sled he was idly leaning over to obtain various food delights, Kristoff marvels at how much energy his beautiful new bride (twice over) still owned after that noisy raucous ordeal of yesterday's troll marriage ceremony. All the noisy singing and raucous dancing, with dried hay and grass capes and wooden stick crowns and all—Valley of Living Rock style—would wear most people out.

And then the subsequent introduction to his childhood home that 'love experts' Cliff and Bulda, made sure to outfit their Kristoff's old 'room' with a few more fresh leaf pillows and a new feather down mattress on his rock framed bed, proved that still excited and pleased to no end Princess Anna of Arendelle wasn't 'most people'.

Thankfully, his adopted parents had enough courteousness to have covered the 'room' with a thick curtain of bark, and to shoo away all the troll village's curious eyes blinking in the cave's peephole, to give the newlyweds some space and privacy.

That is, once overbearing Bulda had ascertained that Kristoff had just washed well at the nearby hot geyser spring. The mother hen of a Rock Troll even embarrassingly checked, within a giggling Anna's hearing range, that her adopted 'cutie' thoroughly washed those lucky blue undies while he was there.
There may not have been much room left for romance under the circumstances, but there was plenty of love between the two of, at first, thoughtfully tentative (mostly Kristoff) then impulsively impatient (all of Anna) double honeymooners who were about to finally consummate their twice blessed union...

"I'm ready! Oof…! Almost! I got this…! Kristoff! Just wait a second!" Bouncing to and fro like a magic pixie, Anna cries out in her boisterous spirited way to her new husband, who suddenly found her quixotic movements so very…alluring…

And absolutely—

"Take a ten minute drive over that hill's rise, Sven old buddy." Kristoff quietly suggests under his breath to his best friend of a reindeer, who knew instinctively what Kristoff was up to.

After all, Sven was used to playing the part of Kristoff's conscience.

The mysteriously smiling young man leaps from his Royal Ice Master and Deliverer's sled in a single bound. As, with a purposeful and urgent intent, he rushes towards to sneak up on his unsuspecting bride who, none too gracefully at the moment, was sprawling herself across the laid out blanket in her attempts to stretch it out to be big enough for their luncheon to enjoy their repast upon.

But it wasn't the food the virile and brawny, well-built and restless mountain man, feeling his oats, was interested in partaking.

"Lucky to be in love in every way..." Now it was Kristoff who was now serenading the skies and trees and grasses as he sneaks up with playful hands. Kristoff covers his wide palms over Anna's startled eyes where she was knelt down on the ground, still struggling to stretch the woolen blanket so it wouldn't have any wrinkly bumps to disturb their meal.

Though Anna needn't have gone to all the trouble for all the mussed fabric was about to endure through their giddy tussling tickle-time match as Kristoff kneels down to match her level.

Pausing before he begins to take the fun another step further, Kristoff's rugged good looks go all soft and squishy with the tender love he felt for his Anna evident as he intertwines in her yummy caramel hair a sweet buttercup stem he plucks from the bountiful grass at eye level, near by the blanket.

Anna's voluminous bright eyes go all wide and inviting up at him. "You're so pretty…as pretty as that buttercup…all velvety, butterfully yellow." Losing it, Anna murmurs dizzily and runs her fingers wildly adoring through Kristoff's blond tresses. His masculinity protested her effeminate wordings, but his sweetness didn't have the heart to argue with her.
"Did I tell you how much I love butter?" Anna luxuriously prattles in the quiet still of this, as yet untouched by civilization, stretch of land beneath the warm, buttery, summer sun.

Once the washing up was accomplished, Elsa, the able bodied 'scullery maid' goes to work in aiding Hans' preparation of the pirate's next meal as the sun starts to sink beneath the sea's horizon.

"Be careful. It's getting dark and that knife is sharp." Hans warns, as Elsa picks up the utensil he'd just finished using to slice some cheese for the potatoes au gratin he was dishing up as a dinner side.

"I will be. Thank you for your concern." Elsa addresses him in that oh-so-proper way in which she spoke to strangers, though the amount of nighttime dreams and/or nightmares she'd spent with Hans Westergaard over the past two years would constitute him as more than that.

Elsa suddenly senses his curious eyes upon her, and she nervously folds her guilty hands together in that wringing action she oft took when psychologically perturbed.

"Oh, is it permitted? Pardon me, I should've asked. May I take some of this cheese?" Secretly storing the slices she cuts away in the pocket of the apron he had given her earlier to wear (on which she faintly still detected his scent, though he wore no cologne).
"You can have anything here you wish, Queen Elsa. You needn't ask my permission." Hans answers kindly, though his sharp eyes did begin to wonder why she was spiriting bottles of water and milk and now foodstuffs in her clothing, behind his back, thinking he hadn't noticed.

Now Elsa glances down to her lap with express guilt at being caught upon her lovely features, she chewing on her knuckle nervously as a result.

"Did you know-" He suddenly interjects, clearing his throat with a disarming smile to ease her tension.

"Did you know, that there are over 33 methods of preparing potatoes that I have learned and used in practice here to high regard since beginning life as head chef aboard this vessel?" Leaning his head in to gain better vantage of her eyes, Hans directs his query to the shy girl as he waves a hand towards the potatoes in midst of preparation on the butcher block.

"No. No, I had no idea there were so many different ways." After gulping down her fear and shame, Elsa meets his inviting eyes in wonder of where this interesting turn of conversation was going.

"From simple boiled, to roasted, creamed, scalloped, grilled to mashed and made into shepherd's pie, there are numerous useful varieties to this amazing little guy." Holding it up in fine example as he speaks, Hans hands her on the table's cutting board she was working at, the potato he had just finished peeling.

"I'd like to show you how someday..." Strong hands then wrap around her unknowing inexperienced ones from behind as Hans starts to guide the young woman's shaky digits along with the knife, his fibrous sinewy arms tight around her upper torso as he proceeds to mentor her attempts.

After a few less than ideal cuts, nervous, uncoordinated and thoroughly bewildered by his rather intimate physical proximity, nonetheless, under Hans' tutelage, Elsa was soon slicing the tuber with all the expert precision and ease his capable firm hands clasped around bestowed upon her.

"...to make a mean Potato Lefse." Adjusting his husky tone in her ear, Hans innocently whispers to her wide eyes of the traditional favorite tasty Scandinavian potato pancake that was more resembling a crepe than the mere breakfast fare.

"You are so warm..." Surprising herself when her innate ice abilities do not overreact at his too near embrace, Elsa glances at their still joined appendages, Hans lingering his grip around her, by now, trembling form.

Should I trust him with our secret? Will Rapunzel be safe if I don't, with Eugene still locked in that cell? And what of Olaf? I tossed him inside a barrel...I believe...

The startling ensuing actions that occurred directly after her swift dashed save of the conspicuous snowman somewhat blurred her precise memory of that time of this perplexing man's enthralling kiss.

Noting her sudden bristle for unknown reasons, Hans frees her hands from his, takes a step back and pauses before he begins to speak.

"If there were someone else—I'm just hypothesizing, for instance—who had accompanied you aboard this ship, perhaps I might suggest that there is a small area in the bilge's lower deck, not too far behind the cell hold where a living quarters with an unused bunk exists, just beyond the old
boiler. It's leftover now, when the Captain cut the crew down to nil, save Job and I, and unoccupied where not a soul visits any longer."

"How can you be so sure…?" Elsa asks, then bites her lip as the natural question slips out aloud. She somehow already felt accustomed to talking familiarly with him.

"Let's just say I spent some time in that boiler room before I realized learned culinary skills were far more advantageous." He smiles that gorgeous smile as his focus returns to his cookery on the stove.

"And it's ready. So I'm off to deliver this meal to the Captain in his stateroom. Job should be where he is normally at this hour—above deck at the helm." Hans casually - and quite informatively- speaks from experience as he glances through a porthole on the edge of the galley at the choppy rhythm of the waves as he passes by, carrying his tray.

Just as he is about to exit the deck up the ramp, he pauses to give a pensive Elsa a cautionary look.

"If you do leave the safety of this kitchen…Please be careful." His eyes meet hers in genuine concern. She was surprised to see such care for her well-being there, but this wouldn't be for the first time that Prince Hans had inexplicably extended his protection over her.

Elsa recalls again memories she'd been trying to shy away from, of those horrid days when she couldn't control cryokinetic powers to the point of sentencing Arendelle to an Eternal Winter. The mountain she climbed, the ice palace she'd built, the Duke of Weselton's men—and their crossbows—that Prince Hans had deflected, that ice chandelier, and then the blackness… And the dungeon…

And nothing in between.

On information learned from Kai, Gerda had told her, much later, that it was Prince Hans who had brought her back to Arendelle, back to her home. That is, after he'd carried the injured woman in his arms without the fear all the other soldier's expressed, from her ice palace, on his own horse's back all the way down the North Mountain.

And again, Gerda herself, through the door's peephole, had witnessed Prince Hans' vigil over Elsa's unconscious form at her bedside. To Gerda, from the way he'd looked sorrowfully at Elsa, to the compassionate way he'd covered her highly unprotected body in the cold, dark prison with a blanket, even placing a warming hand upon her cheek, it appeared to Gerda a tender gesture of uncommon affection.

But why? Why does he keep showing me kindness? It was to his detriment at the time to save me—and not to let me die by the hands of those evil men of the Duke of Weselton. And then to cover me with a blanket in compassion?

When he was left in charge of the kingdom by Anna, and could have claimed all power to the throne, if he had just let the others execute me, out of their own worthy fears..?

So many questions that I can't—I just can't bring myself to ask him—perhaps that is the cause of my nightmares—the fear of finding out the truth…

Yet, what of the dreams? Why is he reaching out for me to save him there? Oh, Prince Hans, can I trust you now? Can you tell me that this isn't a trap that I'm walking into?…

Elsa's churning emotions cease abruptly when her eyes look up from slicing the cheese, to glimpse
the kitchen table, where a fresh baked loaf of bread was all sliced and done up in strings, around brown paper wrappers. There was small note scribbled upon the top of the parcel in a fine, strong hand.

'Everything I have is yours.'

"I will trust you…" Elsa whispers to her convinced self as she quickly wraps the bread, along with the cheese to secret them in her apron. She adds them along with the bottles of water she'd prepared before into a basket she 'conveniently' finds awaiting on the butcher block, as if it were all planned out for her.

With these supplies in tow, she takes off. Her nimble feet race off into the dank ship's corridor. Elsa glances about furiously as she stumbles down the ramp and back in through the doorway leading to the bilges, where she and Prince Hans had…

*Focus, Elsa*

She wipes her moistened lips, imagining—no, re-playing—his first, thrilling kiss with a little shake of her elegant head. Elsa expels the vivid memory from her foremost thoughts as she speeds towards the cell where Eugene was still caged within, still tinkering with the locks, while Rapunzel was sitting on the floor of the outside, massaging her poor husband's sore neck and back.

"Elsa! Are you all right?!" Rapunzel jumps to her feet and runs to embrace her supposedly captured cousin, left to some underhanded cabin boy's mercy, according to the tales Eugene had been relaying to her as he worked.

"I'm fine." Elsa answers, her eyes darting about as she gets her bearings.

"But that man! Eugene told me how he kissed you! You mean he didn't try to—?!" Rapunzel asks in a lowered eye whisper at the delicate subject she, as a married woman, knew quite well about.

"No, not at all. He's been a perfect gentleman."

"Yup, watch out for those slick types. They lull you into a false security and then it's too late." Flynn comments snidely, believing sheltered Cousin Elsa had been hornswaggled by that drippingly handsome and cloyingly clever chap.

"You don't understand. I know him. We've met before. And he knows about us—about all of this. But I don't think he'll let on he knows about it. He's even told me of a safe place for you to hide, close by—just around the corner, near the boiler."

"Great! Let's go see about it." Rapunzel was enthusiastic and trusting of anyone her cousin deemed reliable.

"Wait! Wait! Wait! Your friend's working for the pirates now! Why do you think you can still trust him?!!" Though Elsa seemed taken by this charmer, Flynn was more chary to believe the sly guy for anything—even without having any idea of his treasonous past with Elsa's kingdom.

"Because his eyes are kind." Elsa's heartfelt answer was not comforting to a jaded Flynn at all.

"Don't worry, Eugene! We'll just take a quick peek and come right back and tell you if he's right or not." At Rapunzel's words, Pascal's big eyes blink at Flynn with a thumbs up, and he leaves his cell mate to hop onto Rapunzel's shoulder.

"…Because his eyes are kind…" Flynn taps into his feminine side again but this time more
mockingly. "Gotta work on my eye contact skills. Who knew? Even ice queens can fall for a pair of goo-goo eyes. Or was it that guy's kiss? I got that one covered, right, Blondie? It's all in the tongue action. Keep 'em beggin' for more—that's my motto..." Flynn Rider had a compulsive way of admiring himself aloud still...

After settling Rapunzel in the albeit small, yet sufficient boiler room attendee's bunk, and assuring Flynn of its hidden aspect, Elsa unloads the pretty full basket of drink and food, she gives Rapunzel a quick smile and was just about to hurriedly return to the kitchen when—

"...or the funny way he talks...or the clumpy ways he walks...Or the—"

Elsa, in a panic at all the noise, rushes up to the rum barrel and pushes its heavy lid that she'd forgotten she had pulled over to seal in a poor, by now unwittingly drunken, Olaf.

"...way he likes to tinkle in the woods!"

The snowman's droopy eyes and unsealed lips were on plain, crude singing display for his black hood had been removed to soak up the residual rum in the base of the keg barrel that was now filled with the snow flakes of his flurry.

"Shh! Olaf...!" Elsa couldn't quite blame the innocent creature for her folly in tossing him into the casing containing the odious alcoholic beverage.

But in her haste, she had believed it to be empty.

"Elsie...watch out! That was...uh...Prince Hans' voice...methinks I heard...Ohh! Why is your head spinning around the room?" Olaf was tipsy (more than usual) and collapses in Elsa's arms as she reaches in to lift him out of the barrel.

"He might be tricking you, Elsie...!" Obviously having heard some of their conversation, Olaf drunkenly exclaims as she tries to clamp an icy hand over his mouth.

"Please don't call me that, Olaf!" She hisses at him.

"What? 'Elsie'? Prince Hans did."

"Well, I don't like it!"

"Why?"

"I just don't!"

"Why?" He persists in his lowered eyelid wavering uncovered head.

"Because it sounds like a cow's name!" The royal queen unwillingly admits her vanity through quiet, clenched teeth.

"Why did Hans say that? You're too sleek to be a cow. Hans is wrong again."

"The snowman's got a point there..." Flynn adds coal to the fire. He just happened to pick up that bit of their conversation, as Elsa reaches where he was sitting on his cell floor.

"Olaf!" Elsa was too flustered by the question to even answer it civilly. She shoved his tinged with rum balaclava hood back over his head. "Behave for Cousin Rapunzel while I'm gone." She orders, passing the dizzy snowman over to Rapunzel, though planting an understanding, sympathetic kiss on his black-covered forehead.
Ick! I don't like the taste of alcohol…!

Olaf just starts to hum. "Okay, Elsie! No! No…that's wrong…'Elsa!' Olaf will be good—good fixer fixer fixer upper…" Back into his happy song-filled state, Olaf sinks, deliriously smiling into Rapunzel's growing more ample chest. She- or was that Eugene's wandering arm and thieving fingers? - had already unlatched her tied down cleavage.

Rapunzel gives a squeeze of the hand and a wiggled fingered wave to Elsa as she leaves, with Olaf following suit.

"I can fix this fixer fixer upper with a little bit of love…!"

Love?

Olaf brings a smile to Elsa's lips as she leaves him in Rapunzel's care in the secret hidden room Hans had somewhat cryptically suggested to her while she was trying to covertly smuggle food here.

How does Prince Hans know what I'm thinking?

"Slow down there, lady." Not strictly speaking of only her pumping legs speeding past his cell again, Flynn casually calls out in insinuating double entendre. "And have a good night with your old friend…!"

She hears his insinuating voice echoing behind her.

Upon Elsa's harried return to the galley, she was relieved to find the kitchen still vacant. As she returns the basket to its hook near the cupboard, Elsa's ears are suddenly drawn to the calm, lilting sound of music softly emanating from inside the doorway connecting to an interior room.

Entranced, her cautious mind screams to pause before the door, but she could not keep her enchanted feet from entering.

"Are you the sweet invention of a lover's dream? Or are you really as wonderful as you—"

"Oh, pardon me, Queen Elsa. I do tend to take to song when working. I didn't even realize it."

Hans abruptly ceases singing in mid-melodious perfect note, whilst his industrious hands had been adjusting some quick construction of a tall wooden screen and fabric curtain that he had devised in the short time she'd been down in the bilges.

"What are you—?" Elsa gazes around the room, lit by the swaying, dimmed candlelight.

It was a small, to put it mildly, and simple, for lack of other words, living quarters, designed to house the single cook of the connected galley kitchen, for quick access to his employ.

A bar was across an inlet that served as a clothing cupboard behind the door. There was a little table holding a chipped porcelain wash basin with a miniscule excuse of a piece of broken mirror, whose luck had run out long ago, hanging over it on a hook that also doubled as a little towel holder.

There were extra cloth towels and a sharp knife for shaving placed neatly beside them. Beyond a dilapidated chair whose slatted back was chunked out and its multiple legs appeared to have each been repaired, the remainder of the room appeared Spartan.
Although, a great part of the already diminutive room was obscured by the piece of hewn plywood screen that Hans had just finished nailing with a hammer to stay lodged in place.

"I hope you don't find the accommodations too arduous, but my—this—sleeping chamber is rather tight." The tall man, though having no prior building experience whatsoever, used his brains to create the wooden partition screen he was just hammering together with a hinge he had found below deck, to make it movable as a kind of sliding overlay to shield a hidden area.

"Sleeping chamber?" Elsa repeats as the reality of his tentative words begin to sink in. Her eyes widen as Hans flexes his slim but extremely fit muscles to slide this newly erected screen back to reveal a bed concealed behind it.

With much on her mind all the day long, seeing to Rapunzel and Olaf's comforts, Elsa had not thought through what would become of her own living 'accommodations' for the night, on this dangerous venture she had boldly undertaken.

Her eyes flash up at him in sudden fear, recalling what the pirate Captain had intimated before.

"Oh, no! I didn't mean— This bed is entirely yours now, Queen Elsa. I only wanted to give you the privacy a lady deserves." Hans had noticed her impliciting fright and puts up both hands guilelessly innocent.

"But what of you? Where will you sleep?" Elsa's leeriness turns to concern for this high-class man's selfless act of chivalry. His gentle eyes then completely put her mind at ease.

"There have been harder floors than this." Hans smiles a bit sardonically at he points at that narrow alcove of the cleared out cupboard across the room where a beat up blanket or two were ready to be laid out for him to sleep in the recessed cove on the wooden floor.

"But you need—" Elsa shakes her head at his gentlemanly nature, still foremost at hand, as she glimpses the multiple sheets and fluffed pillows piled on the bed's mattress awaiting her.

There was even a long shirt draped over one of the bedposts to suffice for a nightgown.

"—I need to take care of you. Please allow me this—if only to pay some small recompense for my past crimes against you and Arendelle—and perhaps give my fruitless life some meaning." Hans once again astounds Elsa by fearlessly taking both her hands now in his, to lace their fingers and kiss the back of her pale hands to his lips in reverence.

"Thank you…” Elsa manages to say after a long pause spent watching their coupled hands. She was surprised to find her hands did not even begin to emanate the frost at his touch that she believed such close physical contact with a man would.

But the warmth in his eyes took the cool of her breath away…
"A Morning of Revelations"

Act I

Chapter 9

"A-ha! Now I'm talkin'! Who da man?!"

In the wee hours of the morning, Flynn Rider's triumphant whisper can't help but cry out in pride as he, after a long night playing with his locks, finally succeeds in cracking open the final latch of the last difficult deadbolt he'd been tirelessly working on.

There had been seven (Count them!) difficult types of all makes and model of lock—two of which were so old they were nearly rusted out, never mind the three deadbolts that had been clamped on his cell door fully designed to keep the master thief from escaping.

But these boys don't know who they're messing with!

A smug Flynn was so full of it as his excited hands remove the last despicable barrier to his freedom, his arrogance was palpable in the air…

As was that pungent stench, suddenly pervading the entire already none-too-fragrant cell hold.

P-U!

"I wondered how long it would take you."

That insipid smooth voice again! Man, if I didn't have bad luck…How do I get this jerk off my back?! He's everywhere! Like horse puckey!

"So what's the procedure here? Are you gonna sound the alarm? Or are you planning on keeping this cell door between me and my freedom shut—all with your own namby-pamby bare hands, pretty boy. You just got lucky before." Flynn drawls the challenge to the thinner, in his opinion, scrawnier man. After all, he was endowed with big muscles, which he counts on, though his own hands, fingers and wrists were raw, painful and pounding—and had somewhat lost sensation from the hours of being strung up yesterday. (Thanks, pal.) His flexing muscles could still manage a mean left hook to wipe the simper off that guy's face.

And with his freed legs, Flynn powerfully kicks the unlatched cell door open with a smile on his bumptious face.

"Who said I was bare handed?" Prince Hans of the Southern Isles displays his own prowess as his haughty imperiousness rears its magnificent head once his pride in his own abilities was questioned.

For Hans knew every inch of this ship backwards and forwards by now—especially this brig's contents as he ducks into a siding where a secondary cage cell resided near the ramp entrance he came in.
"Hey! I know I'm good but I didn't really expect you to tuck tail and hide, Handsome." Flynn Rider's voice was full of mocking bemusement at this interesting dandy fop of a cabin boy.

"Ooo-kay…That is a **BIG** sword…"

As he walks out of his cell a free man Flynn loses some of his starting bravado by the end. His normally lowered eyes bulge out when Hans swiftly reemerges from the dark barred cove with a rather dangerous and deadly looking broadsword wielded in his 'namby pamby' bare hands.

"Please return to your captivity, Sir. It is unwise for you to attempt an escape at this time on the open seas. Return to your confinement or I'll be forced to run you through."

Flynn swallows hard as the resoluteness in Hans' voice expertly shows off his proficiency at swordplay by slicing the long blade in throwing in a few practice swings that appeared redundant as he tosses the wide bladed weapon back and forth between his ambidextrous hands.

**GULP. Where's a frying pan when you need it?!**

"Since I'm truly growing rather tired of cleaning the dirty floors, I'd prefer not to draw your blood here."

The casual way that Hans Westergaard spoke of blood-letting was a bit disturbing to Flynn, who 'preferred' to keep all his blood in his veins—thank you very much.

However, he had a ship to commandeer with a pair of females, a talking snowman, and a color-changing frog—that he was single-handedly responsible for bringing safely back to land.

"Well, I don't do the housekeeping here, so I wouldn't mind spilling yours all over the floor, good lookin'." A mocking, courageous Flynn, having more than a bit of observation skills of his own thieving variety, recalled seeing that one of the metal bars of his cell looked stressed and loose and—

"Urghhh!" With a loud grunt, he utilizes all the strength in his equally half-paralyzed and half-frostbitten arm to **rrrrrippp** that wobbly bar the rest of the way from its cage structure.

"Impressive." Hans gives credit where credit is due. His own cold, calculating eyes widen at this interesting prisoner's singular feat of wrenching one of the iron bars from his cell with his hands alone.

"Yeah...I didn't know I had that in me! Maybe after all these years, Blondie's magic hair powers did give my hands super strength! Who would've thought it?! Hah!" Flynn Rider puffs up with pride as he makes this happy discovery of his newfound manifesting massive strength.

Hans pauses before speaking. His clever mind decided it would be more to his advantage to have his opponent imprudently believe in some 'magic' superpower that didn't really exist. Hans personally knew that particular cell bar was already loose in its mortar base. Some past occupant obviously already put in the time to chip at the mortar holding the bar in place, but failed to finish the job before he was probably a goner.

"Come on, Sideburns! What're you waitin' for?! Bring it!" Flynn, feeling powerful, armed with his long metal bo-staff runs, lunging forward at Hans who deftly sidesteps out of the way of Flynn's first punishing blow.

**Clang! Clang!**
Iron staff deflects sword. Sword blocks staff.

The two able-bodied men go at it with a vengeance. Hans Westergaard's years of honed fencing and trained sword wielding skills pay off dividends; though Flynn Rider's wild improvisation techniques of attack and bob and weave style give the experienced swordsman a run for his money.

POW! Clang! BANG! Slice~!

Hans' sword comes within millimeters of gashing a serious wound across Flynn's concaved, avoiding chest, as his tight black shirt's sliced tear flips open to reveal his rather hairy and very masculine chest heaving wildly with all the effort.

"Hey! That was my—Ungh!—slickest shirt!" Flynn idly comments as he whacks his bar into thin air, then glances down at his trashed, favorite black shirt peeling off his exposed chest, as if he was not in the middle of hand-to-hand, life in the balance combat.

"If I ever get back home—ugh!—I'll be sure to purchase you a new one. Ungh!" With his natural acerbic wit, Hans smiles. His own normally held back male testosterone levels enjoyed this sparring rematch more than he had imagined he would.

"After all—uggnh—black is the color always worn at funerals—even for a thief." Prince Hans lets his darker side peek out again, as unleashed in their fierce battle, a man's ferocity could not be quenched by mere words anymore.

"Oh, yeah? That is hitting below the belt!" Whack! In synchronization with his choice of words, Flynn uses Hans' diving momentum to spin around from the sword's vicious blade thrust and horizontally hold his long iron bar to hit just the correct spot.

Bam!

Flynn's iron bar, though not swinging with as much force as it was crashed into with precision, connects painfully with Hans' lower torso. The auburn head bends over as he backs off, clutching at his no doubt bruised hipbones with an angered expression on his pained face. His breath comes out ragged and hard.

"You, Sir, are no gentleman…" Feeling this man was his wily equal again, Hans retorts with a grunt, eyes to the top of his skull as he doubles over trying to catch his breath back.

"Well, I never claimed to be! Just a good looking orphan boy with magic fingers!" Flynn answers with a conceited chuckle as he lords over Hans' doubled over form, deciding on how hard he would clobber the guy.

But when he nears, Flynn's precious nose wrinkles in disdain at Hans.

"Ewwww! That smell is on you! What have you been wallowing in, pal?" Flynn covers his nose with the grossed-out question.

"Forgive me. As I stated before, I just came from my most favorite weekly task on this vessel—scraping the extremely full between deck. I merely was going to peer in to enquire of your well-being before changing my work clothes when I caught you escaping." Hans apologizes, as the conscientious neat-freak in him looking rather embarrassed of the dirty and most odorous of his shipboard responsibilities.

But someone had to do the filthy deed and of course the worse chores fell to the paid-for 'slave.'
"Hngh...I'd do more than change my clothes if I were you." Flynn backs away, pinching his offended nose closed.

"Yes, thank you for your kind advice. Could we please get back to our joust?" Hans asks this most exasperating foe.

"Only if you stay downwind." Flynn demands under his breath, still holding his nose with the back of one of his hands.

"Then, the advantage is mine." Hans swiftly takes this opportunity of Flynn's single hand holding his iron bar, to suddenly make a grab for the metal with both of his own capable hands, after he sheathes his sword in his belt.

With determined resolve to win, Hans capitalizes at Flynn's shock to his quick, underhanded actions unbefitting a proper sword match. While the two men vie for control of the struggle, Hans' energized, sinewy arm muscles bristle in raised pumping veins, forcing the larger man backwards to trip and crash into a remote area of the bilge.

Flynn's head bashes into a solid steel wall. It smarted, but he was actually knocked out cold, as his luck would have it, by the heavy metal staff they'd been fighting over clunking down on his poor noggin for good measure as his dazed body sinks to the ground.

"It's not time for you to show your hand, Rider. Believe me, I know. This pirate Captain Houtebeen possesses a cache of many weapons onboard this ship—too many deadly firearms that have become his pride and joy in his dwindling years. Both he and Job are expert marksmen. You wouldn't stand a chance against a lead bullet for all your deft skills of maneuvering and thievery." Hans speaks in respected deference, not knowing if the semi-conscious man was understanding his recommended advice of non-aggression until the right moment.

"If I were you, I'd wait until we were docked to make my move. At sea, this pirate has the advantage. On land, we may just be able to outwit him—once his intent us revealed in his weakness—lust for greed."

An astute strategist in his clever brilliance, sagacious Hans finishes dragging the heavier man back into his cell, then relocking each of the locks that Flynn had so tirelessly slaved over to open. He even reapplies the handcuffs to Flynn's wrists again to ensure his wily digits could not master the locks again so quickly.

"We only have a few days left of ocean travel, if I correctly perceive the ship's course settings. You should be able to have these sorted out by then. So, don't try anything rash again to alert the Captain of your betrayal as his henchman—for the sake of the ladies—err, lady—please." Hans leaves the now completely secured cage. Though uncertain of Flynn's ability to hear his shrewd pointers, he had ascertained with his keen periphery that there was an audience to which his voice grew to a louder volume would hear, and who might have more pull than he in convincing this sly thief in the wisdom of his warning.

"I leave you now, to go and bathe—as per your advice. Good day, Sir." Hans pauses as he returns his sword and sheath to its rightful owner (another skeletal former prisoner) to make a clipped bow to the man who had nearly bested him again.

Hans had never felt so equaled by any other man than this Flynn Rider in artful cleverness.

"Be therefore as cunning as serpents, and as gentle as doves."


The phrase of Christ-like wisdom stabilizes Hans’ stalwart heart and mind.

Now Elsa, who had been calm and composed all morning, after she had helped the breakfast meal to be prepared and her dishwashing completed, had sat in Hans’—now their shared—sleeping chamber, (the very combination of words gave her goosebumps yet) to gaze about at what Prince Hans had been subjected to for these past two years.

In the morning's daylight, the surroundings of his small, galley cabin had a more quaint, cozy atmosphere than the dark claustrophobic mystery it retained at night.

She walks over to touch each of the items there with a delicate finger on the small table that served as his wash basin stand. A crude bar of soap, that shaving knife and those small towels were all carefully arrayed and neatly stacked as they were awaiting her this morning when she had awakened to find Hans already busy cooking at the stove.

Upon walking out into the kitchen, she almost felt domesticated to find him there, yet again harmonizing a pleasant tune. She even almost joined in with his singing but the shy reserved side of her held back.

Looking around now, there was another littler night stand piece made of a thick wicker type basket material at the head of the bed she had slept shockingly soundly upon last night.

And not a trace of the dreams either...How puzzling...

As she was in passing thought, Elsa's eyes catch sight of a bit of yellow paper with some small printed words transcribed upon it, peeking out from some of the basket's weaves beneath the candle in its wax holder.

Though she knew she shouldn't pry into someone else's business—her dear mother had taught her better etiquette than that—Elsa still felt compelled to open the basket to see what was hidden inside.

Slowly, cautiously, regardfully, Elsa picks up the candlestick with her left hand and lifts the basket's lid with her right. Her gaze was surprised to see the multitude of pieces of paper, most of which were torn and uneven scraps that appeared to be folded and battered as if read over and over, then crunched in a pocket or leaned on a food stained kitchen pot or pan numerous times each.

Gingerly delicate, Elsa chooses one paper shred with particularly neat handwriting to peruse with a guilty bitten lip, as she secretly desires to discover the mystery to her who was Hans Westergaard.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust do corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven where neither can be corrupted or stolen. For where you treasure is, there will your heart be also. - Matthew 6: 19-21"

Elsa quickly grabs up another scrap and reads to herself in a whisper. "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest in all your souls. - Matthew 11: 28-29."
And once more, her eyes dart across the small, uneven scribbled missives written all in the same hand.

"Whoever wants to be great must be your servant first; and whoever of you is a servant must be a slave to all. For even the Son of Man comes not as a master, but as a servant—to give His life for a ransom to many. – Mark 10: 43-45"

The unmistakable penmanship was the same as that on the note she’d read yesterday that said 'Everything I have is yours.' By now, tears were biting right behind Elsa's beautiful eyes as she realizes the voice of the Bible's wisdom showed there was truly beauty in Hans' soul amidst the torment, and he was reaching, through the Word for God's guidance—guidance, path and forgiveness.

Elsa reaches her hand in the basket for another crumpled text. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins—to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Elsa's eyes were opening to a new aspect of Hans that she had not known existed. It was one that she found, to say the least, admirable, as she reads his written words obviously jotted down from memory that looked so worn and tattered with food stains and dirt splattered across each of the no-longer white papers that it could be seen he had pored over each many times on his long, lonely penitent journey.

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal.' 2 Corinthians 4:8"

Elsa pauses here to consider.

Prince Hans, you found solace and forgiveness in the same place I did…Is this part of why I feel so connected to you? We have both been searching alone for so long—but do I see something more in those pleading eyes of yours in my dreams…?

"Queen Elsa? Are you in the kitchen?" Hans' voice breaks through her circumspective inner thoughts. A guilt-ridden Elsa, feeling prevaricatively indiscreet at peeping through his private affairs uninvited, quickly gathers all of the papers from her lap and shoves them (Forgive me, Lord) back into the wicker basket used for a nightstand.

She glances about wildly, looking for the candle to sit on top again as it was, but in her haste she knocks it over on its side.

"Yes! I've been here cleaning up!" Elsa tries to hide her breathless rush back to the kitchen's cutting table. The reserved, shy little girl in her was still afraid to be caught doing what she was not supposed to be doing.

She was telling the truth, after all. She had been in the kitchen cleaning.

"Oh, I thank you for that. May I impose on your kind nature a bit more and ask you to…Fetch a rutabaga from the further back larder box where it's kept? And then chop it up finely…please?" Hans' normally steady voice sounded a tad perturbed as it cracks, emanating from somewhere outside the galley entrance.

"Certainly…” Elsa answers, confused. He had shown her earlier where the winter vegetables were kept, buried deep in a thick wooden box, stored behind the stove and cutting board, in the dark, to retain their freshness.
She just wondered why he was not actually visible as he was speaking to her.

*Oh, well…*

In his apron, in his oversized shirt, she kneels down, quite unsuitably for a queen, on all fours, as she had seen him do, to pry open the somewhat heavy wooden lid—

**Whoosh!**

*What was that?*

Elsa's tense mind mildly notes, then dismisses the gust of breeze she felt vaguely blow across her bent over brow. She was having enough trouble distinguishing which rooty vegetable was which (a Queen wasn't normally trained to know raw veggies by name). She was distressed to find that he couldn't tell a rutabaga from a radish.

"Prince Hans?" Elsa stands up and dusts her apron, holding two brownish, bulbous roots, one in each hand. She wanted to ask him which vegetable he was requesting before she cut up the wrong precious commodity on a ship. Or if she got either right at all.

But upon a glance about the kitchen and not seeing him returned, she quite innocently strides into the bedroom—*err, sleeping chamber*—becoming more acclimated to just waltzing in and out and just seeing him here and there.

But not like this.

The modest young girl in Elsa verbally squeaks aloud upon entering the small room. For even in the dim lighting, she could clearly make out Hans' basic silhouette form from the backside.

And he was not wearing much yet on it—save for his tall, trademarked pair of black boots and a towel slung over his shoulders.

"Ohh! Please pardon me." Elsa just about can excuse herself as her wide, ashamed eyes soak in every slender line and well defined toned muscle perfectly intersecting along the curving arch of his gorgeous back—all the way down to the incredibly tight flats of his divine thighs.

"—Elsa!" He calls out after her retreat.

"Err, Queen Elsa! I should've dressed more in haste. I am so sorry you had to see that! I just expected you to take longer in cutting up that—" Still pulling on his billowy white shirt over his open chest, his pants firmly on, Hans comes into the connected kitchen to find his blamelessly, faultless, innocent and untainted angel named Elsa—

—had taken to her wings and flown the coop.
"Part of Your World"

Act I

Chapter 10

Elsa was still tightly clutching rutabaga and radish in either tensed hand as she blindly races from the galley and up towards the welcoming light of day on the upper deck to escape her new trials. Looking left and then right, trying to get her bearings, Elsa pauses in her hysterical race to pant against some unfamiliar wooden wall.

_Why did I go in there without knocking first?! Elsa, he must think you such a fool!_

Losing her control over her ice powers, again in her manic confusion, Elsa rushes through the corridors, needing to feel the warming sun on her tempestuous face again as she always did now when seized with sudden tumultuous spasms at those times when she first began her emotional rehabilitation under Anna's bright shiny care.

"And vere do you zink ye're goin', Missy?"

But just as Elsa takes her first incoherent step up onto the 'Pearl Lady's' deck, the brilliant, blinding sun greeting her face almost immediately sets in the flash of a dark, foreboding, unctuous second. Both rutabaga and radish fall to the deck with a splatting clatter.

"Aye. Ye come a-runnin' to get ze attentions of Captain Houtebeen, have ye, lass? Zat toffy nosed pup not treatin' a fine lady like ye, proper like? Houtebeen be at yer service, ma'am." The condescending, oozing simulated charm of the 'sympathetic' odious pirate, as he grabs Elsa from behind, smoothly exudes feigned compassion for the 'poor, misled' lass moments after she appears, scared and blinking in the sudden sunlight from below deck.

"Come closer, pretty girlie, so Houtebeen can have a better look at ye. Then I'll take ye below and show ye how a real man should treat ye…"

Elsa shrinks within herself, trying to back away, uselessly attempting to pull away against his stronger brute force, as rough, dirty hands travel along her curves and his hideous face leers at her. His graying red beard was all grimy looking, the closer his face comes towards her. His cracked, blackened teeth and foul stench of him was almost bad enough to cause panic-stricken Elsa to faint as the vile pirate moves in to steal a kiss from her struggling, unwilling, delicate lips—

But there was a self-defense mechanism inside of this frightened young woman, that was almost about to kick in with terrifying result as Queen Elsa shivers uncontrollably in fear, and ice once again begins to grip her heart…

"Unhand that lady!" Just as Elsa's ambient ice powers were about to be unleashed, Hans Westergaard's fiercest voice, full of genuine caring and protection for her, warms her now thoroughly chilled heart to pause in its attack, as he appears above deck.

Chasing her frantic dash, Prince Hans had rushed up through the ship and up the ramped steps in
his tall, imposing pair of boots. His unbuttoned shirt was open and blowing in the breeze, his auburn hair caught fire in the sun, still damp it glimmers with water particles in the fresh sunlight, and the steely expression on his handsome face made such an impeccably ideal picture of a perfect hero, the likes of which Elsa had only glimpsed in storybooks of old—that he quite took her breath away.

"Vat did ye say, leetle cabin boy?" Captain Houtebeen was not as impressed, though. He demeaned Hans with his uncomplimentary words, accompanied by a sneered gnarl on his mug at him.

This was the defining moment as the pair of men glare across the ship's open deck at one another the challenge, with Elsa caught helplessly in between.

Although, she wasn't the helpless 'damsel in distress' that needed saving. For this evil Captain had absolutely no idea of how deadly her inherent powers could be.

But Hans did. And his calculating intellect already knew how the sadistic pirate would react to discovering Queen Elsa's secret magic. He would either kill her right now on sight and be done with her in his irrational fear, or kill her later, after he had raped her powers for his own wicked, villainous depravity and intent.

And Hans Westergaard would rather die by the sword first, before allowing any man to mar regal, beautiful Queen Elsa of Arendelle's purity.

"I said UNHAND THAT LADY, please." The courageous, distinguished young man closes the distance between he and his new enemy with long, purposeful strides, and a quickly gathered pirate cutlass along the way.

He draws, with scraping metal against its scabbard as his eyes meet Elsa's with explicit instruction to keep absolutely still.

"Have ye lost yer senses, boy?! Don't ye know who Captain Houtebeen is?! Houtebeen's been called ze finest shot wit a revolver on ze high seas!" And with that prideful statement, the vicious peg leg reaches for his trusty weapon in its leather holster at his side. He trains its sight at Hans' pretty boy head…

"Since'n yer such a goodly cook and usually a handy slave by me zese past two years, Houtebeen will give ye one chance to recant yer childish struck dumb wit young love threat—if ye return to yer kitchen duties and let me have me way with zis wench."

The Captain's focus was on Hans, with his sniveling, smiling ultimatum—though perhaps he should've been paying more attention to Elsa, who, inspired by Hans' bravery in the sight of immense danger to himself calmly finds her center to reach her long, dainty fingers and their endowed 'claws' as she was still in close proximity, pressed against the dubious pirate's foul chest, waits for Prince Hans to utter the word she knew instantly was on the tip of his tongue that would certainly seal his fate. Her pleading eyes reach out for his now, begging for his warning glance to concede and just let her go with her ice powers—

"NEVER!"

Hans' strong tenor voice rings out. He utilizes all his speed and focus and skills with a blade—any blade—even a pirate's rounded cutlass. Long ago, Hans had trained himself to hone his balance and inner strength as his cunning mind calculates everything, from wind velocity to trajectory, in a split second of racing time.
Captain Houtebeen, for his part, keeps to his dark promise of firing off his pistol's dead eye shot...

Pity...Houtebeen enjoyed zat boy's potato soup and will miss his cooking much. Ah vell...zere will be others...

But before his single shot's lead bullet is sent careening wildly towards the impudent lad who had become infatuated with a woman, and let her be his foolish downfall, the 'wench' herself in his unattended grip, breaks free. She rips her long, pointed fingernails across his face, scratching off the despicable man's eyepatch in her clawed wake, causing the old coot to growl and scream as now his misdirected bullet zings towards Hans.

The quick-witted man had to recalculate his actions, as he dodges and simultaneously swings his cutlass at the multi-roped canvas riggings. Its released tension does indeed send the gaffe rigged fore-to-aft mainsail loose to spring forward to swipe its powerful sweep back across the deck and, as mind-bogglingly calculated by a genius—

—directly where Captain Houtebeen would have been standing.

Note the auxiliary future perfect tense verb, 'would have.'

In his vehement anger at his one good eye being almost scratched out as well, enough to cause blood to be spilt down his frightful, menacing features, a crazed Captain Houtebeen viciously fulfills his earlier threat. And before either Hans or Elsa could think or speak another thought, the burly pirate lifts the terrified Queen of Arendelle over his roused to rage bloody head that she had personally injured. He sees to it, in a maddened fury, that he tosses her flailing body overboard.

"ELSA!" Hans' screech was soul-wrenching as he dashes to the ship's rail ledge beside the evil Captain.

Hans was not calculating nor scheming nor planning anymore, as he fearlessly makes a diving leap over into the deep, to save the woman he—

"Elsa! Elsa!" Hans bobs around the crashing waves surrounding the full steam moving seacraft. His muscular legs fight the ship's undertow into its surging rudder and keel.

But did she go under already?

Hans' mind was furious with himself, as he dives under the murky waters, eyes greedily scanning for this delicate young woman's slender body most likely in need of his breath's resuscitation.

If it took all he had, he'd give his last breath for her.

But there was nothing. Again, he dives, headlong under the sea's crest. His own breath was sparse and thin by his fourth diving search for the young woman.

He didn't dare allow himself to indulge in the belief, until right now, in his desperation to find her and bring her pure magnificent beauty back safe, that he truly loved her.

Not for some schemed plot to become ruler—not for some selfish conquest of manipulating her wealth—both physical and magical. No.

This was the most honest, simple, truthful feeling, beyond his renewed relationship with the Lord, that Hans ever felt.

That beautiful, pure of heart, innocent, demure and vulnerable—yet still strong and firm in her
beliefs Queen Elsa of Arendelle was, after all his dreams, the singular angel he'd fallen madly in love with.

_Do I love you because you're wonderful? Or are you wonderful because I love you?_

_I will never know now._

_Because of me, must she be punished? My fallen nature—I always lose everything I love in the end. Perhaps it is my fate to walk alone. Please, God, help my angel find Your light…_

Job's dark arm cuts around Hans' upper torso, just as the frantic man, too, was slipping under the deep blue. He drags a despondent Hans back from the dark depths onto the Pearl Lady again.

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**Into the watery dark depths, under the sea…**

_Sinking, sinking…I can't stop falling. Where does it stop? When do I hit bottom?_

Queen Elsa's incoherent mind floats across the swirling waters, as does her flailing, unresponsive body.

_Is this what it feels like to drown? I feel like there is no up, nor down, no left nor right, no back or forth...Just drifting, with no anchor and no hope of a horizon. Did this happen to you, Mama, Papa?_

Elsa's semi-conscious mind gazes about the undercurrent of churning ocean waves as she tries to reach out to her parents, who too suffered this same fate when their ship sunk some five years ago.

_Dear Lord Jesus, if this is the end, please take me to be with You and my papa and mama, and let Anna know…_

_Tell Anna I died feeling her warmth, her love all around me._

Elsa closes her eyes in pious submission to His plan for her with a fond farewell thought to her beloved little sister.

_And please take care of Prince Hans. He's searching for You, too, just like I was._

Elsa's final thought, as she lets her mind go, reflect the current state of her heart—a heart which another lost soul touched enough to believe she could've found out what true love was perhaps.

But their time was far too short.

_Thy will be done, Lord…_

Somewhere inside of her, a warm and safe peaceful sensation overtakes her and a tiny sparkle begins emanating from inside Elsa's no longer frozen heart.

Her cryokinetic powers spring to a life all their own. A thin coating of ice vergles form over her mouth and nose as involuntarily, the ice creates a small vacuum over the last breath of warmth held
inside her mystical body. A cryogenic status coats her unconscious form from the inside out. She was frozen, but her life force, her spirit and mind, still had hidden warmth within as the currents pull her further away…

*Swim flutter flap swim flutter flip bubble*

A school of young flounder fish quickly swish past the strangely floating, unknown entity with their father fish in lead. Several playful dolphins create bumper cars alongside a carp making harplike music who slowly eyes the new discovery, as he floats towards it in A major.

A slew of sea horses tinkle their tiny cymbals, seeming to call many other varieties of sealife to have a curious peek at this odd, pale lavender blue skinned creature who owned a pair of -- *what'd'ya call them?* - *Oh, feet!*-- floating in their ocean, until a deep crimson red crustacean clamps his claws together authoritatively and the lot of ocean dwellers disperse to make way for a beautiful melody flowing closer across the gentle ocean waves…

"*Cough cough cough...*"

The next thing Elsa remembers is waking up on a sandy beach with the sun's vibrant rays doing their work, melting the outer cryogenic state of her body and bringing the inside back to a normal warm rate. (For the Snow Queen.)

The next thing she had to work on was breath.

*Huff, huff, huff*

"Where am I…?" When Elsa is finally able to speak, she glances around an empty afternoon beach front, wondering just how long she'd been lying on this shore.

How did she get here? How did she survive the chasmless sea's terrors? How did she—?

"How did I end up wearing this?!!" She glances down at the very small, beautiful light blue seashell corset type covering. "And why is it so immodest?!" Elsa blushes at her exposed upper torso, very glad to find herself alone and in a long matching, slinky skirt. It shimmers in the bright sunlight as it drags upon the shore.

"Whoever gave me these clothes at least has some good taste." Elsa tries to smile at her strange situation. She glances at the pearl necklace bracelet with a very special conch seashell pendant attached. A matching seashell decorates the well coiffed braid of her pale blonde hair.

"I wonder who gave this to me? Who took care of me?" She stands to her feet shakily and gazes about for anyone to ask a question of. She grasps her aching head as she does. She may have had a headache but the prick of the rocks of the sand between her bare toes told her she was still alive.

*After all, there's no pain anymore for us in Heaven.*

Elsa smiles, the love and warmth in her heart given this second chance, longed to embrace the little sister who adored running barefoot along the beach, once upon a long, long time ago, when she and Anna were tiny, tiny girls—

"Papa and Mama would bring us—"

Thinking about her dear, departed parents, Elsa's thoughts are reminded to give praise and thanksgiving—first and foremost—as she falls to her knees in her shimmering skirt in the sand. Her hands were clasped together in deep petition.
Thank you, Lord. Now I know my time here isn't finished yet. I have a lot of love yet to give.

She sings to the endless blue sky amidst the thousand sparkles of rays of light.

"Thank you!" She waves indiscriminately to the ocean that she had found friends within, though she wasn't aware how or who or when—but now Elsa was no longer afraid of the ocean, for some of its great watery mystery was not as frightening as it was amiably generous and kind and full of unforgettable music.

A song carries her up the sand dunes, and onto the grassy path above.

Now, all Elsa had to do was find help to save Rapunzel and Eugene, Olaf and Pascal, King Olaf's orb and—

Hans, too.

From whatever that evil pirate was up to, and there was only one person left on this earth who she could rely on, through thick and thin, to stand beside her in this crisis, just as before. Everything worked to the good, when sisterly love came together as friends.

And, by Providence, she wasn't too far away. Elsa's eyes light up to see a great big advertisement sign at the end of the long road, reading, with an arrow pointing to the store cabin, just up the hill:

'Wandering Oaken's Trading Post and Sauna'

"Sorry, little sister, but I need to ice your honeymoon." Elsa says to the wind on the desolate path, trying to cheer herself up. This sheltered young woman, all on her own, was so in fear for her friends and family and…her new love that she was trembling inside.

Elsa had learned that nervous feeling could be overcome by Anna's prescription for smiles, singing and laughter—all to be found at 'Wandering Oaken's Trading Post and Sauna.'

And that was exactly what was going on within Mr. Oaken's place of business. Anna and Kristoff had arrived a day or two ago and had been sampling the Sauna's perennially warm hot spring that savvy businessman, Oaken, was cashing in on.

Too bad, after the first night, Kristoff had to say something to rub the big man (big, big man!) the wrong way, about the extra charge for renting a 'Honeymoon Sauna'. Kristoff just didn't see how anything was different that Oaken had changed for the sauna room, save for a sign on the window peep that said either 'In trouble' or 'Out of order' on the reverse side.

The joke of which Kristoff didn't find funny at all.

The end result had Anna and Kristoff laughingly spending the remainder of their paid stay out of the sauna and in the barn only.

"—And stay out! You dare call Oaken a shameless money grubber in his own place?!!"

"And just when we were getting to be friends…"

Well, the laughter that Anna found when Kristoff was once again physically kicked out of Oaken's store to land on his bum hard to the stone garden fit that prescription again.

"Here, let me see!" By the time Anna had gotten her big 'baby' of a new grumpy husband into the familiar haystack homey smelling barn haven beside Sven, who was calming chewing his cud,
Kristoff was in a better mood.

Especially after Anna quite forcefully wrestles him out of his pants to make sure 'you didn't get cut on those jagged rocks and I'll have to put some medicine on it!' she threatened whilst her frisky little paws were a-wandering.

"Ookay! Backside is all clear." Having a ball by now of embarrassing her new husband, making poor Kristoff lean over as if he were a child, Anna giddily slaps his tight rump, humming away happily as she peeks down into his fully washed, light blue undies, not able to resist a pinch or two on the way out.

"Anna! Stop that!" Kristoff hollers at her incessant playful pinching of any spot on his bare skin, so Sven decides to take his bow (several times a day, the rate this foreplay was going) out the side stall door that the reindeer kicks it tight shut behind him.

"What?!!" A giggling Anna feigns innocence as Kristoff turns around to sit on his sore, pinched bottom. Anna was none too gentle a girl and none too shy anymore, either, as she sidles in between his outstretched muscular thigh legs before he could get into a more comfortable position.

She returns to her favorite new hobby of counting each one of his ripped pecs, cobblestone abs and horseshoe obliques along his open chest and abdomen. He had been ready for a sauna bath, but got her giddy digits' shower of love instead.

"Heh he, feistypants, didn't you hear me say it tickles when you do that. Heheh…” Kristoff lifts his arm to scratch his still-sweetly-shy-at-moments head beneath his cap.

He semi-protests her endless enthusiasm over his manly physique as he chuckles with each of her tickles tinkling with his troll crystal necklace that had been their wedding present from Cliff and Bulda, Anna having a matching one.

"Yes." Anna answers, half-heartedly listening. Her count was up to fifteen when he breaks her concentration and she has to start over again.

"One, two…"

With a scoffing, high-pitched laugh, Kristoff was wondering if Anna was trying to turn him on, the slow methodical way she fingered and traced each hard bump on his upper abdomen, breathing a number on it before starting on the next.

But it was working.

"Ahem, hmm…how about some music?" Not that there was something wrong with his testosterone, but Sven had climbed over four hills this morning alone and Kristoff was beginning to wonder if Anna was on some kind of crazy mission to fulfill the kransekake prediction all at once on their two week vacation.

Kristoff reaches over her anxious on all fours form. She rolls over as he picks up his lute guitar and starts to strum it, with a smug smile on his face, for he knew nothing could calm a love frenzied Anna more than a sing-off.

"Yes! I love it when you sing to me!"

As foreseen, Anna scrambles back up and drops back from her blatant fondling of her man to listen to him serenade to her.
"Anna is better than most people...I can't think of a girl more bright!
She's soft and she's sweet and really likes to eat
And she's mine, today, tomorrow, forever...all right...!"

"Awww..." Anna had a melty face as she kneels before him like an adoring puppy.

"Again! Again!" She cries out in utter childish excitement. Anna always loved it when her papa sang to her, just like this.

_Okay, Papa was wearing more clothes...and didn't have muscles like you...and wasn't blonde at all. He had hair my color! Oh, Papa, I miss you!_

Tears freely spill over from her eyes and onto the hay sprinkled floor she was kneeling on.

"Anna? Was my singing that bad?" Kristoff was getting used to these little emotional outbursts from his dizzy but absolutely lovable girl and he always knew when she needed a—

"Warm hug time, baby." Kristoff's sincere smile on his caring face was more than inviting enough for Anna to crumple like a little girl into his arms, weeping hot tears onto his hairy bare chest.

"Olaf said you needed one of these at least three times a day, right? I don't mind upping it to five warm hugs if you don't, feistypants." Kristoff, a sensitive, big bear-hugger himself, wraps the small girl up until she almost disappears in his larger bodied embrace - along with her sorrows.

And he was glad of it.

"I love you, Olaf!" Anna repeats her childhood chant to the inanimate snowman. Her ditzy mind now wondered how Elsa was doing right about now, if she too was lonely without her sister.

"Uhhh, I would rather you didn't mix me up with the snowman." Kristoff teases in her hair, starting to blow in her ear. Their intimate proximity was at the limit of all he could take about now...

"Elsa?!"

"Now you're calling me your sister? That's weird. Whoa...! Anna, what?!" Kristoff is actually dropped like a bag of coal, to his painfully bumped chin, (as he was coming down for the 'kill' so to speak, heheheh) when his slippery wife slithers out from underneath him (something that would disturb a less confident man, but not solid Kristoff). He protectively jumps to his feet to rush outside and see what had shocked his little firebrand so.

She was nutty enough to rush headlong into any danger, though Kristoff doubted much could go wrong way up here in the peaceful North Valley.

"Anna! Kristoff!! I need your help!" Elsa was astride a determined looking Sven, side saddle. He had luckily found her stumbling up the path, barefoot and exhausted.

Elsa cries out to her dearest friend - her baby sister - whom she didn't want to interrupt in her time of happiness and get her involved in this madness but it was all becoming a bit too much for her to bear alone.

_But that's what families are for, after all._

Good-natured Kristoff smiles and waves at Elsa until he realizes how little he was wearing down there, and he then flies back into the barn, quite ashamed.
The cell door is forced open and Hans Westergaard's unconscious form is roughly shoved inside by Job, who promptly removes the broad sword and any other item that could be used as a weapon from the secondary cage's former occupant. The old skeletal swordsman crumbles apart under the dark man's harsh actions and the disturbed lifeless skull clatters across the dusty floor to crash into the back of Hans' passed out head as it was residing face down upon the ground.

A growing puddle of his own blood emanates from his whipped and lashed bare back. Job nonetheless coarsely ties a tight knot with a thick rope around Hans' unaware wrists behind his back, equally shackling his flailed out ankles with the same sturdy long cord ensuring his captivity. But at the moment the young man was far too beaten, battered and bruised to attempt any escape for a long time. Job lets out a heaving sigh as the faint rays of sunlight peering down from the ramp above reveal how much damage his—at Captain Houtebeen's relentlessly cruel and brutal command—fierce whip's punishment had caused, as the blood was still trickling down Hans' slashed back from numerous strikings from the chastising lash.

The Captain, in fury with his slave's betrayal, still had a bit of a soft spot for the wayward boy's usual quiet servitude and fine cooking skills, left it up to Job to decide whether his only other ship's workmate would live or die, after expressly demanding the bloodsoaked beating to "knock out of ze damned boy any fantasized notions of rebellion or silly dreams of a girl's love zat's been lost."

But before Job turns to leave, he takes off the long colorful decorated sash belt from his waist and kneels down to Hans' prone and profusely bleeding back. The big brute of a man gently places the treasured article of clothing from his Caribbean home beneath the injured man's head as a pillow, and he turns Hans' unconscious, still sopping wet face to the side and not face down upon the dirty cell floor.

"Thanks for that, big guy! Personally can't stand to see a fine nose like that being squashed. He~y, what'd the poor beggar do to deserve forty lashes after a dunk in the drink? And what of his lady friend, may I be so bold as to inquire?" Flynn Rider had manfully held his tongue since the moment his attentive, adjusted eyes had glimpsed in the near pitch darkness the hulking first mate carry and drag the slender 'cabin boy' into the brig's opposing cell cage catty-corner to his.

The dripping wet sounds slathering down to the ground in Hans' passed out wake when Job brought him in caused much curiosity on Flynn's behalf as to the reason why he had to speak up. That and his growing concern for Elsa's safety.

"He defied the Cap'n. Same'll happen to you if you don't do as you're told once we hit land tomorrow. But I'd enjoy ripping your gizzards out even more, Thief." Job threateningly sneers behind his back at Flynn as he slams shut and locks Hans' cell door behind him, all rings of keys now clutched in his large dark hands.

"Now there's a pleasant thought…and the longest sentence I've ever heard you utter yet! Top of the
morning to you, too, Friend." Flynn sarcastically retorts. His running off, taunting mouth made it no wonder his 'sparkling personality' was none too popular with anyone, save Rapunzel, who comes flying out of her boiler room hiding place the moment Job's heavy footsteps fade up the ramp from the dank bilge deck.

"Prince Hans!" Rapunzel, without giving her miffed hubby even a 'good morning, my darling' greeting or a how-do-you-do, rushes to the singular other cage on the opposite side. She tries to reach the drenched injured man from her side of the iron bars, but her artful fingers were just able to touch the top of his head as she brushes his wet hair back from his closed eyes tenderly.

"'Prince Hans?!' When did this lowly cabin boy get upgraded to a prince, Blondie?" And why do all women feel the need to caress a passed out man's hair...? Flynn recalls his little wife's fond fondlings when he was in unconscious peril, once upon a time. Not that Sideburns over there has the style or rugged good looks of my caliber.

"Hey~! That's enough of the fondling!" Flynn orders, his jealousy rising as Rapunzel scurries around the cage to position herself to be able to delicately dab at Hans' bloody slashed bare back with her handkerchief. She gently pets his soft haired neck for comfort with her other hand.

"Elsa told me his name before. Eugene, he's hurt bad..." She was practically cooing like a mother hen. Flynn marveled at his girl's natural mothering instincts.

That and her new style of dress.

"Whoa...! Blondie, what happened to your boyish pants? That look for you was starting to grow on me. Not that this one isn't working..." From this new angle of her backside, Flynn's eyes were, by now, glued to Rapunzel's rather high pink skin revealing pair of hot, hot shorts. That'll be all the rage someday, too...

"Oh! Yes, Olaf and I have come up with a plan!" With a slightly embarrassed, lower lip bitten smile, she answers distractedly as she carefully begins to minister to Hans' deep wounds with her now thoroughly bloodied hanky.

"Ohhh, great...Everything's gonna be just fine, now. The snowman has fashion sense and a foolproof plan." A disgruntled Flynn rolls his smart aleck eyes to the heavens at the very ridiculous idea of an animated pile of snow deciding his fate.

And maybe Queenie's, too...Without this guy there to watch out for her, I've gotta get up there and make sure she's safe from those ruthless pirates...

Wordly man Flynn Rider imagines Elsa's unprotected fate. His eyebrows knit rather grimly at the thought.

"You think so, too, Flynn-er-Eugene?! See, Rapunzel! I told you it would work." Unspoiled by sarcasm, a prattling Olaf chooses this moment to come waddling out to see where his companion had gone. "And if a smart and fast and nimble heroic guy like Flynn-er-Eugene agrees it's a good plan, it'll work for sure!"

Flynn throws his still tightly shackled wrists up in the air in total frustration.

"What will work?!" Flynn wished his hands were free so he could throttle the annoying creature into shutting up. He jars poor, helpful Pascal, busy at work yet again on his locks, as a frazzled Flynn bangs the jammed locks with his handcuffed wrists.
He was more than pleasantly surprised when one pops open from being improperly locked, as if on purpose.

"Well…" Rapunzel turns her head to respond to her dark in-the-dark husband as he immediately goes to work on the multiple locks of the cell door.

"Olaf and I have been constructing a small boat craft from the old broken boiler's metal tub-like container that I used some candlewax and tar that I found around the room to seal any cracks or holes in it. We've been using every bit of fabric scrap we can lay our hands on, hence my deducted pants, to add to some of the rope I swiped from the laundry line in the connecting area over there. It's just Olaf's size and light enough to be buoyant and since he doesn't need air, it will make the perfect escape pod when we lower him over this pirate ship's edge with the length of rope I've woven and we braided together. Once in the water, he can paddle to shore ahead of our arrival with these coal tongs to find help from the authorities there on land." Rapunzel was so wrapped up in her brilliant, imaginative scheme that she almost forgot to take a breath in between each enthusiastic sentence.

Olaf shakes his own head affirmatively up and down the entire time back at Flynn, just as giddy with excitement as Rapunzel was.

"And how exactly are you going to deposit said 'buoyant boatcraft' with our little hero, Olaf, secreted on board, over the ship's top deck ledge - without being spotted?" Flynn didn't enjoy punching pinholes in his adorable love's audacious plan, but someone had to do it.

"Why, Elsa will! You should've seen her at the dock! She's really good, and fast at being all mysterious and covert and—" Rapunzel in all her industrious meanderings within the confines of her boiler room craft workshop suddenly thinks about her cousin's whereabouts. After all, if Prince Hans (whom Elsa had only briefly inferred their past relationship as being "too painful a memory, it was hard to explain", that hopelessly romantic, daydreamer Rapunzel had taken that to mean 'so madly in love I couldn't tell him') was down there with them, then poor Elsa was up there alone, with the pirates.

"Where's Elsa?!

"Where's Elsa?!"

Rapunzel and then a mimicking Olaf cry out concurrently, with sudden panic written on either face when they both realize their fellow musketeer was sorely unaccounted for in their cozy prison brig area.

"She's gone. I lost her…"

Rapunzel snaps her head back around to gaze at the quiet, displaced, emotionless sound coming from the blood encrusted lips of the beaten man lying on the cold, uninviting floor.

"I couldn't protect her. I tried, but I failed her. I am a failure. God forgive me…” It was the distressed, pent up emotion speaking from his once frozen cold heart — now thoroughly melted by his love for this rare beauty of light named Elsa.

Hot, raw tears begin to relentlessly overflow from his dull eyes. The broken man's formerly haughty ego was utterly destroyed. His tormented mind, distraught with hope for second chances dashed, was beyond any mental caring of decorum or male pride as Hans Westerguard, intensely overwrought with self-reproach and self-loathing, for the first time truly in his adult life, breaks down in unmitigated, unchecked tears.
Impassioned, suffering, remorseful tears for a life lost — a beautiful life — the only one life who could bring him to a glimpse of redemption for his past wrongs against herself and her kingdom. In his agonized soul he felt that pure and delicate Queen Elsa's protection and express safety was placed by God under his own menial and worthless care as his ultimate test of penance and forgiveness.

And the unworthy man found himself wholly inadequate to deserve any morsel of pardonable mercy—human or holy—ever again, as rightful consequence for his monumental failure as a gentleman to protect a lady.

No, an angel. I lost my angel...with the dust of the stars in her eyes...

Her lovely eyes I will never be able to beg forgiveness from again...

"...Elsa..." Rapunzel felt her own heavy-hearted tears stinging her cheeks, as the poor man that her hands through the bars were cradling, was physically wrenching on the cell ground with grief and loss. She did her best to hold onto him.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'YOU LOST HER'?!!" The quiet is broken by Flynn Rider's usually smooth voice, as it bellows out in furious reprobation at the already wounded man's actions or inactions. Flynn didn't care which caused the tall blonde's demise. The masculine anger surges within his own guilt-ridden heart at knowing the very reason Queen Elsa had been present here onboard this damned pirate ship — was because of him.

And that inner kindness of hers, to let him go and cover up his sorry behind for her cousin Rapunzel's sake—that was only worthy of a genuine, truly regal and majestic queen.

All my fault...I let you down, too, Queenie...

Flynn stifles his own tears with his ire at the other man rising with each passing second.

"I couldn't stop him from throwing her overboard. I wasn't good enough to stop him..." Hans was muttering under his tearful breath as Rapunzel strokes his brow as if he were a baby. Her eyes plead back to her husband to show some sympathy for this former 'friend' of Elsa's — for both Rapunzel and Eugene believed him to be someone Elsa had known far too well in her past from the vague way she spoke of him.

But Eugene was not in the mood for pity parties.

"Get away from him, Rapunzel." Flynn growls low as he ceases his incessant animalistic pacing around his cage in sheer anger.

"But, Eugene—!" Tender Rapunzel starts to protest, looking up to see her beloved standing directly behind her, and no longer behind his own cell's bars. His hand was immediately on her shoulder, pulling her away.

"I said to stop mollycoddling this fool!" Yanking her away a bit too roughly, Flynn, somehow in his anger and wrath, had found his focus enough to unlatch every single one of seven locks standing between him and the freedom to beat the living daylights out of this little piece of—

"I'm glad you figured out those locks. Please kill me now. I know I deserve whatever darkness awaits me. A fitting sentence for failing my angel when she needed me most." Hans manages to choke out, encouraging his own demise, aware that the enraged and incensed other man was close enough—and capable enough—to reach strong hands in between cell bars and finish off the sorry existence that ever was Hans Westergaard.
Maybe, my brothers were right to count me as invisible...

But after a few moments of breathing hard, Eugene Fitzherbert surprises even himself by being a better man than a dozen other princes.

He, for one, with widening eyes, touched by Rapunzel's sweet golden heart, clearly sees the pain of extreme loss plainly visible on the auburn, sideburned face, as brokenhearted Hans closes his eyes, resigned to his ill-fate for all eternity, fully prepared to have his outstretched neck broken by Flynn's rightfully outraged powerful hands.

I'll not find the other half of me where I'm going... But I deserve where I'm headed. Farewell, my beautiful Snowflake...

"Maybe... Elsa still needs you to do one last thing in her place. Maybe she needs us both to work together to do it. Then we can kill each other after that. Deal?" Flynn senses Hans' sincere remorse and the extent of emotion he would expect from a forlorn lover, the thought that Elsa once cared for him softens his irate heart. Rather than being the instrument of his doom, Flynn plays the role of the encouraging older brother that Hans never had. He even scruffles Hans' still wet shock of hair with his hand rather than strangle or crack his neck.

"Deal..." Hans faintly responds at the mere mention of Elsa's name. His blood drained body and disturbed consciousness, along with his broken, perplexed and very, very sorrowful heart, finally slips fully away again. Her beautiful eyes followed every thought as his depressed devastated head sinks down to the dirty floor, once again passed out.

"Oh, Eugene, I love you! Thank you...!" Rapunzel jumps up from her sitting in a fetal ball position on a bucket in the corridor to forcefully hug her freed magnanimous guy in gratitude and love for his hidden inner goodness shining through, though the tears for Elsa were still running down her cheeks.

"Oww..." Flynn's stabbing conscience begged to differ as he too indeed feels the sting of his iced, frostbitten arm. It was a vivid reminder of the strong, magic-blessed woman, whom they had just lost. He now wishes the benevolent queen had unleashed all of her powers to do away with this 'underhanded, useless scrap heap' of an orphan boy turned aspiring man who had delusions of being a prince of thieves.

Queenie, I'll get back your kingdom's St. Olaf orb and stop whatever this monster of a pirate captain has plans to use it for, even if it's the last thing I do. I'll right this mess I made... for you... and those gorgeous gams I'll never have the pleasure of seeing again, Beautiful.

Flynn holds his weeping wife close to his chest, feeling her warm tears soaking straight into his heart.

"She was so young and graceful and good! What am I going to tell Anna?" Rapunzel whispers to her husband in grief for her gracious and dignified cousin who had undertaken this dangerous adventure without aid from her own countrymen — for their safety.

"Why are you crying, Rapunzel? Isn't having Flynn-er-Eugene out of his cell a happy thing? Isn't he hugging you right? I'm sure Anna would approve — she likes warm hugs from everybody." Olaf, in his naivete, once again with a silly grin up at them, guesses wrongly a woman's reason for tears.

"Olaf, I'm gonna tell you something that'll hurt your feelings, but Elsa would want you to be strong, okay? Promise me, you're not gonna fall apart or anything, okay?" The healing flower who
was Rapunzel, extends her golden heart out even for this funny little snowman friend as she kneels to the ground, searching for the right comforting words to inform the simple snowperson of his Queen — no, his childhood friend's — death…

"Elsa's not coming back with us to Arendelle." Rapunzel starts, trying to be gentle.

"Why not?" But in his straightforward, non complex way, Olaf would make it no easy task to do.

"Because she's…she's—" Rapunzel's big watering green eyes dart up to her Eugene's for help here.

"—because sadly, your beautiful lady has met with an unfortunate demise today." With a long sigh, he offers, not scoffing for once at the black balaclava wearing snowman, blinking his dark eyes up at him in artless wonder.

"Ohh, that sounds awful." Olaf comments idly, nodding his head up and down as if in total understanding.

"What does the word 'demise' mean, exactly?" He suddenly asks. Pascal slaps his own intelligent head and rolls his eyes in his shaking, sad now blue scaly head.

"Dead, Olaf. 'Demise' is the polite term for just 'dead'." Flynn answers bluntly. This beating around the bush caused more pain for his little wife's emotional state than necessary.

"Ohhh, okay." Olaf answers with a comprehending smile beneath his carrot to this sobering news.

"Why do you think so?" Olaf adds an extension to his normal query. His eyes were wide and curious up at the frustrated couple and their chameleon, who shakes his head again and turns purple.

"Olaf…I know it's hard to grasp right now. But Elsa has been drowned in the ocean. She's gone." Rapunzel chokes out the end of her regretful comment, and puts her head into Eugene's welcoming chest.

"O-okay. I got it now." Olaf repeats himself as Flynn, Rapunzel and Pascal all wonder at his total lack of sorrowful emotion for his friend and sovereign's loss.

Shaking their heads in passing amazement, the married couple start to move back to be in planning their next strategy without her.

"But if Elsa were dead and gone, so would I be." Olaf concludes succinctly as he begins following them in his normal pleasant waddle.

"Olaf! What did you just say?!" Rapunzel immediately spins around and falls to her knees to be at eye level with the uncomplicated snowman. She shakes his shoulders.

"But if Elsa were dead and gone, so would I be." Olaf literally repeats in all honesty.

"Why?!" Rapunzel, quizically confused, but a glimmer of hope begins to shine in her green eyes.

"Because Elsa made me with her powers and she has to constantly keep me alive all through the year with those powers." He answers with a knowing smile.

"How?" Flynn questions suspiciously, but he was catching on to the hopeful jive alight in his wife's eyes.

"With my personal snow flurry over my head, of course! It's still there right now. See?" Olaf
"Oh! Hood." He pulls off his black hood to reveal the previously hidden cloud, still as yet emanating, steady and strong, snowflakes down over him, to keep the snowman in any weather at a constant below zero temperature all the time.

"So I would just melt if something really happened to Elsa. You guys were just trying to scare me, right? You foreigners!" A condescending Olaf begins babbling and chuckling at their naivety when it came to snowmen and Norway's Queen.

"You guys really don't know anything about Elsa, do you?" Olaf chuckles at their exchanged astonished looks as they wipe tears from their eyes to reveal smiles of hope and joy.

A raucous Flynn lifts a laughing Rapunzel straight off the ground and spins her around in the air before the happy pair settle into one another's delighted embrace at the startling news of Cousin Elsa's 'un-demise.'

"That gal's full of surprises." Flynn says with a proud smile.

"And warm summer magic buried beneath the cool winter ice!" Rapunzel tries to imagine what mystical travels her beautiful, sophisticated, compellingly fascinating pale blonde cousin was experiencing on her journey right now…

A pale young woman stands trembling with both fear and cold at the edge of her massively impressive exquisite ice palace's balcony. She was alone and shivering and the look on her gorgeous face was filled with hesitant anticipation as she steps out even further on the high ledge, as if to glimpse the tiny, trifling figure drawing imminently nearer beneath her snow capped horizon.

At first small, the singular dashing figure of a man astride a noble Fjord steed looms closer and closer as he races up the icy mountain as fast as the wind could take him to her. Inside his pounding heart, he sensed it was urgent and imperative that he reached the waiting woman quickly and at all costs.

Finally arriving at the glittering ice palace's stately long winding spiral ice staircase entrance, the handsome prince braves the ice whipped cold, gallantly dismounting his whinnying horse, as his own long legs fearlessly leap and bound two and three steps at a time up the dangerously fragile ornate staircase.

I must hurry! My Queen needs me — my angel of pure light.

The prince, whose determined eyes never strayed from gazing up to his love, runs and races upwards. The sparkle radiating from all around her slender body and in the form of her glorious song, wafts through the thin air down to his adoring ears, inspiring him to forge ahead despite the biting cold and thin atmosphere forcing him to take shallow breaths.

Once atop the long intricate staircase, never once looking back or down to its hundred foot or so drop amidst the endless lofty mountain heights, the prince raises his auburn head to call out to his
love, still serenading him with inviting luminous eyes from atop her royal balcony.

"Wait for me, my angel! I'm coming!" His tenor voice was as strong and sure as it had ever been. His flexing muscles then thrust open the large ornate double front doors to the palace, only to find a huge monster wearing a tiny gold crown to greet him inside.

The humongous fifty-foot 'Marshmallow' (as Olaf had so dubbed him) was the formidable snow creature's name who guarded the ice palace. It takes one look at the new intruder to the castle he was created to be protector of, and lets out a momentous, deafening roar of "GET OUT!"

But the courageous prince does not heed the frozen monolith's words. He brandishes his own well-trained broadsword and makes a wide, charging dive straight towards the angry creature's leg, immobilizing it instantly as he severs the snowy appendage completely.

*I feel as if I've done this before…*

His mind swirls with a cloudy memory as the snow monster comes crashing down in the stately ice palace's front anteroom.

But Marshmallow's arms were still attached enough to reach out and physically grab the attacking prince in large, massive hands — attempting to squeeze the life out of him.

Suddenly, the prince musters all his energy to slice and slash his way out of the ice monster's palm — shredding each finger to bits.

But each piece of ice falls to the palace's ice floor with crack after crack until there were so many crevices in the shattered floor that it begins to split apart.

The prince, in his adrenaline pumped fervor for survival, his quick, calculating mind spinning a mile a minute, utilizes the creature's own arm lifted in pain from losing its digits, to climb up it and use his sword to mercilessly behead the snow beast. His swift hands snatch the golden crown from its decapitated head before it tumbles down.

*FALL! Bang! CRASH!*

When poor Marshmallow's head is severed from his unsuspecting neck, its final baritone bellowed 'NOOOOOO!' reverberates throughout the entire palace as it rolls into the doors, breaking the delicate frames, ornate rafters and ice beams apart. The icy bodyguard's flailing body brings the remainder of the ice pillars, one by one, down like icy dominoes.

The prince looks around frantically at the destruction he'd caused the once beautiful, pristine, perfectly pure crystal castle. He races up to her balcony and with terrified, maddened eyes, he watches his magnificent angel be struck by icicles shattering from that same ice chandelier again as its translucent falling weight sheers the balcony itself straight off the icy second floor — and the ground disappears right beneath the frightened woman's feet.

She lets out a piercing scream as her hands reach up for him to rescue her.

"Prince Hans!" Elsa helplessly cries out for him, her heart in her hands that slip straight through his as if they were nothing more than an illusion.

Prince Hans rushes to the edge of the shattered crystalline ice palace and sinks to his devastated knees as he watches every piece of its delicate, intricately woven edifice defaced and obliterated at his ruthless hands.
"I've lost you again! Before I was able to tell you how I feel…Everything I touch is always taken away from me, because I annihilate all that is pure and good." He disdainfully sneers in contempt of himself as he gazes down to his hands where Queen Elsa of Arendelle's golden bejeweled crown, that he once desperately desired to possess, was still clutched within.

Though without her, it meant nothing to him anymore. Nothing at all.

But even the golden crown and all it symbolized disintegrates into the painful ethers of his derisory nightmarish delusion in his unconscious state of utter self-blame.

Hans' heart was in free fall now that he believed his Elsa's quintessential forgiveness was lost to him forever.

"Come home to me…Please…" Though his voice is lost in the chasm-less depths that had swallowed his tender new love wholly away from him, there was the faintest glimmer of light sparkling back up at him through the refracting endlessly spiraling snowflakes, offering the lovelorn man an inexplicable other worldly twinkle of hope...

I need you…Because you are the other half of me...

It was the one burning thought within Prince Hans as his consciousness slowly stirs awake...
"Mutiny of the Pearl Lady"

Act I

Chapter 12

\emph{Drip…drip…drip…}

The gentle snow that had flurried down over Prince Hans' lying prone form whilst he was in a state of unconsciousness begins to melt along his furrowed brow down to the perfectly curved line of his firm jaw.

The wetness begins to cascade along his well-born cheekbones until the snow droplets completely dissolve upon the heat of his tall, sharp nose and long noble chin.

\emph{Drip…drip…drip…}

"…Snowflake…" A dazed, depressed Hans whispers a fond diminutive for the woman he'd believed lost, that perhaps he could have cared for even more, as he awakens from a choked, disoriented dream. He is quickly snapped back to cold reality by the chilled particles of icy frost descending over his head.

"Actually, I'm a 'Snowman' or a 'Snowperson' if you like the non-gender personal sound better. I don't mind either."

The nearby voice that pleasantly continues to drone on astounds Hans as his groggy eyes flutter open—not to see a person talking, but rather the self-described 'snowperson' of a creature hovering close over his downed face.

"What manner of magic creature are you?" A wide-eyed Hans emerges from his depression to ask the happily humming snowman, who pauses in his peering down at the unconscious prisoner to return to his industrious weaving and braiding of a long ribboned cord from various patched together fabrics and ropes, with his strangely animated branchlike hands and wooden digits.

"Oh, pshaw! I'm not magic! Elsa made me! Just a working snowman named 'Olaf.'" Busy at his task, Olaf modestly states to Hans' quizzically evaluating eyes. The cogs spin furiously in Hans' intelligently astute head at the sentient being blinking back at him pleasantly.

"Olaf…?" Hans lifts his curious, aching head to stretch painfully beaten and whipped back muscles so he could get a better look at the living and talking and moving snowman close by with the private 'snow flurry' cloud still encompassing his elongated head.

"Queen Elsa made you…? So, if you're still maintained alive—then she yet lives! \textit{Ergh-!}" In his jubilant excitement, Hans attempts to leap to his ecstatic feet as he cries out the realization logical to his swift mind. The immense injuries to his wounded back and shoulder areas cause him to just about be able to sit up instead, as he places dauntless hands around the snowman's rounded upper torso, not flinching at the icy cold touch one bit.

"Where is she?! Can you draw an inference to her location with your ice capabilities? I will go to the ends of the earth to make certain she is safe!" Hans ignores the pain to shake poor Olaf senseless (even more so than usual) in search for a hopeful, positive response to his impassioned,
wild-eyed plea.

_Blink, blink._

"Do I draw an 'inference' with a pencil - or a crayon, maybe? What does it look like? I love artwork, and paints, and pastels—are'nt I a good artist, Cousin Rapunzel?" Just about managing to keep his head piece attached, Olaf once again diverges on his own amiable tangent, raising his voice to call across the cell and around the corner to where he knew the small girl was diligently making use of her own hands in constructing another ingenious article honed in her new 'workshop' boiler room that Hans had alerted Elsa of, what seemed a lifetime ago.

"Olaf…? Is he awake?" Whispered in a squeak, a brown, short-cropped head peeks out from around the corner. "Remember, Eugene told you to be quiet while he was gone…!" Rapunzel rushes across the brig with the result of her newly finished work still strapped to her. The anxious whisper, as she patters up to berate the loud-mouthed snowman, who promptly zips his mouth shut again pleasantly, told of the intense worry of her harried heart.

"Eugene…?" He intuitively knew that the girl was referring to the man introducing himself as 'Flynn Rider.' But Hans' smooth voice seemed to catch on the name as his eyes begin to ponder under a deeply thoughtful brow.

*Focus, man…*

He shakes his naturally inquisitive subconscious back to return to the more pressing moment at hand.

"Oh, yeah…Eugene's my husband. My name's Rapunzel. I'm Elsa's cousin. Are you feeling a little better…Hans…?" The empathic girl doesn't heed good old Eugene's words herself as Rapunzel recklessly dashes straight into the prisoner's cell where Olaf had carrot lock-picked the final singular padlock her master thief (who was getting too darn used to playing with those blasted hasp and staple chain linked locks) had left to keep the passed out man contained.

In her mind, the scene from just twenty minutes ago replays—how Eugene had handed her his treasured lock pick set that she had been fastidious in learning his tricks of the trade for fun on afternoons spent together in their blissful marital castle life.

_'Just in case, Blondie.'_*

Attached to a rather intense, lasting kiss with one last uncertain glance at the other man lying on the cell floor, Eugene had murmured to his doe-eyed wife, who had fearfully trembled at the thought of him going above deck as dusk was falling.

His intent was to first retrieve Arendelle's stolen treasure and vindicate himself in poor Elsa's unseeing eyes, then overpower the Captain and his first mate to commandeer the ship just as the 'Pearl Lady' was to set anchor and they would be taken by surprise.

But since Rapunzel 'technically' didn't have to utilize her newly trained lock picking skills to unlatch the cage that Olaf's carrot had opened for her, the guiltless Rapunzel didn't see much deceitful wrong in disobeying her hubby to this degree.

Besides, she had a back up plan of her own that would involve Elsa's 'ex-lover' as her fertile imagination, bolstered by Eugene's first hand observation of the 'couple's' first reunited, volatile kiss, believed to be face.

"Never mind me. We must disembark from this vessel and locate Queen Elsa whilst halting this
pirate in his insidious plot to ravage her country's holy treasures."

"Wow~! You're good! I can see why Elsa likes you!" With a pleased eye up and down Hans' exposed chest, Rapunzel smirks at how ardent and zealous her tall cousin's former love interest still was.

*If she had any idea...*

Hans' eyes glance down sheepishly at her inferred meaning, causing her to think his handsome face cute and sweet all at once.

Rapunzel touches the gauze strips she had applied to his bloodied back earlier, and removes them as she reaches for the roll of first-aid bandages she and Pascal had newly made out of the remainder of Eugene's sliced up shirt.

*I love it when you go all hairy bare-chested...!*

She wraps the kerosene-oil dipped 'ribbons' around another fine specimen of a man's torso.

"Now, this might hurt..." Rapunzel bites her own lip as a non-vocal Olaf aids her in covering Hans' multiple, wide-open back and shoulder wounds with her homemade homeopathic treatment. (Medicine was another venue for filling in her idle, free time when Eugene was sleeping in.)

This spunky Princess may have lost her powers to heal, but the compassion to try to relieve others' pain was undiminished.

Hans grunts manfully as the sugared kerosene and rum tincture seeps into each freshly opened wound. Rapunzel softly hums her familiar chant as she administers both bandages and gentle caresses. Although the music had little effect anymore, it just felt 'right' to sing to make someone in pain feel better.

"As I said, never mind me." Hans finds the wide-eyed, cute woman's mercy for a stranger quite touching, though he was man enough now not to require this degree of mollycoddling.

"Okay... Eugene thinks the ship is docking soon and was worried the pirates would have more minions on land when we arrive, and he'd lose the chance to get the Orb back. So he's up there now, alone, fighting those pirates. Please...maybe you can help? I have an idea." Rapunzel stops her fussing over the injured man to return her fidgeting fingers to the work she had wrought.

Hefting himself up to his black-booted knees at her feet with a silent prayer for fortitude and uncommon strength, Hans breathes in deeply, imaging a platinum blonde head in his mind. Every bit of his stamina is tested when the man's slim, muscular form rises the rest of the way, to his tall six-foot-two stature. But there was a proud glisten of a crystal beauty aglow in his chivalrous, determined eyes that could never turn down a lady's request again.

"I am at your service, Madam." Hans gazes with curiosity at the most interesting article in the young woman's proffered hands and just as eager hopeful eyes, pleading up at him.
So, how about that for impeccable timing?!

Flynn Rider inwardly congratulates himself for his fortuitous, sly, unobserved entry into Captain Houtebeen's unoccupied stateroom. The 'former' cunning thief had been lucky enough to just narrowly escape being seen by either the Captain or Job's keen eyes when he surreptitiously snuck onto the cabin deck by ducking into the corridor's shadowy corner as they were heading up to the main deck.

Now where could that blasted Orb of yours have gotten to, Queenie? I know we copied the map from it, so why would he want it still?

Eugene's mind was whirring as fast as his slippery hands were rifling through the aged seaman's desk and drawers. His curious digits just graze over a rather interesting item within the pirate desk's hidden wares.

Damn…! He's probably got the thing in his grimy hands…Well, this'll help, I hope.

Thief Flynn's crafty hands purloin more than one of the desk's contents to stash away in his pants' pockets.

At least good old Sideburns didn't carve them to shreds like he did my poor shirt! Brrrrr…! It really cools down once the sun starts setting up here in the north!

Rubbing his hands together, the shirtless man displays his chilled, yet buffed, muscular chest, deducted of his slit open tunic by his ingenious little wife's industrious ideas.

Flynn was by no means a seafaring man. But Flynnigan Rider, the valiant adventurer he once modeled his life after, had picked up more than a few pointers on traveling the world and reading the compass—even a nautical one—whose inner ring beneath the bowed out type ball lens operated much the same as a regular land compass. It rather worked off degrees gathered on the hatch marks on it that corresponded to different locations on the nautical map amply displayed across the pirate captain's desk.

After all, using a nautical compass was largely a math problem—subtracting or adding the magnetic north variations to the true north map readings to pinpoint the desired location.

And if nothing else, gold coin collecting Flynn Rider excelled at adding numbers together—especially when it came to adding his money.

Glancing at the nautical map rose's outer ring, Flynn quickly determines which direction was true north and, on swift inspect of the inner ring, it shows him where magnetic north was, on the map that was pinned to the desk with an oh-so-fitting pirate's knife stuck in it.

It was jutting out over the eerie skull and crossbones 'x' marking the approximate spot with the number on the direction variation targeted at that particular due location about 63 degrees latitude east and 10 degrees longitude north.

Flynn quickly multiplies the shift on the chart by the number of years on the map to determine the shift on the current year. His agile mind figures out the course on the map's degrees and hatches outlined on the nautical compass' declination in mere seconds, for the orientation's nearest cardinal direction.

"Okay, here's where the nutty pegleg's heading is, according to that Orb-ie map he drew up. Better write it down for Rapunzel to tell the authorities later, in case…I don't make it."
Eugene swallows hard as he scribbles down rough map arrows to landmarks as he copies the unfamiliar names of Norwegian towns foreign to his native tongue and sticks the paper downwards, expectantly sure, to which Pascal, who had been secreted in his boot cuff all the while, scurries up Flynn's long, muscular leg to retrieve the paper. With a two fingered salute up at the smirking male, the chameleon rushes back down to his boot cuff hiding place to stash the note before racing back up again.

"You ready then, frog?" The dark brown haired man glances out the corner of his eye to the lizard alighting on his shoulder as Pascal gives him a thumbs-up supportive reply. His bulgy eyes were slit in resolution, while his able tongue was ready and willing as he watches Rapunzel's wedded thief of a lover back his way out the cabin door and slink down the hall towards the main deck's looming darkness.

As Flynn slowly and stealthily creeps up the ramp to the forward deck, he produces from the shirt tied satchel of his 'arsenal' slug around his lower waist and hips—his favorite choice in weaponry. He steels himself in this one-man force, about to commandeer the pirate ship. Flynn recognized that the element of surprise was of the absolute, utmost importance if he alone was to overtake both lunking strongman of a first mate and his well-armed pirate Captain.

And a little luck never hurt brave hearts or fair ladies...or some catch phrase like that.

But Flynn Rider did not usually possess that particular four letter word.

The shirt he had just stolen from the galley, which he now used as a thin fabric satchel he'd hurriedly tied together after stuffing it chock full of all the knives, forks and weaponable cutlery that he had procured from the kitchen before leaving the below decks for higher adventure above. Of course, it chooses this dislodged sneaky moment to develop a small tear from one of the pointier, steel knives, resulting in a decidedly loud—

Clink...chik...CLANG! BANG!

Of all the kitchen tableware to come clattering down, announcing poor, unlucky Flynn's attempt at covert arrival, it had to be that one.

"And vat might ye be zinking ye're doing wiz zat frying pan, ye dirty bilge rat?" The old pegleg that Flynn was stealthily trying to sneak up to and subdue with said frying pan, in the dusky darkness of sunset's end curve around the horizon, spins around from the forward helm of the ship's bridge.

"Ohh, yeah! This...! Just checkin' to see if you guys were up for an evening snack! Snack!" Flynn Rider's smooth-talking idea of a 'snack' was more of a 'smack' as he expertly wields his cast iron weapon of choice to trip the aged pirate's long wood leg until both collapsed unceremoniously to the deck plants.

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His thieving hands cunningly zero in on precisely where the Orb was hidden in the smelly pirate's upper inside jacket pocket. Eugene ducks his head to the side, just in time, as Pascal lets out a mighty high-pitched squeal directly in his ear, to alert his 'partner' that the more formidable first mate had left his post at the ship's wheel to come barreling towards them, anger and violence to come evident on his dark face, along with a wicked right hook on his fist, that just misses connecting powerfully with Flynn's intended head by mere milliseconds.

"Watch the nose, Big Guy!"
After an intricate series of impressive bobbing and weaving techniques to hold off the mightier, bigger man, Flynn throws his trusty frying pan up with a forward thrust as Job's fist, with now profusely bleeding knuckles, holds back a wince.

"You should just see your fa—!"

The man evolves but never learns. His arrogant taunting mouth foretold his own downfall yet again, as Flynn Rider hears the deafening click of a revolver's hammer dropping so close to his ear that his terrified temple begins throbbing as wild, fearful eyes follow its source.

"Ye make another wrong move, Thief, and me unsteady trigger finger may just shake a wee bit too much for yer skull to stay intact." Captain Houtebeen had managed to get himself up to rejoin the fray. His yellow toothed mouth sneers evilly at a gulping Flynn, as he follows as motioned and lets go of his frying pan, as the pirate slaps it out of his hand.

"Who's moving?" Eugene squeakily taps into his feminine voice yet again. Houtebeen cackles at how yellow-bellied this tall, strapping lad could be in a crisis.

"Too bad. I smelled zere may be ze makings of a pirate in ye. Me haves zis lily-livered lad, Job. Ye get back to anchoring ze Pearl Lady at zat port up yonder."

"Aye, Cap'n." Job obeys, flexing his injured fist directly in front of Flynn's cringing face as the dark-skinned shipman passes by with a snide snicker on his features.

"Now, I'll be takin' back zat St. Olaf's Orb, zat rightfully be mine—since ye stole it fer me, fairly and squarely. Ye ain't p'raps considerin' goin' back on zat rest of ye word of helpin' a poor old seadog on one last adventure, are ye, Rider? Because if ye were recantin', zen all bargains are off on me side, as well, zen. T'would be a pity for yer precious Prussian parents—I could be sendin' out word through me seafound connections and it'll all be over and done wit in two days' time."

Eugene's widened eyes at the pirate's deadly threat, close again in resigned compliance. Though they weren't his own blood, this orphan boy was taken in by the benevolence of King Friedrich IV of Prussia and his queen, Arianna, Rapunzel's good and kind parents. He couldn't dare put them in any danger if there was anything he could about it with his worthless thieving skills and false reputation.

After all, it was only through his beautiful Rapunzel and her wonderful family that the discarded youth, turned loner man, had found a place to be loved and belong.

Was that—?

The gun still trained to head, Eugene's dismayed gaze could've sworn he'd caught the glimmer of a pair of certain green-tinted moonbeams that he was all too familiar with. In restrained silence, they seem to reach out to him across the upper deck in the now pitch dark of night.

He squints, then shakes his head at the same time as he tries not to give away any notice to either pirate, as the ship steers close to the shore.

Keen Pascal's sudden squirreling down Flynn's leg to retrieve the hidden note in his boot cuff, as he leaves his side, signals to the highly anxious Eugene that some new twist to his already unlucky, foiled at commandeering the ship plan was underway, under the cover the moonless night's darkness.
Then, Pascal's big soulful eyes blink up at him twice before he scurries to the opposite end of the pirate ship's deck and disappears into the now super short-haired girl's hands.

Across the way, Rapunzel was about to run to Flynn who was busy giving her warning eyes. She frantically wanted to save him, but a taller, lean figure holds her back in the darkness.

"Does ze cat have ye tongue, boy?"

"Yes! I mean, no. I mean, yes, I will, absolutely help you." Flynn tries to stall for time and cover up the decided 'splash' sound at the aft of the vessel, confounding the confused pirate with his muddled words as he watches the statuesque shadow across the dark deck place a shushing finger to the smaller figure's lips, before physically lifting her form over the side rail and letting go.

"NOOO!" Though a loaded revolver was being held to his head, there was nothing more frightful to this loving husband than to be helpless in seeing his little wife being tossed over the edge of the ship like a sack of potatoes by a man he knew more and then less about each time he encountered him.

It all had to come down to trust and cohesion in the end, on both men's part, if this crazy scheme was ever going to succeed.

"Well, which is it, Flynn Rider? Make up ye mind before I blow it to kingdom come! Do ye join us willingly or not?" With the ultimatum, Captain Houtebeen gives one final click of the pistol's hammer. It was now totally at his finger's discretion if Eugene Fitzherbert was to live or die on this fateful night…

"Yes! I am one hundred percent READY!" With a deep, bellowing voice, in obvious signal, Flynn cries out so loudly, it disorients both pirate and first mate, who was listening in carefully at the helm.

It seemed Flynn had a partner in crime who, taking his cue, chooses this moment to dash his long legs across the Pearl Lady's deck in a record-setting wink, utilizing speed and momentum combined with innate quick thinking on his feet agility to simultaneously scoop up and hurl yesterday's discarded rutabaga, still on the deck floor, and launch it to directly connect with the back of Job's unaware head. The dark man sinks to the ground in an unceremonious heap, while at the same time, the shadowy figure grasps one of the sharp carving knives his honed years of kitchen skills made him master at wielding, to thrust with precise aim, the blade into the steering column—so exactly embedded in the wooden wheel, it could no longer move freely.

He then sets his gallant sights on the pair of sailing canvas. Hans then climbs up the mast and, with a fearless fluid flip through the air, slices his way down the sail to fully handicap the ship. The plummeting sail canvas deflates as he uses a sharpened grating tool to raze across their roped riggings. The loosened sails and slackened mast abruptly halt the vessel's progress to shore.

"Ha ha! Now the shoe's on the other foot!" As for Eugene, he does his part with flourish. Using the moment's chaotic sail and mast unraveling to yank his own head back to safety, he takes advantage of the pirate's momentary inattention to not only triumphantly use his thieving fingers to clasp around the Orb once again, but also kicks the old pegleg out from beneath the pirate. Houtebeen loses all balance as Flynn ingeniously employs the large piece of shredded sail that fell his way (that guy sure loves to slice up fabric!) to wrap around the old pirate like he was a strawberry pastry roll. His bright, flaming red hair stuck out one end with one furious eye just visible when Flynn was done 'mummifying' the dizzy man in the white textile.

"Hah! How's that for some good teamwork! Hey, you and me'll be pretty rich roaming the
countryside together, good lookin'! After you take a few more lessons from the expert, you might turn out pretty darn good, kid!” Flynn bolsters himself.

With a salute and suave smirk back down at Eugene, a gracefully athletic Hans begins to descend. His long-legged muscular body comes down from his lofty high-wire act of climbing masts of cutting down the two canvas topsails that he had personally gaff-rigged, once upon a athwart time.

After all, Hans Westergaard's proud service in Denmark's Royal navy had taken up most of his earlier life's vocation, until Arendelle and now Queen Elsa appeared in his life—

**B-B-BANG!**

The stark, deafening noise in the crackling air, in the pitch darkness was ear-splitting from where Eugene stood on deck. His head snaps around to look down to the origin of that sound with horrified eyes to see the black hearted Captain Houtebeen had not been constrained thoroughly enough in his wrapping. Flynn had forgotten, in his proud haste, to secure the revolver that had been trained on his stupid noggin from the lying prone but facing upwards, elderly pirate's still loaded gun in his secreted beneath the sail hands.

Captain Houtebeen's one good eye had managed to pull off a perfect shot with deadly aim at Hans Westergaard's chest, hitting it accurately right on the mark where his heart would be, beneath all those black bandages.

Everything was in slow motion now for Eugene as he, frozen in shock, watched the lithe, mysterious young man that he had forged some sort of strange affinity for in their short time together and who had come to his aid and rescue just moments before, be struck down by the pirate's unforgiving bullet directly in his bandaged chest.

The man begins his plummet downward from the lofty height of the sail he had scaled from one of the double masts he had been perched upon in the dark of this darkest night…

…as Flynn Rider's hero.

"I'm sorry, kid. We would've been good together." Flynn dashes and dives to catch Hans' thin, though muscular, falling form from hitting the harsh deck.

But the younger man was no longer breathing by the time he had flopped into Flynn's arms. There was blood oozing freshly from his chest, right where his heart would be, beneath the already strapped black bandages around his previous back injuries.

"You patch eyed bas-!" Rocked with raw emotion he couldn't quite explain, Flynn yells out the foul curse, turning to stomp with vengeance on the downed, wrapped up Captain for killing the other man.

But Captain Houtebeen was no longer where Flynn had left him tied up. Neither was Job yet unconscious on the helm's planks, the victim of Hans' expertly hurled vegetable attack.

"Ye'd better do as yer told or the same fate'll befall ye, t'ief." They weren't there because they were standing directly behind him.

Flynn catches a glimpse of his own frying pan, as Job's strong arm wallops his skull mercilessly with it.

And Flynn sinks to his knees with Hans' lifeless body still clutched in his arms as the world goes dark and swirling about him.
"Adrift"

Act I

Chapter 13

The befreckled orange haired girl closes her eyes hard as she tries to soak in every last ray of sunlight of the waning sunset playing copper tones on her head over this northwest section of her home country of Norway.

She had never traveled this far north before. Heck! She had never traveled much further than Arendelle, save for that fateful journey to bring Elsa home and save their kingdom—their home—from the Eternal Winter of 1849.

And then there was the honeymoon.

Oh! Those glorious five days of wedded bliss, with just herself and Kristoff and Sven (Mostly Kristoff—Sven always wandered off at opportune moments.) that had taken Anna back along the route she and her new husband had first traveled and met and fell in love with one another upon that adventure two years ago—when she had nearly died to save her beloved sister.

And she would do every bit of it over again in a split second, without a single, solitary otherwise thought.

_Okay, maybe minus the mistakenly falling for that smooth-talker, good looking Mr. Westergaard._

Anna wrinkles her cute little nose at the sour thought of that rotter ne'er do well roiling about in her head.

_What a jerk! Why did I think I liked him?! Why am I even wasting a thought on him now?! He's not a sweetie pie at all, like my big, cuddly bear, Kristoff._

Anna, despite being on her best, most serious behavior, still couldn't hold back a delirious drool for her rugged, muscle-bound fella, as she peeks one shut eye open over the back of his head where he sat in the sled's driver front seat.

_Sigh…Isn't even the back of his head so manly…? And butter-fully gorgeous…? Sigh…_

Princess Anna obviously didn't agree with the trolls here about him being an 'un-manly blonde'.

"Has it been ten minutes yet, Anna?" Elsa's high-pitched, anxious voice belied her impatience to return to her own new adventure that Anna was only made half-aware of the whole story along this day-long trip so far.

Elsa had carefully explained, in much detail, all the ins and outs of the secret mission's goings on — from Eugene's thievery of Arendelle's holy treasures to herself and Rapunzel's disguises as males to board Captain Rustung's Valborg craft, to locating the pirate ship and covertly boarding it — only to be unsanctimoniously thrown off into the ocean where some under the sea magic she couldn't explain saved her life. Every little detail of Rapunzel, Pascal, Olaf, and her own incredible, exciting and dangerous foray on the high seas she told them about as explicitly as she could recall.
Although Kristoff, who was all the while keenly listening from his quiet station as designated sled driver to Elsa's far flung, stimulating tale and a glued to the pulse pounding tale Anna's intrigued peppering of questions, had a sneaking suspicion at each of the queen's stories' exciting twist and turns that a vital piece of the puzzle was being left out.

And that causes him some concern, for as he had personally found out these past two years, living very close quarters to them and visiting every second of day practically, no pair of sisters could be more honest, open or closer with one another than Anna and Elsa of Arendelle.

*I wonder what she's holding back now. And why? I wonder if Anna noticed…*  

"Whoa!"

*Guess not.*

Kristoff exchanges a glance with quizzical Sven who obeys his driver's 'whoa' command and pauses his trotting ride when a closed eyed Anna out of nowhere, suddenly leaps up to maul a startled Kristoff from the backseat she and Elsa were sharing a lounge back to soak up the last of the sun's warmth for tonight after the thrilling storytime was over.

"Ummm…Nah, it hasn't been ten minutes yet, has it, Kristoff?" Anna had even less sense of time than she had decorum, as even the sinking sunset disagrees with her wacky inner clock.

"It's actually been twenty minutes." Kristoff struggles through Anna's pawing arms around his be-crystaled troll necklace neck as he gives a glance to the watchpiece attached to it that some Swiss Archduke royal had given to he and Anna as a wedding present.

"Anna, I thought I felt the sun no longer on my face." A smirking reprimanding Elsa opens her voluminous eyes, their daily 'sunning' as Anna so dubbed the nutritional Vitamin D rich warmth, for both sisters' body and soul regiments, was long over.

"Oh, yeah. Oops! Sorry, Elsie, but we both needed a proper recharge." As boisterous baby sister Anna snaps open both her smiling eyes up at Kristoff's bemused turned face, she lands a smack lipped kiss on his cheek, causing him to blush deeper than the cranberry to crimson streaks tracing the dusky sky.

She honestly had no idea what her silly name game was doing to her elder sister's heart.

For the last person to call her that affectionate, albeit 'cowlike' diminutive could be in grave danger on that pirate ship, even as she and Anna were speaking frivolously right now.

And that frightening though upset her more greatly than she dared to imagine it would.

"Kristoff, how long until we arrive at the ship's dock?" Her tone all business, Elsa could look Kristoff in the eye now that she was wearing one of Anna's more modest dresses befitting a regal queen, though 'reindeer king' Kristoff had quite a lot to live down in his own disrobed early morning embarrassment.

Without even turning to face her, with pants securely pulled on, the big, burly blonde bashfully blushes before blowing breath between his lips in a low whistle.

"I'd say, at least another full day's travel to get to the far north port of Trondheim. It's almost 200 kilometers north of here. But the Kristiansund port that's not quite so…busy, is only a five hour trip for Sven—maybe even four hours or less if we take off some of the excess weight from the sled." Kristoff calmly states, his ice cutting vocation making it his business to know where the pertinent
ports for travel and shipping goods and services along the Norwegian coastline.

"Great! Here you go, Sven." Headstrong Anna jumps up at her husband's words of wisdom, beginning to randomly chuck over the side of the sled some 'excess weight' in the form of wedding presents, clothes, and a great deal of—save for the last remnants of kransekake cake. of course—the remainder of their already dwindled food supplies without a second thought.

"What?! Anna, wait! Our clothes! Oh, not the food supplies, too!" Conservative Kristoff, in total frustration laments his gung-ho wife's thoughtlessness of essential future needs.

"It's all gotta go! Gotta make the sled lighter for Sven." She scoffs in Kristoff's face as he is only able to salvage one bag full of change of clothes.

*Thank goodness this one's got the clean underwear!*

And a day or two of immediate supply of food for now the three of them.

"Don't worry, I kept all of Sven's carrots. We've gotta keep him fully fueled so he can keep going, fast! Step on it, Sven!" Anna calls forward, as the obedient reindeer knew who was boss on this royal ice deliverer's sled by now, Day Five.

"Does this weigh much?" Anna pauses her tossing away anything unnecessary in her inexperienced eyes, chucking valuable ice and mountain climbing tools stored in the back hatch of the official 'Ice Harvester's' sled overboard with abandon, much to Kristoff's head-holding chagrin, to ask Elsa's opinion on his lute guitar.

Elsa was amused at her little sister's feisty personality that would jump recklessly headfirst into any dangerous situation if someone she loved asked her to.

And she loved no person more in this world than her sister—her hero, her forever friend.

Kristoff gives a relieved sigh as Queenly Elsa bestows her shaken head to halt his poor musical instrument's flagrant death sentence disposal out the sled door by the cavalierly heedless girl he now claimed as his headstrong—and at times, foolhardy—wife, who was always impetuously spontaneous in her love for others.

And that's why he loved her all the more.

"Okay, we're pretty emptied out back here, Sven. So move out, big fella. Port Kristiansund, ho!" Crawling over the front seat, and leaning over it like a madwoman with eyes wild, Anna sings out merrily, thoroughly enjoying the taste of adventure again—a bit too much in Kristoff's lovestricken eyes, as holding on for dear life, he gently reaches back to secure Elsa in her backseat with the ingenious new 'strap belt' he invented for Anna's reckless driving, to hold down any poor passengers or precious cargo when his girl was at the helm.

He then physically lifts his enthusiastic new partner who was squirming rebelliously, back over the sled divider she had clambered over, to strap her in the backseat as well at the sled's over 80 kilometers per hour high speed that most other 'delicate' females would cringe in fear at.

Elsa gives Kristoff a wan smile as he turns back to attend to Sven, for both knew that Anna was not one of those females.

For giggling Anna was the type of vibrant girl to embrace every moment—and sparkle in every second of its topsy-turvy path, to make everyone else's world around her shine a little brighter for the journey beside her pure energy as Sven picks up speed.
Elsa shares a grateful smile with her, glad she had finally come to the realization that she couldn't do this on her own. She needed her little sister/best friend more than the very air she breathed.

"Oh!" Losing all that breath, Elsa suddenly clutches at her chest. Her heart, her fingertips frost over at the extreme painful fear gripping her entire body. And it wasn't at all due to Sven's high speed trek.

"Elsa?! Are you all right?" Anna abandons her merry sled tossing overboard madness to, for once, sit down fully in the backseat beside her nearly convulsing sibling, after unstrapping herself. (Poor Kristoff bargained for a disobedient firebrand of a wife, it seemed.)

Anna wraps a protective arm around the paler girl, so struck with cold reverberating from inside her heart that there were puffs of icy smoke emanating from the ice queen's parted mouth, even on this warmest of summer nights.

"Elsa?! What's wrong?! It's okay—I'm here! I'm here! Feel the sun! Feel the sunshine!" Anna hugs her close, rocking Elsa back and forth with her own warmth until Elsa begins to calm down and her temperature begins to normalize.

"I don't know, Anna…but I'm scared. I don't know why. I'm so scared." She answers truthfully on Anna's compassion chest with icy tears forming in her eyes, as the older sibling gains strength and stability from her little sister's innate warmth against whatever cold fear just knocked on her heart's door. Anna hugs her all the tighter.

Glancing back at his rear view at the tender scene of sisterly love, Kristoff silently pulls Sven's reins in that certain way the intelligent reindeer understood to mean to race forward even faster than his already speeding 80 kmph towards their shoreline destination of Kristiansund and whatever chaos awaited them there…

"Helloooo? Helllooooo?! Helllllllooooooo?! Is anybody out there?" The voice emanating from within the metal aluminum canister bobbing up and down upon the sea's foaming waves was at first unsure and quiet, but it was growing even louder with every bellowed greeting hale from his frosty lips.

"Is anybody out there?! Oh no, no, no! I'm all alone! Boo hoo! 'Nobody loves me…' This is the end…'Nobody loves me at all…'" A crooning Olaf begins to feel claustrophobic in more ways than one as his gainingly full escape pod from his snow flurry was beginning to be less and less buoyant. The need for air was fortunately not an issue, so it was just the weight problem that Cousin Rapunzel did account for by someone having to be there to open the small pod's top hatch and scoop out the excess snow piling up about now.

"Ohh, somebody loves you, little one!" A sweet, melodic voice in her most maternal tone sings out the reply that Olaf had been dejectedly beginning to believe would never come to his frosty ears again. But the rocking waves beneath her small lifeboat that Hans had managed to lower earlier had caused an exhausted up all the anxious night before Rapunzel to be lulled into a sleep on the peaceful waves.

"I'm right here, Olaf. Shhhhh! I'll pull you in." Rapunzel utilizes the fabric rope lead she and Olaf
had been industriously braiding together for strength and had secured one end to his metal mini
craft, while the other end had been tied around Rapunzel's waist as if it were the long braid of hair
she had once upon a time ago, again.

She carefully tugs the handmade cord until Olaf's watertight floating device is close enough for her
to lift out of the water and into the small lifeboat that Hans had placed her in, with assurances that
the two members of the Pearl Lady would neither miss nor seek out the miniscule craft in the
darkness.

Besides, he stated he had plans to 'incapacitate' the vessel so they wouldn't be able to give chase,
even if it dawned on them to try.

Rapunzel had totally trusted the man with her life and with saving Eugene's life as well because she
sensed that Elsa cared deeply for him still, the romantist in Rapunzel believed. And caring on
one side was worth giving a second chance on the other.

Besides, he has pretty eyes...And a good chest...and a really, really tight backside...

Sorry, Eugene!...really...But I am a girl and I couldn't help but notice while I was bandaging him
up. I have to say Elsa's got excellent taste in men. I guess that runs in our family.

A dizzy Rapunzel tries to keep her thoughts light and fluffy, like her Eugene does, generally when
he was distressed.

Oh, Eugene! Please be safe! I hope I did the right thing sending Hans to help you. But it's always
better to have a friend when you're in trouble, right?

Her unsure uncertainty was trying to prove her earlier decision and the tall redheaded man's input
on her and Olaf's ship departure timing—not to mention his knowledge of the small lifeboat she
told him she knew how to row. After all she'd seen Eugene do it so many times at Corona's annual
Magic Lantern festival. How hard could it be to row a little boat?

After opening up Olaf's escape pod's secret door—for she was the one who designed it—and his
proud ice slurry cloud pops out, Rapunzel shoves her chilled hands in the overlay of snow packed
tightly and unburies the little snowman. She lifts him up and up, piece by piece and puts him back
together until Olaf was fully reassembled to stand in the lifeboat beside her.

"Okay, Olaf. There's the pirate ship we came from," Rapunzel begins to explain, pointing first to
the wobbly masted and canvas shredded Pearl Lady, where they could just make out the two
figures scurrying back and forth. Her wishful eyes hoped the rhythmically stumbling redhead was
Hans pretending to have developed a limp and Eugene the tall, tall dark one, who seemed to be
lifting a third body to toss overboard.

But deep inside, she knew it wasn't them.

No matter how hard I wish it to be...

"Job! It sickens me to look at him. Rid me ship of ze dead body weight of zat damnable double-
crossing fool, who took insufferable advantage of Houtebeen's goodly nature one time too many!
Me poor, poor Pearl! Did zat bad, naughty kloutzak hurt you, me lady?" From the short distance
she had managed to row from the disabled pirate ship, Rapunzel could just about make out the
ruthless captain's harsh raspy words as they cut through the still, moonless dark of night, while he
shouts multilingual curses too foul and course for a princess' shocked ears, even after five years
living beside a not always so smooth-tongued Flynn Rider and the oft-visited roughhousing gang at
the Snuggly Duckling, full of rugged men's language.

"Curses be upon ye dead rotting corpse, for ze betrayal, ye mangy cur! Davy Jones locker be too
good for ye, insolent silk-wrapped swine! Throw him overboard and have done with ze scoundrel!"
Houtebeen fiercely yells as he continues to stroke his beleaguered Pearl's handicapped mast and
carved up sails.

For her part, Rapunzel, with wide eyes wild with dread, rows as rapidly as she could back towards
the adrift vessel at breakneck speed.

"Aye, aye, Cap'n."

Continuing to row blindly towards the ship, Rapunzel watches the dark first mate lift the lifeless
man's body over the deck's edge in preparation to toss the traitorous miscreant overboard as per his
rapacious Captain's vicious orders.

In those few moments, Rapunzel could've sworn the large Caribbean native named Job directed his
big, soulful eyes across the dark waters squarely to connect with hers below in the solitary flicker
of the moonlight between the thick cloud cover. There was an inscrutable look of some small
degree of—was that compassion?—on his normally foreboding big brute of a man swarthy
features.

Rapunzel watches a surprisingly quick thinking Olaf, send his ice flurry cloud to frost coat the
small boat's front bow and keel so as to let the wooden craft slice more fluidly through the choppy
waters as they near the Pearl Lady's aft side. Job was just about to intentionally drop the young
man's still non-moving form not too many nautical yards from where Rapunzel and Olaf were
quickly rowing with all synchronized speed.

SPLASH!

"What of this one?" Job's low baritone could be heard bellowing above, where he prods an
unconscious Eugene's gut with the toe of his black leather boot.

"Houtebeen not be done wiz zis bilgeous blackguard yet. Prepare to disembark ze Pearl Lady, Job.
Me knows another route to our final destination wizout her, poor lass." Sensitive ears attempt to
listen in to the quieter conversation taking place on the ship's main deck, directly above her small
craft, as Rapunzel and her snowman partner silently try not to be noticed when they pull the
lifeboat alongside the floating facedown body, just tossed from above.

With a tearful, entreated prayer, the brown-haired girl reaches over the boat's edge to flip over the
faceless man who was floating on the dark waters surface…

"Oh!" She breathes a tiny sigh of relief when familiar fingers and blurry strained eyes, even in the
pitch darkness, sensed and felt it was not her beloved Eugene's body lying there, lifelessly within
her shaky grip, as she and Olaf, with Pascal's help, pull him in with the aid of the lasse rope they
had disattached from her waist ro go round him.

But her newfound relief was mixed with some anxiety. She hoped her own fanciful scheme worked
concerning this other brave man—for all their sakes.

Please, God, let it have worked!

Rapunzel literally goes down on her knees and prays, as she'd never prayed before, in the dark of
night in this small dinghy craft. Her eyes tightly clamp shut as preparations on the other side of the
Pearl Lady were noisily underway.
She and Olaf and Pascal, who had secured the knot around his underarms, with the braided rope, use all of their collective strength to pull in the fortunately slender, lean body of the man onto the bobbing craft.

Rapunzel holds her baited breath for all those terrifying seconds before she could let it out as she places a happy hand over her exuberant lips, so as not to yell out with joy.

"It worked! Oh, Elsa! It worked…! You're gonna be fine!" She whispers gleefully to her invisibly, non present cousin, as Olaf and Pascal exchange 'high threes' and hugs. Rapunzel unwraps Hans Westergaard's tightly tied black bandages to reveal the thick cast iron boiler door hatch that was still strapped firmly to his thin, muscular chest. His athletic build was so lean no one would be the wiser that the man was wearing a 'bullet safe' frontal vest.

The small amount of blood that had been spilt was from the impact of the pirate's revolver discharge on the iron's sharp edges striking Hans' upper chest. But the bullet was so far at a distance, that the velocity traversed was enough to only break the first few epidermal layers of his already beaten and battered torso upon impact.

But it rendered him unconscious from the shock—yet still alive... Rapunzel rubs his bare chest tenderly for circulation and warmth.

"We have to get him back to Elsa. I heard the pirates say they need still need Eugene, so we'll just have to catch up with them later, somehow, I hope."

Right on cue, Pascal produces the quick map that Eugene had drawn up for her.

"Good! We know where they're going. I just have to trust Eugene will be fine on his own."

\textit{You've taught me so much about being strong and independent, Eugene. I have to try hard to be tough and brave...like you always are...}

"Now, I have to focus on our new mission!" She gathers up the oar with a determined look on her face as she peeks around the Pearl Lady's stern to see Job loading the ship's larger 'away' crew boat with supplies and an unconscious Eugene as well.

"The pirates are abandoning their ship and are headed to the shore, so we can't go that way…" Doing everything she can not to scream out his name and race to help him, Rapunzel pulls herself together and away from her own tormented thoughts.

Olaf was luckily able to hang onto her every sparse word without guile or impatience, as he copies her example of petting and dabbing at Hans' unconscious bloody body with his cool numbing touch.

"Olaf, which way did Elsa go? Hans thinks you know." She asks hopefully, biting her lip that that man's instinct about Elsa was right—that Olaf would know which way his queen and friend and creator vanished to.

"Ummm…" Squinting his eyes, Olaf glances around in each compass direction and towards the shore before answering. He puts a licked finger up to the wind and closes his eyes before speaking.

"That way." His eyes sparkle snowflakes as his hands branch out wide towards the southeastern Norwegian sea and a port beyond the horizon as a cool breeze blows that way.

"All right! Then that's the direction we go." Rapunzel smiles at Pascal, trusting the snowman, as Olaf scurries to take the other oar, and skips right over Hans' poor beat-up injured chest that
Rapunzel had laid her head scarf over for some small protection against the cool night air and to dissuade the bleeding.

The eternally happy snowman then promptly begins to row and hum a happy tune.

"To sea we go! To sea we go!"

As with a heavy heart, Princess Rapunzel watches with teary eyes the two small boats - one containing herself, Pascal, Olaf, and now Prince Hans, the other holding her Eugene under the thumb of those wicked pirates - within the cover of darkness pull away from one another in entirely different directions towards the unknown future of the murky Northern seas she prayed they'd meet up again beyond its clouded horizon…
Kilometers and kilometers later, Sven finally gets a well deserved chance to catch his breath some three and half hours of nearly running nonstop, with only a few brief pit stops in between. (For water and carrot refueling stops and woodland tinkling for the sled driver that we did not need to hear about.)

His three passengers in varied stages of anxiety, apprehension and adventure, finally arrive at the deserted seaport of Grip at Kristiansund, located in the country's big northwestern section.

The port there was largely a fishing village, due to the fact that most of the municipality existed on a sprawling group of islands and an archipelago called 'Grip.' For hundreds of years, the population of fishermen of this backwater area had been treated as vassals who were forced to sell their ocean catch to inland merchants at fixed prices decided by the higher authorities.

But after the Great Storm Surges of 1635 had knocked out most of the small fishing community's housing and already beleaguered population, even that hard worked way of life on the cold ice fishing archipelago and nearby islands dropped, indeed, to practically nil.

In fact, after the Great Storm, one of the only buildings left standing in the scattered island village, beyond the red and white painted lighthouse towering over the port edge seabound entrance, was the Grip Stave Kirke—Grip's Stave Church, built on the island's highest peak.

Perhaps that was Providential intercedence that it would survive, for, with its single nave that stood only twenty feet high, this Church of Norway's modest Grip Chapel was one of the country's smallest shrines, and proved the Lord God Above smiles equally on the small as well as the large.

But with the sparse population that never returned after the seaside storm's devastation, not even a cemetery could be placed on the sacred church yard. The barren nature of the cold fishing center island nearly below sea level made anything underground, including farming or proper Christian burial of their deceased, impossible.

The dilapidated and weather worn Holy place was still in use in the summer season when every third Sunday, a visiting priest would arrive in the nearly deserted town to still hold Mass and pay his respects to the Lord at the Triptych altar, with its impressive sculptures of the Virgin Mary, Saint Olaf and Saint Maget. They had been gifts to the church from the Netherlands in 1520 after the Archbishop Valkandorf escorted Princess Isabella of Austria in the islands' bad weather to traverse it safely on her to her wedding with Danish King Christian II.

The Grip stave church also contained a small altar cup that dated back to Christianity's earliest days in Norway, placed at the altar near one of the two votive strips of candles. The other candles would sit directly in front of the altar where the three holy statues resided.

It was there, within the rough hewn wooden walls of the storm battered tiny church, under its one worn and leaking steeple, with a devout bowed head in reverence to any of God's holy shrines, Queen Elsa could be found lighting a candle as she humbly kneels to fervently pray for Divine
assistance on their journey, as if this stave church were the greatest, most ornate altar in her kingdom.

For in her pure heart, at this moment, it was.

*The Lord said it was the least among us who would inherit the earth and that the smallest mustard seed could move mountains. And if the smallest seed can move mountains, this little church will lift my prayer to Heaven, just as well as any cathedral back home.*

"Dear Lord Jesus, may you hold Cousin Rapunzel and Cousin Eugene safe and sound—and Prince Hans, as well. Please keep him in the palm of Your hand." Elsa murmurs her soulful plea with eyes closed tightly in deep deferential worship at the votive candle setting beneath the statues of St. Olaf and the Virgin Mary.

"Elsa? Did I just hear you say... 'Han'...?" A confused Anna chooses that inopportune moment to pop up at her praying sister's side.

"...keep them safe in the palm of Your HAND..." Elsa, in all truth, repeats the final sentence of her prayer, making sure that 'hand' sounded like 'Hans'. Her eyes glisten up at Anna, not wanting to cause her little sister any undue concern just yet. Especially none involving a certain auburn red-headed prince who broke her heart, once upon a fairytale ago. Besides, Elsa herself didn't quite know where to place Mr. Westergaard in her own convoluted heart at the moment.

"Oh, okay." All doubts quelled, trusting Anna hugs the back of her kneeling big sister's head to her chest, and plants a sweet kiss atop Elsa's platinum mane.

"Anna, we're in church." Elsa said with a smile. She wasn't as embarrassed as she was teasing of her sister's indomitable spirit and open affection.

"Yup, and God is love! I love you so much, Elsa! I'm really glad you came looking for me when you needed help. We can do anything if we stick together. We'll find Rapunzel and Eugene—I KNOW we will!" Anna boisterously proclaims in rather irreverent tones. In her boundless, reckless energy, she knocks down a row of the votive candles that Elsa had already lighted.

Anna rashes picks one up by the wick end. "Ouchie!" and in spontaneous overreaction, she even whacks poor St Maget's statue on her sainted nose.

"Oops! ...Sorry...!" Anna apologizes to the statue as she backs away, clumsily crashing into a few unsuspecting pews that rock unstably between the small kirke's shabby rough hewn walls.

"Can this poor, beat up old church take up much more of my wife before the whole building comes crashing down?" Kristoff Bjorgman's mellow voice seemed to enjoy saying 'my wife' by now, as he enters the somewhat dilapidated and weather worn holy shrine.

"Oh, wow! Looky at this ship! Ohh! And there's another one over there!" But Anna was Anna. She found joy in the little things as well as the big—the simple joys that most people were too jaded to marvel at anymore, much past the resplendent age of eight years old.

"Whoa, there, feisty pants!" Kristoff dashes long strides across the small church's interior to reach his girl when—not 'if'—*when* she came tumbling down from the rocking pews she was dangerously teetering upon to reach the wooden ship.

"Wouldn't Papa have loved this one?" Anna smiles brightly, though Kristoff could see the emotion for her lost parent's favorite hobby building up behind her moistening eyes.
And it was that same look reflected in Elsa's eyes, as the tall, stately Queen comes over, after resetting the lit candles in the votive strip at the altar (so as not to burn the old church down) to join them.

"Yes, it is a magnificent depiction of a galleon class schooner. Look how detailed its three masts and roped riggings are displayed." Elsa had spent far too many hours in her sheltered youth, alongside a naval father, with an innate love for the sea, for it not to have rubbed off more than a bit of nautical knowledge and ocean traveling fondness on herself.

After all, her sweet papa was made the Admiral of the entire Norwegian fleet the moment he was crowned king, but there was no place nor rank for a woman in the navy, circa 1841 — not even a royal Queen.

*Oh, Papa, I do miss you so!*

Reaching a whimsical, intangible hand towards the model ship hanging from the church's stave cornered low ceiling, Elsa allows her tussled mind this one regretful luxury. She recalls with vivid detail how her always calm, cool and collected patriarch would use his model ship building hobby to help her learn to appease her fears of emerging ice powers. They spent hours of focus on the placid task at hand instead.

She even grew to enjoy setting the rudders and keels and assembling the many layered topsails to their delicate wooden masts—a job that took precision that he entrusted her with. For Elsa and her dear Papa had become closer to one another in the usual way of father and son bonding in the intricate ship building hobby, than had the king of Arendelle had a boy/son.

"Waahhhhh!"

As predicted, Anna loses her balance just about now. Kristoff indeed had to flex his ample muscles yet again as he comes to his new bride's pitching forward rescue.

"I gotcha." He proudly proclaims, caressing back her mussed bangs as he cradles Anna's body in the safety of his big bicep arms.

"So, did you find any pirate ship at the dock that's holding Cousin Eugene captive?" Anna, like always, handsprings right back out of her klutzy adventure as she now directs her untamed enthusiasm up at her good looking hubby.

"No, I—"

"Did you go onboard to make sure?"

"No, I just—"

"Did you even ASK anyone if they saw a pirate ship go by here?"

"No, Anna, let me get a word in edgewise, please?" Stoic, even tempered Kristoff tries to hedge his feisty spoken gal off at the pass as he sets her down to the ground and gives her bobbing head a halting pat.

"Oooh." But in Anna's besmitten eyes, the intimate touch—that to Kristoff and the rest of the known world meant 'stop'—to her insatiable love, it meant 'go' as she wraps both arms around his neck, looking up expectantly.

The mountain man smiles at her need to be loved as he lets out a resigned sigh before rewarding
her sweet, upturned face with a light kiss, and she giggles.

"Look, there's practically nobody out there at the dock to ask. The whole village is practically deserted, except for a couple of elderly folks up here for the fishing cod season at the main harbor. They say that since the storms hundreds of years back that literally wiped out the town only a few fishermen come up here to the cliffs for drying the cod they catch."

"Oh, poopy! –Sorry, Lord!" Anna apologizes to the double sided painting near the pulpit, showing Jesus and His disciples praying.

"So, where do we go from here?" Elsa calmly asks, though feeling restless inside as she was listening intently to the blonde man's words.

"Well, there's no moon tonight, so it's gotten real dark out there. With all the wolves and other predators out, I figure Sven needs a full rest anyway from that practically nonstop journey he just made. That old couple of the fisherman and his wife I was telling you about offered to put the three of us up for tonight. We can start again along the coast towards the next port further north at Trondheim tomorrow morning, okay?" Responsible Kristoff knew time was of the essence but so was the well-being of his exhausted, hard-working reindeer and the two worried and wearied female travelers he had taken under his wing as well.

"I understand." Elsa concedes graciously her own longing to run and fly as fast as the wind could take her back to that pirate vessel where Rapunzel and Eugene, their friend Pascal and our own Olaf—not to mention Prince Hans of the Southern Isles - were all in need of rescue.

Next time she would not hold her ice back.

"Worrywart!" All newly-wedded still despite the dire circumstances, Anna pops Kristoff’s chest with her tiny fists in playful defiance of his protectiveness, to which Kristoff encompasses both fists within just one of his big knuckled ones, along with a pair of patronizing eyes.

"Behave, Flutterbudget." Acting all paternal, he upbraids each of her two orangey pigtail braids with a tender tug each. He pushes her down to sit on one of the church's front pews like a good little girl.

"I trust your judgement, Kristoff." Elsa gives the responsible man a nod.

*I just pray it won't be too late.*

Standing at the old style clerestory window overlooking the sea that was in much need of repair that the cool sea air seeps through and Elsa whispers almost inaudibly to the crashing waves surrounding the Grip stave church. Her anxious wandering mind had absolutely no idea how close the hand of the Lord was drawing near to her prayer within that corner posted church that had, through hundreds of years of being storm tossed, torn and battered, survived to stand as a beacon of light much like the Grip lighthouse not too far in Kristiansund port on the cold Norwegian sea…

As dawn begins to break over the sea line in its brilliant multi-colored shades of burnt siennas, umbers, terra cotta and sinopia hues overtaking the royal purples, violets and indigo blues of night, Rapunzel gives pause for the first time all night to her oar-wielding expedition.

It had been countless hours since she'd been rowing the small boat across the thankfully placid ocean waves once the coming storm that had been threatening her all evening had decided to veer to a more westerly course.

So it left the now clear skies and calm sea below it for clear sailing—or rowing, whichever might
apply to your craft.

In anxious haste and blistered hand doggedness, their little boat had made good time in moving some ten to twelve kilometers per hour across the Norwegian Sea.

Rapunzel had no idea how much strain on one's arms, painful hands, and upper body it required to move even a tiny vessel such as this lifeboat through ocean waters towards your destination. She had been following Olaf's internal 'map' so far and fortunately only had to make a few course corrections as they traversed.

The eager snowman's frosted front bow did make for easier maneuvering and his incessant chatter and singing filled the otherwise foreboding darkness, out in the middle of nowhere, with no land to be seen for miles, surrounding the bobbing up and down boat, bearable.

And though, anxious visions of her Eugene's whereabouts and well-being still gnawed at the back of Rapunzel's tensed mind, it also helped to know she wasn't on her own on this crazy mission.

Besides a morale pumping Olaf and an always supportive Pascal to wipe her sweaty brow and wrap her hurt hands on her oar-rowing exertion every now and then, the young woman was grateful for the fourth unexpected passenger on board.

After being tended to and cared for at her word of healing knowledge by able-fingered Pascal, he was about to be awakened by the first glistening rays of sunlight penetrating the dawn's welcome arrival.

*Cough Cough Cough*

Hans Westergaard begins to revive from the unconscious state he was put in by first the mutinous battle on the Pearl Lady that resulted in him being shot, to fall from a thirty plus foot height, then tossed overboard another twenty-five feet to the cold ocean below.

All that added misery to his already battered and whipped body from a day or so before certainly gave this heroic young man reason to stay unconscious.

But his heart's drive to seek out the singular point of shining light called 'Queen Elsa' causes his beaten body to strive to find awareness again—even if all seemed grim.

"It's okay! It's okay! I've got you!" Rapunzel pulls her oars in, before carefully maneuvering herself around to kneel at the prone man's choking head, lifting it to her lap.

"Madam, you are too kind." He says, once his coughing quiets.

She smiles down at the classy man's still polite moniker for her, petting his worried brow as he bestows back up upon her one of his dazzling smiles.

"Where are we?"

Smelling the salt of the sea, Hans lifts his upper body up. The unconscious status he had been in seemed to do his recuperating, beaten torso some good as he stretches it in the small craft, as he sits up fully, to look around.

"I have no idea…but Olaf says we're going in the right direction." She bites her lip, though surprises herself at how naturally easy it was to talk to this male virtual stranger with his chest bared, as if she'd known him for a long time.
They both look at Olaf who waves one hand of his three fingers back beneath a goofy, open-mouthed smile.

"Hiya, Prince Hans. Olaf here." From behind Hans' back the snowman reintroduces himself to the man seated in the middle of the boat.

"Please, it's just 'Hans,' Olaf." Hans shows he had learned humility enough to bow his once proud, royal head to the menial snowman, whose black coal eyes were burning a hole in the back of his head.

"All right, JustHans." Olaf's frozen brain suddenly blurts out the question he'd been meaning to ask 'ThisHans' for years. "So why didn't you kiss Anna?"

"Olaf?! Such a question!" A slack-jawed Rapunzel berates the frosty rudeness of her ill-mannered fellow oarsman, then gives an embarrassed toothy grin to Hans to try to mend things.

Silence envelops the now uncomfortable foursome crew of the tiny boat until the man smiles a sad smile, turning to face Olaf.

"I didn't love her, because I was too much in love with myself to know what true love even was." Hans answers honestly with a regretful look on his handsome features.

"Do you know it now?" After a few reflective moments, Rapunzel musters the courage to ask. She sensed a spark between he and Elsa long before she was aware of any previous relationship he may have had with her little sister.

"Yes, I think I do, but I'll never deserve to have that love returned. You have no idea what unforgivable things I've done to that Kingdom." Hans was smiling at her but his olive green eyes were telling another story of painful betrayal and deceit on his part.

"Hey, I think kingdoms don't matter anymore when it comes to hearts forgiving one another — if the love you feel is real this time. Even a criminal can exchange what's false in his heart with the power of love's truth. Maybe he just has to prove that love is really all he's after." Rapunzel calls upon her own romance to speak directly from soulful experience with her adored Eugene, who was willing to sacrifice his own chance to live to gain the freedom of the girl he loved.

"You are a wise woman for your youthful age, Princess Rapunzel." Hans says after he absorbs her deep meaningful words and squeezes her hand gently.

"Thanks." Rapunzel blushes under his pretty eyed kind compliment. Something about those eyes when he lowered his eyelids reminded her of someone precious to her own palpitating heart.

"But these hands have been worked too hard." He surprises her by turning over both of her palms to examine the wrapped blisters from the oars' constant movement on her hands, and the wrists on her lower arms were bulging from strained, overworked veins.

"Oh, well...We have to quickly get help to rescue Eugene...so we kept rowing all night. They're only a bit sore." She bashfully pulls in her thin, exposed vein popping arms and bandaged hands to move back to the oar station at the boat's end to get going again after this brief break.

"Allow me, Madam." Hans halts her in backing up mid-motion, as he stands in the small boat with perfect balance. Being a naval seaman was in his nautical blood he deftly climbs past Rapunzel even as he maneuvers the stunned girl to the middle seat, taking her place as the forward oarsman.

"Are you ready, midshipman Olaf?" Breathing in deeply the fresh salt sea air to fill his lungs,
Lieutenant Hans Westergaard takes command of the seafaring craft, with roster of one petite woman, one scrawny lizard (That is a chameleon, is it not, on her shoulder…?), and one three foot tall snowman, and himself as the rowing crew.

Why wouldn't this be the ship the lifelong naval officer would be assigned as his first command?

'You cannot mock the justice of God, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

Galations 6:7's New Testament text replays in Hans' once proud, sardonic mind at this humbling commission of the smallest, just barely seaworthy vessel he claims his first command of. Instead now, he just smiles in submission.

"Oooh, I always wanted to be a midshipman! Don't you love the sound of it—Mid-ship-man! I'm a midshipman! It gives me goosepimples—if I had skin, that is! I'd love to think I could be a midshipman covered in goosepimples. Ships ahoy! Ships ahoy! Row, row, row, your boat!" Olaf's jaunty singing starts up again as he quickly picks up the pace when a smiling Hans lifts the pair of oars in Rapunzel's place and begins rowing with his lean, sinewy arms like a seasoned pro.

Her eyes had adjusted now to the emerging sunrise and Rapunzel's hazy gaze believed that the shirtless Hans looked rather dashing rowing the boat with such vigor in the rising sun.

"You were right—Olaf knows where Elsa is...Kind of like a homing beacon... Yawn! Oh! Excuse me! I guess you know Elsa pretty well to have known that...Big yawn! Oh, pardon me!" Rapunzel rubs her cloudy eyes as her sleepy head bobs up and down. She was not as embarrassed as she thought she would be to have rudely and openly yawned in front of this high-class man.

"No need to apologize—you've been up all night rowing hard. You get some rest, your highness. I'll take over now, don't you worry." He assures her in his soft, melodic voice that instills trust in the young woman.

"We'll be following Olaf's southwesterly direction." Hans glances up to the rising sun in the sky to determine its position as to their heading, as any experienced seaman could tell. "Olaf and I will row as swiftly as we can and we'll wake you when we arrive."

"Wow! You're just as smart as you are handsome! Oh! How's that cut on your chest feeling? I had Pascal dab some of that homemade ointment on it that we brought. We wrapped it up to stop the bleeding—I'm so sorry the iron plate still had some sharp edges. I tried my best to file them off, but I guess I missed one." Rapunzel groggily remembers the kind-eyed man's injury she and her chameleon had tended to when he first was pulled aboard.

"I'm fine. Thank you for your ingenious idea. I owe my life to you." It was so cute the way the grown man would shyly look down and blush at her plainspoken flattery.

"I haven't thanked YOU properly for doing what you did back there on the pirate ship for me and Eugene. Thank you, Hans. You probably saved Eugene's life by risking your own." Giving him a smile, Rapunzel sighs dreamily, trying to muster happy thoughts of her cocky, smirking with his trademark stubble in place, good looking husband.

She and Pascal huddle together in a pile in the middle of the lifeboat, using the fabric rope they'd crafted as pillow for her short cropped head that yards and yards of magical hair were no longer present to cushion. She almost immediately drifts into an uneasy sleep against the rolling ocean waves.

"Eugene..." Rapunzel wakes up with a start some hours later from a perfectly wonderful dream
having her strong mate's muscular arms wrapped around her chilled little body.

But he wasn't there and the warmth was only to be attributed to the hot summer sun beating down on her suntanned forehead and freckled nose.

The brown haired princess blinks away her sleepers and sits up to face the young man, who by now, was sweating quite hard from all his exertion of traversing nautical miles ceaselessly.

"I must look a sight." Hans, a dapper man who once prided himself on his agreeable countenance, i.e. sideburns and well coiffed hairstyle, saw reflected in Rapunzel's large eyes, his state of unkemptness. He knew his hair must be askew and his ruddy red face sweaty.

"No, you look fine. Just perspiring from all the hard work. Here, let me…” Rapunzel crawls over to where Prince Hans was still industrious at his rowing with the aid of a tireless Olaf who was entertaining him with endless ocean going ditties.

She wipes the manly sweat dripping from Hans' sunbeaten forehead into his uncomplainingly, blinking back stinging eyes, right down to his sharp, celestial nose. Looking at his extremely comely face, she inexplicably begins to compare his features to her own gorgeous Eugene's, wishing he was here, like he was in the gondola in her dream.

"Eugene. You said his name so many times in your sleep. He must be quite a guy to be loved so well by such a lovely lady." Hans says with a little teasing grin and raised eyebrow.

"He's the most wonderful, most amazing, most caring man I've ever met. I love him to bits!" Rapunzel answers, holding back the tears of her heart on her sleeve.

"Then he was lucky, after all. May I tell you a story I've just figured out the end of myself?" Hans continues to row at an impressively steady, nineteen kilometers per hour. His agility and strength increased their voyage's speed by several nautical kilometers than if small girl Rapunzel had still been at the oar.

"Please, do." Rapunzel leans forward in her middle seat, putting her elbows up so her chin could rest while she listened to the man's tale.

"There was once a crown Prince who in his youth had a romantic dalliance with a woman beneath his status, who came from around your neck of the woods—in Prussia. She was said to be a beautiful young woman, a Gypsy dancer with dark striking features and a sense of humor and wit that was just as attractive as her long unruly black hair. Unfortunately, his secret visits across the Baltic Sea were not halted by his arranged marriage to a princess of Scottish ancestry, with bright red hair as vivid as the shine of her pure heart—that would've been broken had she known her worldly new husband was still keeping this mistress, and was father to her child. The woman had died when the baby was just two years old. The hardened man had sent that illegitimate boy away to an orphanage to be raised by unknown strangers rather than his father's castle, and the growing number of strapping boys his loving Scotswoman of a Queen filled their home with. One day she discovered a letter from the long passed Gypsy mistress, pleading with the king to take in her son that was half his royal blood, for she was dying. The brave Queen was so utterly good and kind that even on her own deathbed from having one unlucky child too many, she made each of her twelve elder sons promise to one day seek out this poor, discarded lad and treat him like the royal prince and brother he was."

"Oookay…that's a really…nice story." Rapunzel, who was just as much listening to the melodic sound of his voice as to the somewhat sordid tale, and didn't quite put two and two together, until Hans has to plainly reveal the name he would garner her reaction better.
"That missing Prince the king had sent to the orphanage when he was two, some twenty-nine years ago - so that would make him about thirty-one years old today - I think you might know him. His name was Eugene Fitzherbert."

"Eugene?! Wait! This is...crazy! Are you saying Eugene is—!?" Rapunzel suddenly jumps up, to clumsily land back down on all fours on the now wobbly boat.

"I believe your husband is my older half-brother. I felt some affinity with him when we first met, but didn't suspect anything until you said his name was originally 'Eugene' and then everything fell into place. It is 'Eugene Fitzherbert' you married, isn't it?" Hans' laser like mind connects all the dots and then some that he'd picked up from bits and pieces in conversation with Eugene himself during their continual sparring along the voyage. "After all, since ancient times, the 'Fitzherbert' surname was one that was generally attached to an illegitimate child of royal lineage, and the name 'Eugene' itself was to be of a man 'high-born'." Hans explains the ins and outs of royal code to the girl whose sad eyes were now sparkling with new wonder.

"So, Eugene is kind of a royal prince of Denmark? How many brothers was that again?" Rapunzel's mind was blown by now. Hans chuckles at the fantastic luck to have met together after all these years, under these incredible circumstances.

"After a fashion...I guess there's fourteen of us now. I'm glad not to be the unlucky number thirteen anymore." Hans answers and his shortlere increases when Rapunzel jumps up to glomp him, as he tries to hold tight to his oars from dropping into the sea.

"I can't wait to tell Eugene! I can't wait to meet everyone! Eugene's brothers! That means you're my brother-in-law! I knew you were both too gorgeous not to be related!" She once again makes this man blush with her blatant honesty.

"We've got a big family now! Yes! I love family! You've got to invite them all over to stay with us in Corona, so we can all get acquainted when this is all over!" Rapunzel sings out, deliriously overwhelmed as the hot sun bakes her addled brain a bit.

"Absolutely..." Truly wanting to mean it this time (though, through personal experience, knowing the rest of his brothers would not be very warm to the idea of a fourteenth illegitimate addition to the clan) and not wanting to break her illusion, Hans is quite reminded of another exuberant princess who hungered for a love he couldn't give her.

**Now if her sister on the other hand wanted it...**

**But how could she?! I am dust to her diamonds!**

His pleasant smile begins to fade at his dim prospects.

"Move aside, Olaf! Time for you to take a break!"

"Oh, good, my branches were about to snap in two!" The snowman holds out his wooden arms to display their wilting weariness.

"I've got energy to burn now! Eugene is gonna be so excited...I think..." Rapunzel was so enthusiastic for her orphan boy having a real, actual brother-ful family that she didn't have time to think how he'd actually react to the news.

"But we have to save my husband AND your brother first. WOW! We're family! This is so great! Let's go find Elsa asap, then get Eugene back!" Her astonishing speeded up and deliberate rowing impresses Hans as he has to work to keep up with her now.
The pair of oar bearers cut the small boat through the sun reflective waters at an even more quickened, livened pace, inspired by the new revelation of familial bonding that takes the excitedly chattering craft towards their southwesterly goal…
Another dawn ushers in all the sun's bright vivid colors to contrast the hazy mists lingering over the shoals of the small inlet fishing village of Grip.

Princess Anna of Arendelle is shocked awake by the rhythmic sounds of some unknown thumping bangs just beyond the bedroom window. This morning, curiosity gets the better of her sleepiness as she rubs the sleepers from her eyes to be rewarded with quite a pleasing early morn sight of her fine looking new husband helping the old fisherman, whose home the three travelers were welcomed in last night, chop up some firewood for kindling outside her front row view of the elderly couple's backyard through their cracked smoky windowpane.

Anna was entranced for a few moments to watch her strong strapping blonde flex his rolled up sleeve revealed bicep and tricep muscles in all his axe-wielding glory. She leans on propped up elbows into the window she was adding her drool to with a droopy eyed smile pasted across her delirious face.

"Isn't Kristoff so...capable...even in the morning?" Not a morning person herself, though her hardworking guy was generally up with the dawn. Anna murmurs in her incoherent awakening way as her single track mind marvels to find the right term's drawled out meaning to describe the man of her dreams. Babbling, the orangey head unceremoniously plops back down to the small creaky bed of the long vacant children's room the elderly fishing couple furnished herself and Elsa to share, whilst Kristoff had to manly brave a chilly cot on the floor in the outer living space where he offered to tend the waning fire for all this wet island humidity in the small spartan shanty.

"Elsa?" As she peeks one eye open in expectation of a response, Anna felt like that tiny little child again who called her sister's name – only to find her stretching arms reaching for an affectionate 'good morning' greeting hug and snuggle yet again left empty.

"When did you go?" After spending the night like they were little girls again, hugging and giggling and joking to try to cheer her somewhat preoccupied sister who seemed to be disturbed by some undisclosed inner demon she was hiding from her little sis, Anna begins to panic.

Since she came to them two days ago, Elsa was holding something back. *I know it!* Something heavy on her heart.

**But why? I thought we were past that, Elsa!**

After waiting an impatient few seconds for her big sister to return to the bed (had there merely been a necessity), her sisterly instincts kick in, despite the early morn, as she jumps up to her frozen cold feet to patter about and hurriedly shimmy into her outer clothing strewn on a chair with worry written all over her pretty face as the pounding sounds of the axe continue their foreboding rise and fall outside.

With a contented smile on his face, Kristoff Bjorgman pauses to wipe the honest sweat from his brow. Sure, it was the middle of Norway's all too short summer, but it was still fairly chilly in this
windy and wet archipelago port located some 500 plus km north of Arendelle. The hot moisture trickling down his sweating neck turns instantly chilly with the cold breeze blowing in with the sea tide.

But more than accustomed to both stark cold and hard work, this Ice Harvester was feeling his oats again this morning. He was proud he was able bodied enough to accomplish this little service easily for the sonless elderly couple he had stumbled upon meeting that had kindly taken the three of them in for the night.

Making their hard fought living off the small crop of the fish of the sea, this old couple lived just on the outskirts of the town of Grip, none too far from the stave church where Anna, Elsa, he and Sven had previously visited. When he first encountered them on the road, the crusty old fisherman and his sweet yet overbearing wife kind of reminded Kristoff of Cliff and Bulda in a strange sort of familiar way in how they opened their home up to strangers.

The industrious responsible young man wanted to show his appreciation for putting them up in bed and barn. So when observant eyes saw the nearly depleted woodshed and single log fireplace bin, even an arctic blast could not stop him from doing what the good-hearted lad was raised to know what was right.

CHOP! SWING! CHOP!

"Whoa there, laddie! Ye've been at it all morning, going foraging in the woodland to garner what few sticks of timber be available. Now don't overwork yeself starting so early in the AM before the sun up, rustling some firewood for me and the Missus. I've been a-meaning to get to it, but me old back argued the point. Thank ye kindly, sir. Ye are a good young fellow, though I would've thought ye'd sleep in with that lovely lil' frisky thing for a new wife ye've got." The raspy, but kind voice of the thin, weatherworn old fisherman cracks out as he brings Kristoff a steaming cup of broth his goodly wife had insisted he deliver to the hardworking boy at thus early 6AM hour.

"Yeah, well…” Kristoff was sweet enough and new enough to the idea of a 'frisky wife' to still blush. "I was seeing to Sven, and noticed your woodbox was empty, so…” Despite being a tough seasoned mountain man, Kristoff yet was timid to be so openly praised.

"Ye sure love yer reindeer, eh, young fella? Anyone can see ye've got a special touch when it comes to the animal-kind. There's almost something magical-like about yer perception of a creature's needs." The old man comments as he surveys his own meager work mule and his wife's old dairy cow fed and their stalls cleaned and tended to with fresh laid hay by this big hearted generous stranger.

"I guess I just could always tell when they're hungry or thirsty or need attention of some kind. It's like I can hear them tell me sometimes." Kristoff answers as his one hand reaches into the milking cow's stall and scratches behind her ears where a fierce itch she couldn't have satisfied with cloven hooves is relieved. He pats her gratified neck as the mournful eyed Betsie gives Kristoff a smile he seemed to instinctively pick up on.

"Yep, ye've got the magic touch." The fisherman notes as he follows his now well-fed and gnarled beard trimmed goat into the barn to be dazzled at whole well organized barn. The farm animals were cooing in their new hay beds and neatly stacked wood piles beside the fresh water drawn buckets, full and ready for at least a week's worth of feedings and washings.

"Magic? Hmph…” Kristoff chortles to himself under his breath at the superstitious old geezer, as he lifts his axe high in the air and turns to go back to work splitting the wood asunder–
That's when a recklessly rash pair of arms abruptly wrap around his thick neck as if he were not holding a deadly sharp weapon directly above both their heads in swift preparation to swing and chop –

"Anna! I could have hurt you!" In a rare moment of raising his normally soft voice to her, Kristoff scolds his real little fluff of magic. As, after safely placing the heavy axe down to the ground, he looks his wife in the eye with a thankful crooked smirk, knowing her penchant for luckily just sidestepping out of dangerous situations, though usually at his expense.

But one look on her worried features and lack of her buoyant 'But you didn't!' response that generally followed many of his safety reprimands, and the big burly man is immediately alarmed.

"You okay?" He grabs both her shoulders in his large hands.

"Elsa's gone!" Her eyes wild with panic, Anna nearly sobs into his chest as he tugs her stumbling form close for comfort.

"Anna—"

"Maybe she was kidnapped in the night! I know I sleep light, but somehow, someone must've snuck past!" The frantic girl jumps to conclusions, even as she overstates her sleepy disposition.

"Anna, she's fine." Kristoff fights to get a word in edgewise.

"That evil pirate must've tracked her down here! Kristoff, we have to call in the Royal Navy! Or the palace guards, but we're way too far away from Arendelle! Elsa, I'm coming!" Fooling herself that she was, by any means, a light sleeper, Anna's wild imagination, spurred on by Elsa's thrilling tales of piracy on the high seas, begins to get the better of her as each nightmarish thought snowballs and snowballs until she was practically frantic for her beloved sister's well-being.

"Anna, calm down." Kristoff, in his placid stoic way, attempts to quell her building fears as he physically holds his struggling girl from wriggling away to race blindly through the foreign tranquil sleepy village in search of her missing royal sibling.

"Anna! Stop it! Listen to me!" After kneeling to the ground to replace her two mixed up left and right shoes on her messy rush to dress feet, the big blonde man must resort to shouting and utilizing his own brute strength to keep hold of his slippery wife with the proclivity to jump to rash conclusions.

"Elsa is fine! She's with Sven. I just took her down to the church to pray, okay? You can see the church from here, see? She's safe and sound. There's no one else there, I checked it out." Kristoff reassures.

"Oh, okay. Why didn't you say so in the first place?" Anna pauses to ask sincerely.

"Argh!" An incredulous Kristoff sighs in frustration of how little his Anna paid attention to his words.

"Church, big fella! I could feel like praying this fine morning, too." He turns around to see her fearlessly mount the fisherman's mule (who was fortunately in a good mood for a full tummy) and take off towards the mahogany red small holy building's direction.

"Good morning to you, too, Feisty-pants." Kristoff mumbles under his breath her teased nickname, already aware that Elsa's well-being had a prominent spot in their lives together. And he was fine with that. After all, it was Anna's great love for her sister that brought them to know one another in
the first place.

"Oh! Good morning, Husband!" Anna, dangling over the confused mule's neck, manages to get him to do a 180 degree hairpin turn, to come thundering back to land a rather sloppy greeting kiss on Kristoff’s unsuspecting mid-motion amused nose.

"You." Kristoff, never competitive with sisterly love to be the afterthought, chuckles as he rubs his bumped and slobbered on facial feature with the back of his hand as he watches his bubbly gal race towards the shoreline astride the wobbly mule.

"Crazy kids in love." The old fisherman's wife had trailed Anna who had tornado-ed through her peaceful abode, both she and her husband in the barn now laughing at the newly-wedded bliss that gave quite an exciting stir to their backwater mundane lives.

But as the gangly mule's legs trot into the single steeple Grip stave church's front yard, Anna's sharp eyes spy a small unmistakable figure slowly pacing along the beachfront just to the right of the chapel, close on the archipelago where a singular half painted red and half painted white lighthouse stood starkly against the rising sun's craggly shoreline.

"Elsa!" Letting out a big sigh of pent-up relief, Anna was exuberant to catch sight of her sister, as Kristoff said (See! I was listening!) 'Safe and sound' praying outside the church grounds.

Though this weird sense of something thrilling about to happen grips her heart as Anna urges the mule to speed up to meet with the aimlessly wandering on the shore elegant elder sister who seemed to be silently wringing her hands as eyes were gazing out towards the misty sea's horizon as if in longing anticipation.

"Anna! You're here!" The pale blonde appeared both relieved and anxious to see her younger sibling approach on the unsure-footed mule.

The beautiful queen, whose hair was iridescent in the forming sunlight beginning to penetrate the mists to glisten off the ocean waters, was an introvert by nature. And it was very hard to unlearn long years of trying to hide one's feelings.

Conceal, don't feel.

But these two past wonderful years of living openly alongside Anna, loving alongside Anna, learning alongside Anna—the most warmhearted genuine girl this world has ever known—have taught Elsa of Arendelle to want to at least try to be as open and honest and truthful as well.

She had been wrestling all night with herself for, at first, unintentionally deceiving her little sister—in a sacred church setting, no less. Forgive me, Lord—of what—and more importantly—of whom—she's been in the intimate company of, and she knew it would disturb Anna to find out about him

"Elsa, what's wrong? Since we've found you, you seem so sad and...distant...and lonely. I thought we were beyond keeping secrets from one another. Can't you tell me?" Anna dismounts the mule when she arrives at the beachfront and skips through the pebbly sand to confront her older sister with her concerns, her eyes pleading, her hands offered.

Elsa pauses before speaking as she allows the ascending sunlight to cascade upon her forehead when she asks the Bringer of the Light for special wisdom and strength to explain the inexplicable to the girl it would hurt the most, the girl she loved the best, wanting always to be honest and true in her words and thoughts to her Anna.
Elsa takes a deep breath.

"Anna, what if I told you, while you and Kristoff were away and cousin Rapunzel and I went on this incredible adventure I was telling you about—" Elsa begins bravely, her blue blue eyes trying to steel themselves under Anna's inquisitive melting gaze.

"—that I met someone." She finishes by squeezing Anna's proffered hands in her no longer wringing ones.

"A…man?" Anna's yet innocent (in one sense) eyes bulge out. She was instantly excited for her quiet, sober, reserved sister's first step into romance's beautiful mystery, a quirky smile crossing her lips.

"Yes, Anna. An extraordinary, amazing, good man who heroically rescued me from those wicked pirates." Though she was trying to keep her voice even, the pride in Elsa's high strains seeps through. She was not completely sure herself of her own palpitating heart's footing to admit any budding relationship with Prince Hans, of all men, but Elsa was certain of his gallantry their time together on the pirate ship proved.

She swallows hard, as Anna's big blue-green eyes start to glow with an effervescent enthusiasm for her lonesome sibling. But Elsa had a biting feeling this heartened emotion would soon transform into another, once it was revealed precisely to whom the queen's blossoming attentions belonged to.

"Oh! Wow! A shipboard romance, like in a storybook! And here I was worried about you being an old maid queen! What's he like? How old is he? Is he handsome? Does he know you're Queen? When do I meet him?!" In a split second decision to be happy for her Elsie, the spirited young girl starts prattling off curious questions at a million miles an hour rate. Elsa was quite unprepared for this barrage as Anna nearly yanks her arms from their sockets, doing a happy jig around her once believed solitary sibling's new love prospects.

"Anna! Please listen!" Elsa cries out, quite dizzied by now from being swung around the beachfront like a ragdoll in boisterous Anna's jubilant dance.

"I am listening! Oh! What's his name? I bet he's a looker, knowing your good taste!" Anna sings, so glad that her sister's quiet inward mood yesterday was attributed to this pleasant new aspect of their lives. She gives the exasperated older girl a quick hug before Anna catches a glimpse of a family of crabs rushing across the rocks she was happy to share this news with, totally unaware of how uncomfortable she was making this soulful confession for Elsa.

"Anna. I have to explain to you about him." Elsa bites her lip, having no idea it would be this hard – yes, I did – her resolve on the verge of waning at reciting the name of the known reviled man who once broke Anna's heart. But somehow her dreams of destiny had a funny way of leading Elsa to believe the same man might be the one to penetrate the frozen cold of her own heart...

She closes her eyes and lets the warm sunlight embolden her courage to say his name aloud.

"Oh, goody! I want to hear everything about him! And how you two met! It must've been so romantic!" Toying giddily with her own imaginary sandcastles, Anna's girlish notions of a romantic first meeting actually paled in comparison to what passionate memories were soaring through Elsa's harrowing thoughts of her shipbound encounters with Hans Westergaard.

And yet…Elsa's beating heart was racing in ways she never thought it could at each dreamt of vision of a heroic handsome kind-eyed Prince who made his presence on board that vessel—from the prisoner's brig, to the kitchen galley, to the windblown deck, to their shared bedchamber—so
very real to her every one of her five senses…

The color rising to her cheeks almost achieves the brilliance of the embers of the resplendent golden sunlight as her lips part to speak…

"Oh, Elsa! I've never seen you glow like this! I'm really so happy for you! Maybe you've found your 'Kristoff' on your own adventure, like I did on mine! This is so great! Huh? What's that on the water? A little boat? Someone's waving to us on it!" Never giving Elsa a chance to spit it out, Anna's lively bliss over this new imagined perfect romance is interrupted when she spots out of the corner of her eye the said 'little boat' that was briskly being rowed towards the Grip Lighthouse's welcoming shore.

Elsa, who had been quietly basking in the fresh sunlight's warmth as Anna continued to rattle on, envisions the last time she glimpsed him. Her heroic figure was svelte and straight and tall with his open shirt blowing in the sunsetting winds, when her languid eyes suddenly snap open, and she instantly knows—feels—that this wasn't any ordinary little boat.

This was the boat that was coming for her with that very same man in her fantasies upon it.

He was searching for her! And she would be reflected inside his beautiful stunning green eyes again… The thought of that forbidden possibility made Queen Elsa feel an emotion she had never imagined she could be capable of before…

Lightly tread feet carry her intangibly moving body as if a hypnotic trance towards the furthest edge of the shoreline. Her involuntary ice prowess allows her to walk over the splinters of the archipelago as on a silvery white bridge to where the incoming small craft would find first harbor. Each step she took, the nearer the distance between them closed, Elsa's every nerve ending tingled with the fantasy that he cared enough to come looking for her…

"Hans!" Elsa's mouth barely dares to breathe as hands fly to her constricting throat.

He's hurt! Her strained eyes first focus upon the rear view of the red-haired head and familiar bare back of the man in the boat that now appeared scarred with the stripes of a whip's harsh lash. After a short of gasp at the unexpected breathtaking sight of the sunlit sweat dazzled bare-skinned perfect shape of each traced and retraced line of his lean back in her guilty mind as Hans doggedly rows, with his finely muscle toned triceps flexing the oars of the lifeboat into the island shore's last few meters, Elsa could clearly make out the deep red streaked cut grooves crisscrossing his now deeply sliced, previously flawless and unblemished well-formed traps, scap and shoulder delts.

As she watches Elsa fly without abandon to the boat's edge as if in a dream, Anna follows her created ice trail, skipping and sliding as she waves furiously at an exhausted yet somewhat relieved looking Rapunzel. The brown haired Prussian princess was facing the girls as she finishes rowing towards the shore with a joyously bouncing up and down, smug that he was right on the mark, Olaf.

"Elsa! You're alive!" Rapunzel shrieks out simultaneously with the giddy snowman with much happiness as they pull ashore at seeing their missing friend after Elsa had been cruelly tossed overboard into the churning depths of the sea.

Seeing the plain relief and joy on his little rowing crew's faces, Hans smiles, despite his exhaustion and torn ligament pain. The Dane spins around, eager to feast his hungry hopeful eyes upon the beautiful lady he had tortured himself for days in the pirate's brig in believing this delicate woman placed in his care had passed from this world—and it was all his own narcissistic ego that endangered her, and lost her magical beauty to him forever…
"Snowflake… How I prayed for this moment." The sweet diminutive from his dreams slips out of Prince Han's enraptured, stamina-worn mind. His fatigued, already injured body—that had gone above and beyond the call of rowing duty this night to quickly find her with the aid of tenacious Rapunzel and tireless Olaf as able first mate and midshipman at the oars of their happy little craft—was about ready to collapse.

Hans fully turns in heartening optimism of glimpsing the true glowing beauty of the morning, who was Queen Elsa of Arendelle, alive and well…

As he stands, perfectly balanced in the boat to revolve around in one fluid motion, Elsa's pure inspiring look of demure grace amidst the rising sunlight rewards his greedy eyes for just a second or two before—

**PUNCH!**

Smack right in his shapely dizzy and dazed, yet pleasantly smiling face, the same right hook pounding punched fist that had bested his poor bloody lip once before, connects with his already punished head again.

Princess Anna, upon seeing the despised and despicable Prince of the Southern Isles stand up in the boat where he obviously was in league with the pirates in kidnapping cousin Rapunzel and Olaf in his evil devious schemes again, reacts swiftly..

"No! Hans!"

Too disturbed to revel much in the intimate proximity of clinging to his bare chest and feeling his raw back muscles tingle under her fingertips, Elsa lunges forward to catch the upper section of redheaded man who was just blindsided by the girl's quick attack.

Rapunzel, still in the boat, grabs hold of his lower legs (Nice tight calves! Ooh, sorry, Eugene!) to steady poor Hans from tumbling overboard into the waters.

"Let me at 'im!" Sweet little Anna could be quite vicious in her enthusiasm for a fight. The vivacious girl coarsely pushes Elsa aside to let go of him and then roughly shoves Hans' now shaky shoulders with both her incensed hands until he tips to the side and Rapunzel can't hold on any longer to his flailing long legs. As he drops over the boat's edge into the shallow drink, Hans' head bashes against the sharp craggly rocks.

"There, I did it! Olaf! Come on, girls! Run!" A triumphant Anna, feeling rather justified and powerful to vanquish her fiercest enemy singlehandedly (I got this skinny toffee-nosed git covered, Kristoff!) calls for the victim rescues she had just freed from the wicked man's clutches.

Only to find the lot of them rallying around to retrieve the fallen villain from the water and fawn over his now bloodied head from the sharp rocks it smacked hard into.

"He—Ilo! This is Hans we're talking about here! You remember—liar, cheater, kingdom usurper, attempted murderer, nasty heartbreaker Prince Hans of the Southern…Isles? "

"Guys? Do you even hear what I'm saying?" The shoe uncommonly on the other foot, Anna is quite astounded to be so ignored by her own loving relatives who were more interested in the welfare of that guy.

She wonders as both Elsa and Rapunzel, along with faithful Pascal (who had narrowly missed taking a similar swan dive atop Hans' shoulder) and even Olaf—Traitor!—all seemed to be doting
to help the dazed, already tired man recover from the pretty harsh blow to his spinning skull in the shallows as the trio drag him towards the beachfront.

"Elsa! What is going on here?!" A shaking fisted red-faced and angry Anna demands, unable to believe her eyes as she witnesses her reserved and shy sister (especially with men) yank off from her shoulders her own borrowed (from Anna's bag Gerda had packed that had not been tossed, only thanks to conservative Kristoff) Arendelle cloak to wrap around the pounded dizzy man's trembling with cold and weariness, spent body.

"What?" Anna sees the way Elsa's caring, once afraid to touch anybody hands impulsively caress the fist injuries to Hans' lower lip and jawbone. Anna watches in utter shock as Elsa softly dabs at his injured countenance with a produced handkerchief with as much tenderness as would befit a… Lover.

"Elsa. Tell me he isn't the 'extraordinary, amazing, good man who heroically rescued you from the pirates' you were talking about. Elsa! Please tell me it isn't him!" With tears in her furious eyes, Anna demands loudly, not caring one wit if "Prince" Hans overheard or not.

"Anna. Please. Not now." An embarrassed and ashamed Elsa, afraid of her growing fears, begins to feel cold ice enshroud her perplexed torn heart even in the broad sunlight due to the emotional upheaval between herself and her sister—her rock, her perpetual sunlight—clouding over in this angst-ridden argument.

"Anna! Stop! I don't know what he did before, but Hans is a good guy now. He's my friend who saved Eugene's life. He's the whole reason Olaf and I even made it here!" Rapunzel rushes back from dragging their little long-suffering lifeboat onto the shoals before it gets washed back to sea unattended.

"Yeah, JustHans is a good bad guy. Or is that a bad good guy? Hmph, I always get mixed up there on the adjectival order of things. Can I get back to you later once I decide?" A chortling Olaf looks up to the pair of girls toothily as he chuckles to himself, all goofy in the consideration.

With a smile at the ditzy snowperson, the brown haired compassionate young woman wraps an understanding forbearing arm around the bewildered Anna. The two females with curious eyes look upon the poignant scene taking place on the wet rocky beachfront.

"Queen Elsa. I've come all this distance to ensure that you were alive and safe and well. Please grant me a smile. I think I deserve that for all my troubles, at least." An emboldened Hans regains a bit of his cheeky senses enough to tease in a whisper the fearful eyed woman on whose lap his wounded head was being cradled.

And Elsa beams her most gorgeous smile down at him in absolute reward.

At witnessing this, a shocked Anna doesn't know what to do as she is filled with overwhelming concern, wild-eyed craziness and total confusion. Fortunately, the one who generally calmed her troublesome three C's arrives to take some of the burden off her tensed shoulders.

"So, look what the tide's washed in. How does that new saying go about 'bad pennies'?" Kristoff must've heard the noisy ruckus as his brain quickly images his spontaneously explosive wife's reaction to re-meeting her abhorred ex-fiance in the flesh.

Literally. Princely Hans may have had a scarred up back, (Wonder who did the honors? Remind me to shake his hand.) but he still seemed to possess a charm for the ladies, two out of three of the
'weaker sex' (Yeah, sure! Anna is a little toughie!) mooning over the bare-chested purportedly good-looking scrawny fool.

Kristoff gulps as he surveys the usually dignified Queen Elsa rather presumptively readjust the cloak he saw her wearing herself this morning around the otherwise fairly shirtless man (quite a scandalous thing for 1850s upper crust royal sensibilities that Kristoff was glad to only be mildly acquainted with himself) as she dries his dripping wet skin and dark red slicked back hair and moist sideburns with the remainder of her clothing—sleeves, skirt, even her long blonde tresses.

"Okay, I'm not even going to ask how he got in this state." A smirking Kristoff gives Anna a raised brow, yet approving look that softens her rigid stance a bit already.

"Let's get them up to drier ground, up in that lighthouse." Level-headed Kristoff easily hefts the too weak to protest underweight disowned Prince's slim body over his firm shoulder (if only to get him away from the fawning queen, for man of the world Kristoff instinctively already knew Anna's view on the touchy subject) as Anna ushers a drawn-eyed Rapunzel to alight on Sven's comforting back. An eager Olaf (after Sven just mildly misses nabbing his carrot nose in their trademark greeting) happily hops on board the reindeer as well as Anna and Elsa, calling a truce with a sisterly all forgiven hug, both clamor onto the poor fisherman mule's complaining hemming and hawing back.

Once the tired group traverses the hill from the shore front up to the Grip Lighthouse, Hans begins to come to and Kristoff puts him down to the ground on his two unsteady feet so that Elsa boldly drapes his arm over her own pale shoulder for the support and winning smile up at him that Hans is grateful for.

"So, I understand chivalry and ladies in distress and all—but, there must be another reason you're here." Kristoff tries to make sense of this most undesirable man's strange reappearance in their lives right now as he quietly addresses him.

"'The Lord establishes our steps.' 'And His purposes are always right.'" A reverent Hans quotes the Good Book before directing his next query up to the taller blonde man. "If I may be so bold?" Hans asks and Kristoff cocks his head with a shrugged acquiescent nod.

Hans then surprises everyone, Anna most of all, as he goes down to his knees, heedless of the sharp rocks, to Anna's shocked feet. Belittling himself as he did with Elsa before, in all humbleness, he takes Anna's at first unwilling hands until she looks from a nodding Kristoff to a hopeful Elsa, as Hans presses his bloodied lips to her palms.

"In these past two years since we last met, I have reflected deeply and have learned the insincere error of my misbegotten ways and fallacious behavior, especially concerning you personally, Anna. I have heartily asked God to forgive my ignoble betrayal of your goodness of innocence and trust in my past contemptuous misuse of your purity of genuine emotion for me. Is it even feasible for me to hope for you to search your gracious soul for some small amount of mercy, Anna?"

Anna's jaw drops at all the big important sounding words of the speech spoken for her as she simply stares down at the once unscrupulous underhanded man whose large green puppy dog eyes up at her were all vulnerable and hopeful, with not a trace of the artful calculating craftiness she knew him to be capable of that she was suspiciously looking for.

But Hans’ eyes were only full of redemptive sorrow and apologetic sincerity. Anna's own wide eyes, not wanting to be tricked again, go from Hans to Kristoff to Rapunzel and then back to Hans, after a long stare at Elsa's emotive eyes.
"I…guess I can try." Anna finally relents to everyone's relieved sigh.

"But mainly because I'm a good Christian girl. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus himself told us 'to forgive others who have sinned against us'. So that means jerks like you, but only if you're REALLY SORRY for what you've done to us." Anna stresses the words in bold.

"You remember your prayers, Anna." Elsa proudly whispers, she always having to drill the memorization part of their faith into her forgetful little sister's head when they were tiny, though she needn't have worried for the true lessons ingrained on Anna's sweet soul.

"And that's Princess Anna to you, Mister." Turning back with the sore point to face him, the 'sweet' little girl puts the man who had wronged her in the past, no matter how contrite he may be now, in his rightful place. Mercy or no, Princess Anna no longer wished to be on first name familiar terms with that loser.

"No funny business! I heard you did some great things but I haven't seen anything myself yet. So, you're on trial from now on! I'll be watching you with eyes in the back of my head. You'd better be that 'amazing, heroic, good man' to Elsa or so help me, I'll—I'll have my Kristoff wipe the floor with your sorry behind!"

Giving Hans a withering look in warning, Anna threatens, trying to sound like the tough guy she was pretending to portray. Her truly good heart wanted to forgive more than her stubborn unyielding mind would permit right at the moment as she pokes the kneeling to the ground Hans' forehead with a harshly pointed finger boring into his skull.

"You heard the lady, pal." Kristoff reiterates his tiny wife's threat, his own pounded fist into the other hand visually displayed an alternative less palatable fate, for Kristoff was just as uncertain of this new entrant to their little rescue party as Anna of the man's true ulterior motives concerning Elsa.

He wouldn't admit it, but it was a comfort to Kristoff to have another man involved in this dangerous secret mission with him as they were about to enter some treacherous hungry wolf, wandering bandit and other unsavory wild animal laden roads amidst all these vulnerable females.

Although, the experienced mountain man wished it could've been anyone else than his former rival, as he signals Anna to get them into the shelter of the Grip lighthouse.

"Here, let me get the door for you, Hans." With not many hard feelings really, Anna 'accidentally' (or was it on purpose?) throws the lighthouse door open a bit too wide, it knocking into Han's already bruised chin and jaw, to gain a pained grunt from him.

"Oof!"

"Anna!" Elsa couldn't believe after all that soul searching she still had to reprimand her wayward little sis on the morals of forgiveness.

"Oh, sorry. I suppose I'm not that good at opening doors for you anymore." Anna pointedly gets one last jab in of their big romantic song and dance once upon a time right in his face as she gets to vent her-retreating vengeance in little ways.

"Ladies first." She smiles saucily and huffily saunters past him into the lighthouse.

"Forgive her?" Elsa apologetically smiles up at him, getting that warm feeling just to be present at his affable side again that quite disturbs her reserved heart—in a good way.
"Without a second thought. I deserved it. And you need never say such words to me, of all people. After all, it is I who requires her forgiveness. A woman's wrath is never quickly dissuaded. And rightly so. I am the one to take it on the chin, so to speak." Hans rubs his bashed in long noble chin with a droll air of resignation, causing Elsa to indeed grant him that special smile he's been waiting all his life for...

"...I believe it is always wise to listen carefully to what the fairer sex has to say." As Rapunzel delivers to him a steaming cup of hot coffee, an intuitive Hans senses her deep worry for her husband and his brother. And he gives his rowing partner Rapunzel an encouraging grateful smile, to which she tries to return, meeting his kind eyes before going back.

As he and Kristoff seriously discuss their next stratagem and traveling route logistics of entering some rugged unchartered territory by the open land, Hans seemed to reclaim some of his more characteristic well-bred bravado when conversing with another male. He stands up straight and tall to stretch the gorgeous yet aching arch of his stiff back from all those long hours of sitting in the small boat under the strenuous rowing conditions, mostly on his shoulders.

But even the cuts, bruises, muscle pulls and scarred pains he'd endured these past few days were a welcome blessing to be able to feel alive in a world she was in too. Hans' eager eyes gaze across the small lighthouse cove to where the three lovely ladies sat around the table they managed between the three of them to fill with nourishing food and drink. They were being entertained by Olaf's vivid retelling of his own recent heroic endeavors on naval frigates, dark mysterious ports, and pirate ships alike. The snowman didn't leave out much detail of their 200 km seabound journey's conversational revelations either, Olaf proving to be a grand gossip with a good auditory memory of every word he overheard.

"Whoa-whoa-whoa! Back up there, Olaf! If Eugene is Hans' half brother, and Eugene's our cousin because you've gone and married him, Rapunzel—then that means HANS WESTERGAARD IS PART OF OUR FAMILY, too?! You mean he can come to Christmas dinner?! No way! That's so wrong!" Anna nearly spits up the hot chocolate she had been guzzling that Elsa had rustled up for the group from the lighthouse's well-stocked stores ready to welcome any weary ocean travelers stopping by.

"Yep! Isn't discovering your family roots a fun thing! Maybe I'll find out that big 'ole Marshmallow is my long lost great uncle twice removed. Isn't it a small, small world where we laugh and play?" Olaf starts singing as he rattles off in his happy nonsense concerning family trees, much to Anna's disdain, Rapunzel's anxiety, and Elsa's keen interest that, as he collects his own coffee, Kristoff notices the way the queen's eyes gloss over as they float towards this new red-headed companion who was drying off the back of his soaked trousers, still on him, near the fire stove.

Returning to the stove, the two like-aged men share a companionable silence, though Hans' stare often sneaks to similarly land his gaze upon lovely Elsa in much the same way as she was looking across at her ideal man.

"A-hem." Hans suddenly notices a smug Kristoff noticing him noticing Elsa as Hans clears his throat in covered up embarrassment.

"How quickly can we travel to Trondheim by land did you say, sir?" His cunning mind was still tenacious in his resolve to, first and foremost, save brother Eugene from the pirate's clutches, thwart the evil pirate's plan, whatever it may be, in doing so whilst still retrieving Arendelle's holy treasures from being used for the pirate's wicked unknown purposes, if it took everything he had to do it.
"About a full 2 days' worth of travel, maybe a little more with so many more passengers for Sven alone. Maybe I can pick up a bigger sled and another reindeer for a two team sleigh…There's seven of us now, right?"

"Actually, eight. Although, my invaluable little friend here doesn't weigh much. Do you, Pascal?" The man's gallant chivalrous manner appealed to the chameleon. Pascal was usually accustomed to the less congenial company of Flynn Rider, who still called him a 'frog' to flick off the shoulder as Rapunzel's little companion listens in on the men's serious conversation planning to rescue the thieving rascal. The chameleon honestly missed the jaunty joking attitude of Flynn, as Pascal turns a proud shade of brown on Hans' forearm.

Hans was beginning to enjoy having little companionable friends like Pascal and Olaf around. He missed his noble steed Sitron these past two years more than his well bred, supposed-to be-detached-and-stoic sanity wished to admit.

*But who needs sanity anymore?* Hans runs his hands through his damp sideburns as eyes travel across the lighthouse to where the uncanny Olaf was still comically entertaining a giggling despite herself Anna, to connect with Elsa's eyes. Then both fix their mingled worried gazes upon the young woman pensively silent in the corner as she pretends to sleep on the bench.

But both knew she was weeping inside for the quiet hidden tears running endlessly down her scrunched up face in anxiety for the love of her life in some obscured danger beyond her reach…

"We will get him back alive. I promised we'd bring him home to her. And a gentleman's word-" The noble born man begins to vow Eugene's successful rescue for the tears of a loving woman in low tones aloud.

"—is his bond." Kristoff's innate goodness, not to mention Bulda and Cliff and growing up with his Troll family taught him every bit as well of honor and valor as any higher education military academy offered.

With a shared nod, Hans' passionate resolve on Eugene's behalf for Rapunzel's sake touches family man Kristoff. That little bit of empathic compassion pushes most of Kristoff's doubts aside as he decides to cautiously share Elsa's trust of this reformed villain.

So that only left Anna's trust to win.

Or lose, along this unpredictable fateful journey where life and death and destiny itself hangs in the balance of alliances forged...
With Prince Hans' logical input on the matter considered, it was decided that having two modes of transportation would be 'more advantageous' as the lofty-worded naval officer had described. Knowing these trade routes like the back of his mitten-ed hands from his ice-harvesting business expertise, Kristoff and an overworked Sven pull into a workman's trading post just a few kilometers beyond Grip's closest archipelago jump to Kristiansund port.

"Okay, we're here. I'll go see if Torvik has a reindeer ready sleigh available. Everybody stay with Sven." Cool Kristoff surveys from the corner of his eye how…cozy…some of the cramped passengers seemed to have been enjoying the ride thus far. It was obvious from the way his little wife's silently bristling face was scrunched up in disdain at how her sweet, innocent formerly standoffish-to-men sister, Elsa, had somehow discreetly made her way in the sleigh's backseat to nearly sit on the lap of one uncomplaining Prince Hans, who appeared rather comfortable with the arrangement from the smug look on his pleased mug.

A quiet cousin Rapunzel was seated next to Elsa back there, with a squirming Pascal and bouncing Olaf on her knee. The simple snowman was excited to see the new sights, with his mouth rattling off at practically every bump and turn of poor Sven's overfilled sled.

Anna pounds a protesting fist yet again on the unsuspecting luggage that just had to be piled between her and Kristoff in the front sled seat row. It was so high she could barely see over it's mound of supplies and baskets of food that the old fisherman and his wife, though they had little, gave much, as the Bible instructs us all of generosity's reward in Heaven someday.

But right now, Princess Anna surely didn't feel rewarded. All through the mid-afternoon ride, she had been constantly arching her aching neck over the parcels to see exactly what was going on with the backseat's occupants. It was a little too quiet (beyond Olaf's endless wagging tongue) for her protective taste, and now with Kristoff gone from the driver's seat, a grumbling Anna is able to topple over a few of the supply and food baskets so she could garner a better view.

And it was just in time to watch Hans, rather at liberty, tenderly lift Elsa's perched body from her comfortable leaning resting place on his shoulder and chest, to alight from the vehicle.

"I'll be back, my Sleeping Beauty." He boldly whispers the fairy tale alluded tease directly in the queen's groggily slumbering ear so only she could hear.

"Oh! Did I fall asleep? Please excuse me." An embarrassed awakening Elsa didn't sleep much the previous night, for worry, and somehow had felt safe and warm here in Sven's swaying back and forth sled ride enough to doze off.

But she had no idea Prince Hans' welcome chest would be her headrest pillow! How did my head get there and how long was I there? The demure shy Queen blushes intensely at the shameful thought as she sits up, straightening her rumpled dress to regain some level of sensible decorum.

"Hey! Kristoff said to—Oh, never mind! You can get out and stay out for all I care!" Anna
inhospitably yells out after the tall, thin man departs once he lifts his long legs over the sled's edge to disappear around the corner where Kristoff had gone reindeer hunting in the rear of the outpost sled yard.

"Anna! I thought you said you were going to forgive Hans." A chastising Rapunzel, her rowing mate's finest advocate, defends the dashing red-headed figure as he moves just out of earshot.

"I said I was gonna 'try.' That's different from actually doing it." Anna retorts. Just watching that guy wear their signature grey Arendelle cloak coat again maddened her to some degree. She turns to her sister.

"Elsa? I don't want you to be so darn chummy with him. Didn't I split you two up on opposite sides of the sleigh? What happened to that, Rapunzel? Huh?! You were supposed to sit between them!" A seething, whispered Anna questions her elder cousin.

"We~ll…I felt rather ill a while back, and needed to…you know…over the side. I think I'll be needing to do that a lot if the roads are this bumpy." The green-around-the-gills, rather red in the face with her stomach turned young woman answers Anna's inquisition with all honest innocence as she places a halting hand over her mouth once again with a gag.

"Don't worry! I didn't get hit! See, still Snow White, heigh ho! I always wanted to say that, hee hee." Olaf sings in his happy way, branch hands displaying his pristine whiteness proudly.

"Oh." Was Anna's only response as her anger is deflated at her inexplicably sickly ill relation. With a frustrated sigh, Anna turns back in her seat with a pout and rolls her eyes.

Well, this is all stupid Cousin Eugene's fault! And now Hans is his brother?! Those jerks are two of a kind! ...Anyway, I hope we find him safe for Rapunzel's sake.

Anna's spinning, addled brain burns the non-present former thief for being at the root of this unsavory road trip, (Among other queasy, sickening problems for Rapunzel that he could be rightfully blamed for.) that facilitated his new little brother, one Hans Westergaard, to climb aboard their once happy and contented ride through life. A silently steaming and thoroughly exasperated Anna throws her hands up in the air in the front seat.

"So, Torvik, is this sorry yearling the only reindeer ya got on you?" After taking a quick look around the trading outpost's back barn offerings, the reindeer expert in Kristoff Bjorgman was not at all impressed.

Beside the singular, knobbly-legged young reindeer cross-eyed buck that was not yet harness broken in, the remainder of the stalls that were usually brimming full of active and robust large antlered reindeer were literally vacant.

"Yah, many pardons, my young friend. But the ice herders already cleared Old Torvik out this season, a few weeks' back. The price of feed and the economy has been hard on reindeer sales this year. Sooo, big-hearted man I am, I gave them a bulk-rate deal that they snapped up to get ready for the early winter that's predicted to be a doozy! Yoo-whoo!" The wide, large-bodied, aging trader whacks the cud-chewing, knock-kneed reindeer on the rump with his playful call. The poor
beastie leapt into the air to nearly fall back down on his collapsing, weak knees.

"All except this derpy, wee fellow, that is. But you can have him at a very good price. He's a happy thing." The middle Norwegian inlet bay peasant pulls the beleaguered creature's mouth into a toothy smile to match his own. The thick-accented shopkeeper's ever-present smile isn't fazed at all by Kristoff’s big frown as his sale's pitch to this rare customer continues on.

"But if you're not interested in him, we also have a wide variety of sleds available, as you can see, out in the yard. Vis-à-vis, cutters, those newfangled bobsleds—if I can direct your eyes over to some modern models that are really nice, well-made, and only slightly upgraded by myself. Whoo-hee! Just look at how large and luxurious that hard top brougham closed carriage model and it's spoke wheels, I imported all the way from Oslo! Oh! And here is a nifty one! Totally enclosed! I obtained it from some comrade, claiming to be Siberian, brought all the way from Russia! I gave him a super deal on a matched team of Fjord draught horses in trade." Trader Torvik pauses before a large wooden box on thick, heavy duty runners that was completely enclosed, save for holes in front for the reins to pass through.

The sturdy frame that must've been built to withstand heavy snows in the deep, more Arctic northerly regions was like a little cabin room with several small tiny windows and even a small furnace inside this Vozok dark, protected interior.

"Wow. This could come in handy for a private honeymoon trip…Ah, ahem…" Kristoff's young male hormones seem to have an imagination all their own as he peers from the lifted top down into the cozy living quarters hidden within this rather intriguing new Vozok sleigh that his expert eyes had never glimpsed before.

"…No, Torvik, I'm only interested in a reasonably priced, plain shaft and yoke double runner sled." Kristoff recovers his all-business, conservative with hard-earned money persona as he slams the inviting lid back down.

"Whoo-hoo! Greetings to you over there, young man! Torvik vill be right there!" But old Torvik's selling attention focuses away from an uncooperative Kristoff over to the tall, stately man who appears in the horse stables, inspecting each of the horses' teeth and hooves, as if he was an equestrian expert.

"We have a wide variety of fine, well-bred steeds here at Touring Torvik's Trading Post! Woo-hoo!" He drops well known 'cheapskate' Bjorgman like a sack of furry moldy potatoes for this Providential newcomer's potention likelihood and sale possibility.

"Hey! I was talking to you first." Kristoff complains, having an itchy feeling this oozing charm affluent guy could mean trouble for his wheeling and dealing wallet.

"Ah, yes, hello, sir. I've been admiring the muscular builds and willing temperaments of these competent horses. I can clearly see these Norwegian Dolahest and Friesians are both quite strong and elegant, though their coats would all benefit from a fresh grooming as well as a good rubbing down."

"Certainly! Of course! Torvik does all the grooming personally, like clockwork, every morning! I just missed today, on account of a little cold. Ah-choo."
"Yes, the attention would be much appreciated, wouldn't it, my dear…Irisherende?" From the way Hans was stroking the just traded in, grateful eyed, much ignored pure white mare's neck where a name tag hung, one could see how much the equine-loving horseman missed pampering his own steed.

"I think you'll have to wake up a bit earlier then, Torvik. This strong little fellow says he hasn't been fed in two days. And didn't I tell you to stay in the sled, mister?" Kristoff moves his address from Torvik to Hans as enters the trader's barn as he sticks his own large hands through the wooden stall bars to scrub and pat the whinnying Dolahest draft horse's back, after scooping a handful of oats from a pail up to the creature's drooling muzzle.

Ignoring his own reprimand, Hans' green eyes turn to narrow on Kristoff in new curiosity.

"And that snowy lady you've got there needs a tender scratch behind her ears." Kristoff advises, and a bewildered Hans immediately does as instructed. The sleek, alabaster coated mare's highly gratified whinny, under his touch, mystifies Hans.

"You know your beasts." He smiles at Kristoff with a raised eyebrow, to which the taller man only offers a self-satisfied shrug.

"Now look, Torvik. We don't want any horses. They're too high upkeep. Is there anyone in Kristiansund willing to sell their own reindeer if I buy a sled off you?"

"But your friend here has his eye on this special rare one-of-a-kind pure white albino beauty, just come in from the far north." After launching his best sales pitch to an intrigued wide-eyed Hans and an unimpressed scoffing Kristoff, who folds his annoyed arms, the outpost trader gives the pair an insinuating look.

"Aren't you two gentlemen traveling together?" A confused Torvik asks the unlikely companions, having received completely mixed signals on what they were looking to buy.

"Yes, sir, we are." Hans answers honestly, civil to a fault.

"No, we are not!" However, Kristoff gets the big man's implied debauched drift at the pair's bantering raillery and how normally rational Kristoff spoke quixotically of a 'honeymoon' earlier. "No, wait! My new wife's waiting in the sled!" Wanting to produce Anna as proof positive, Kristoff cries out, his face a deep red in mortification.

"Oh, good! Even better! On a honeymoon with friends! Two sleds are always better than one, Torvik says!" The man bounces back, laughing at his own joke. "And if you take two of these fine horses, I will give you a super-duper, just married, half-off deal on that large Russian Vozak you were admiring earlier."

"Nah, too heavy." Though tempting for all its safety features, the big brute of the Russian wooden box posed its own weighty problems that would slow their urgent mission down.

"I vill throw in a Pulka, directly from the Lapland mountains. Just right size to stash the little wife!"

"Too small." An arms-crossed, no-nonsense, practical and prudent Kristoff quickly dismisses the traditional Lap sled, called an Ahkio, that was generally utilized for small mountain rescues. He had been familiar with the sleds, since living beside the ice harvesters who had close ties to the Sami mountain reindeer herdsman in his youth.

"You are a hard fellow to please, Mister Bjorgman!" The aged, adept salesman throws his hands up
in frustration at this big, blonde tough customer, who had visited his shop every year since he was a vee little chap.

And still he was an Ort pinching tightwad.

The two stare each other down with furrowed, price-challenging eyes.

"Please, excuse me. But if we purchase this sleigh with the modified canvas roof cover and smooth-sliding longitudinal skate runners at full price—" Prince Hans suddenly interrupts the hardcore bartering and trading action going on between Kristoff and the trader, with a slick deal all of his own making.

"—will you allow us to merely borrow two of your fine handsome steeds with a gentleman's promise to return the pair in healthy condition, or double their cost, upon our return in a fortnight?"

"Hmmm…” Torvik always did like a bit of a gamble. "Double my money, you say? Cash on the barrel for this special, hand built, first-rate sleigh—modelled after the newest elegant, roomy French style six passenger vis-à-vis bobsleigh?"

"—In other words, 'refurbished and used.'" Pragmatic Kristoff points out.

"Used? Used gently, very gently." Torvik relents when his normal sour mood at nightmare customers like Kristoff is soon beguiled by the blonde's statesman-like companion's pervasive winning smile.

"Still, anyone can see it is a magnificent craft, personally cared for by an expert who knows what he's doing with fine, sleighing vehicles." Hans bolsters the puffed up trader and his sleigh with a calm winsome smile.

One catches more flies with honey…

"But, it's just a—" Kristoff lumbers over to check out the covered sleigh that Hans had picked out, to proverbially and physically 'kick its runners'.

"I realize you are far more an expert in the field of winter vehicles than I, and I bow to your sagacity. However, I do believe it's an exclusive deal that we may be wise to take into consideration, Mr. Bjorgman. Especially consider this kind gentleman's gracious gesture in bestowing upon you and Princess Anna a wedding discount."

Just then, as if on cue, while still (mildly) obeying her husband, Anna had driven a sneaky Sven around the trading outpost corner, so she could get a better view of watching that Westergaard with eyes in the back of her head. She didn't trust the devious man alone with her sweet Kristoff.

A squinting Anna blinks in the sunlight at the three men, irritatated to watch Hans give Elsa a smooth little wave and cocky smile that elicits a crimson cheeked blush and lowered eyes still at her earlier shame, much to his pleasure.

"Oh, my! Your good lady's the Princess? Half off the sleigh in celebration of the happy event! Just two hundred speciedalers, along with Torvik's best blessings on your successful marriage, my children!" A patriotic, and heart-happy Torvik even lowers the price, despite his 'better' nature, upon the honor of glimpsing the princess and…Could that be the—? Full of Norwegian pride, all thoughts of inflated money-making fall to the wayside upon seeing his majestic Queen.

"Then, perhaps, you'll allow our lovely ladies to give their personal approval on which of these fine horses we will accept on loan from your stables, Mr. Torvik. We must be departing soon—time is
of the essence."

"You must admire a young man who is able to outfox me with such a good deal, and still have fire in his belly, eh, ladies?" The shop owner gives Elsa, Rapunzel and Anna, still in their sled, a wink at good-looking Hans' wily business sense, causing Anna to feel now like she could 'upchuck' as well at the overwhelming praise of that 'too wonderful' dirty rotten scoundrel.

"Yes! Let us get this exciting show on the road for your new bride, by all means! Beautiful Highnesses, Your Majesty, welcome to Touring Torvik's humble trading post stables, and massage therapy lounge, on the side. Please, take your choice of my finest steeds. I give them on loan as a favor to Your gracious Majesty. And I vill even throw in a free session for the blushing bride and her lady friends in my massage lounge." The portly man bows to the three shocked yet smiling females, who were wondering how all this came about in the few short minutes that the pair of men had left them.

Hans, playing the perfect gentleman to a tee, waves off the amatuer masseuse's offer politely, much to the women's teeth-clenched relief. Hans then immediately strides over to the silvery mare he had already made proper acquaintance of in admiring the Friesian's sleek and powerful good bone structure, as well as her great presence, as the satin horse carries herself with innate elegance under his expert hand.

He leads the white marble coated mare out to Sven's sleigh to canter before Elsa's eyes for the Queen's approved consent of his personal favorite choice.

"Her name is Iriserende—I believe it's rather fitting for this iridescent platinum beauty, don't you?" Hans praises the white horse's high steeping gait, well-chiseled beauty, pearlized sloping shoulders and feather-like, long silky alabaster hair left untrimmed deliberately on her lower legs for effect.

A reserved Elsa gives a slight nod into his beaming eyes and he brings the snowy statuesque, yet gentle and docile pale mare closer the sleigh for Elsa to softly pat the silvery tuft of hair on Iriserende's natural white forehead that signaled a purebred.

"She's marvelous." Elsa whispers as queen and mare's large feminine eyes meld in warm understanding to land expectantly full of anticipation up at the distinguished prince, who had been unabashedly fawning over them both.

"Okay, Torvik, since you don't have ANY other reindeer…sorry, Sven. I guess we'll take on this little guy here." After having a walk around the stables, Kristoff decides on a Dolahest draft horse he had spoken up for earlier.

'Guddy' might not have been as big nor blustery as some of the other drafts in the trader's barn, standing at only fourteen or less hands high, but the Norwegian dole was known for good pulling power and agility. Kristoff opens the latch of his stall to untether Guddy and bring the well-muscled, short legged yet sturdy draft horse to meet first Sven. He snorts in shrugged authorization and Kristoff smiles enigmatically in response.

"Sven, this is Guddy. Guddy, Sven." He introduces the animals as if they were sentient, well-mannered people, and they acknowledge one another in their sniffing quadruped way.

A ungraceful Anna crawls out of the sled to sit directly on the new horse's surprised yet permissive back in her impetuous way.

"Anna. What on earth do you think you're doing?" Kristoff chuckles at his vivacious wife's lively spontaneity at fearlessly bareback riding their new gelding friend.
"Taking the horse you 'borrowed' for a test drive, of course. Papa always said that you should never purchase a horse without taking it for a run to see that it doesn't drop dead. Giddyap, Guddy!"

Though her father did not exactly say all of that, Anna needed this little bit of liberating emotional escape as she gives Elsa and Hans a backward hostile glare right about now.

"S'pose that's a 'we'll probably take him' from my little wife. Okay, Torvik, let's get this milk-fed horse hitched up to that sleigh my friend-and I say the word 'friend' loosely-chose for us." The way Kristoff distastefully said the word 'horse' too, (he preferred reindeer every time) was almost funny.

And he knew Prince Hans just got his own way before their journey was even starting already, and that awareness left a bad taste in his gullet too.

*Not gonna let that happen too often on this trip, pal. But with a covered sleigh for the girls in who knows what weather, I guess it worked out okay.*

The good guy in Kristoff couldn't help but honestly afford the ivory horse a kind, consenting smile which Elsa proudly shares when dab-hand equine connoisseur Hans actually takes the reins (both metaphorically and physically speaking) and, unexpectedly, not afraid to get his royal hands dirty, rather as a trained groomsmen would, goes down to his knees to lean and stretch his regal red-head beneath the new covered sleigh.

With swift purposeful actions, Hans attaches the bow and shaft top with the neck yoke and horse pull for hook up like a seasoned pro. He then agilely swings back up to his feet, balancing his weight to hang around the horse's pale neck and flash an awestruck Elsa a triumphant smile. For in this equestrian world, Prince Hans was truly in his favorite element now.

After a quick rub down and grooming with a wire horse brush that he had gallantly taken from the bucket of cold, soapy water, as if he's given many steeds a hands on curry all his life, Prince Hans of the Southern Isles expertly and deftly attaches the horse collar harness around the sedate beast's proud neck. He reemerges from behind the fully attached vehicle with a proud air.

An impressed, wide-eyed Kristoff gives Hans a 'hmphing' nod. He had watched carefully that each yoke strap piece of tackle had been correctly positioned and the horse's reins weren't too slack. After the larger man concluded the spoiled prince'd done it all right, Kristoff slaps both horse and Prince on the back and Hans does all he can not to wince in pain at the friendly blow.

"Oh, sorry…forgot the back wound. I'll just go and fetch my little firecracker before she tires out old Guddy." Before he goes, Kristoff gives Hans a conciliatory cringing smile when he realizes his pain-causing error.

But he gets recompensed in a way, when Torvik intercepts him with an impatient palm extended in wait of an already discounted payment. Conservative Kristoff was always loathe to part with his hard-earned cash, but he had to give some regard to Hans for somehow managing to strike a pretty good deal with the money wise old trader. The rich boy surprised the young entrepreneur with his business savvy.

*What other tricks do you got up your sleeve?*

"Anna! Stop running around in circles! You're gonna wear him out before we even start!" Kristoff races around to halt the rash girl as she recklessly gallops the new borrowed steed around the small corral until Kristoff himself was dizzy to watch.
"Are you okay?" A sympathetic Rapunzel asks Hans as he comes up to them, feeling his stiffened back hurt in her compassionate eyes.

"I've been worse." Hans answers, sucking in a breath between his teeth as he shakes his smiling head to her concern.

"Oh! Come here!...please..." Calling out of nowhere, Elsa suddenly grows timid after she had reached out a delicate hand in almost royal command, for a pleasantly awed Hans to obey. His recovery from the blow was now complete in his astonishment.

"Your wish is my..." He begins with his newfound, reinstated flirtatious bravado, but when Elsa's pale thin hand can't help itself from reaching out to smooth back Hans' mused hair from the industry of his hand at assembling the horse to be harnessed to the new sleigh, he finishes the cocky phrase with less tease and more breathlessness passing between their eyes.

"...command..."

The tentatively doe-eyed Queen Elsa had been thoroughly impressed with not only his able physical activity, but also Hans' diplomatic genius in negotiating on his feet by wrapping the businessman around his wily finger, and maybe a little bit more of her once frozen heart, too.

But their little tete-a-tete doesn't go unnoticed by Anna as she and Guddy, the 'Gudsbrandsdale' horse, come galloping back at fullspeed, almost running a thankfully quick stepping (for him) Hans down as she and horse rush right between the man and the sled.

"Yeah, he's a good boy." Grateful Guddy did exactly as directed, Anna whacks the sturdy shoulders of the palomino colored gelding with one hand and another on her huffing for breath when he finally catches up from chasing her around the yard, Kristoff's broad shoulder.

"Shall I do the honors again, Mr. Bjorgman?" Yet formal spoken, Princely Hans kindly offers to hitch the maize colored horse to the large sleigh as responsible, husband-like Kristoff reaches up to help his wife down from her sandy ride. But he has to scramble to grasp the nearly tumbling down Anna, as she, in her recklessness, almost clobbers him silly on the way down.

"Yeah, if you would...I've got my hands full..." Trusting the man's competency in this area, Kristoff chokes out in a high-registered voice, bending over as he fights for air again after little Anna's kicking feet knocked against him in certain, unmentionable places.

Oblivious Anna didn't realize her wild glomping had this effect, as Kristoff puts her squarely down on the ground and she skitters away from her temporarily disabled, doubled over guy.

"Okay, gang! Everybody outta Sven's sleigh!" Her head cleared by the brisk, afternoon ride and with a new plan of action in mind, plotting against that despicable redhead, a bossy Anna slaps her hands together to get the group's attention.

"Yay! I love new sleigh smell! This is so exciting! Oops, oh no! My precious carrot! Not another one to watch out for!" Olaf, in his own hapless way, bounces from Sven's sleigh with a spill. All three of his snow mound parts go flying in different directions though his head unfortunately lands right where a hungry Guddy can take a chew, to which Sven himself shockingly comes to the rescue. He purloins the forever-fresh orange veggie into his furry reindeer large wet mouth instead.

One amused glance and subsequent hug from Rapunzel and a pointy accusing finger from Pascal, the naughty, amused reindeer spits out the carrot to deposit Olaf's 'nose' back in place on his face, just as the rest of him is reassembled by a nonplussed Hans, who had discovered the magic
snowman's midsection rolling beside him on the ground under the sleigh's tight bend horse pull he was industriously attaching together.

Walking across the way, Hans plunks the frosty friend's three parts back together with a bemused smirk.

"Thank you for that…Prince Hans." Swallowing her slumbered humiliation now melted in his warm eyes, Elsa says appreciatively, as yet again, her hands push back his one messy lock of misbehaving slicked back red hair. She had gathered enough courage to speak his name to his face at last.

"It's 'Just Hans,' Elsa!" Olaf calls out giddily as he hobbles past the dazed, staring at one another pair. Hans gentlemanly offers Elsa his warm hand to aid her graceful form as she descends from the sled.

"Oh, Olaf." Elsa giggles in shame of the tactless snowman, as Anna quickly scurries between them to whisk Elsa off to the new sleigh.

"He's right, you know. It is just 'Hans' from now on, if you please…Elsa." He was growing increasingly bolder from all their intimate exchanges as he gives her a meaningful look. It causes her heart to skip an extra beat at the mere sound of his velvety voice speaking her first name in such familiarity, without any title.

"I do please…Hans…" Her breathy whisper carries on the wind back to him, over Anna's disapproving shoulder, as muttering some rude expletives at the oily slimy snake charmer no good blank-blank, the younger princess pulls her sister away from the red foxy devil into the new covered horse-drawn sleigh.

All the afternoon's invigorating exercise, plus her lips uttering his name alone, added some extra testosterone to this never depleted male, as he relieves some of it by lovingly stroking Iriserende's feathery mane he had brushed out earlier when he too approaches the new sleigh.

All the while, Hans' bewitched eyes never cease to follow the Arendelle sovereign's trail into the vis-à-vis sleigh.

And Elsa's icy pale hair glimmers in the noon overhead sun as she peers out to steal a shy glance at him, starkly opposed to Anna's suspicious glare…
"Road Trip"

Act I

Chapter 17

"So, Anna, how is your honeymoon going? I don't want to seem whiny after we had at least those first few thrilling days in Troll Valley and then at that dumb Oaken's barn..." After displaying a goofy smile at the vivid not-too-distant memories of being with his little new wife, Kristoff Bjorgman pauses here for a gulp of cold air to calm his stirring senses. "...But this second half part of our honeymoon has been a real let down for me, I'll tell ya that. How are you holding up?"

Some forty kilometers from Touring Torvik's Trading Post later, the big boned blonde turns from his mumbled mouthed meanderings as he's driving his sleigh to gaze upon his adorable life's chosen partner seated in her spot beside him on their "Royal Ice Harvester and Deliverer" vehicle's front bench—

—to have nothing but the cool, crisp, later afternoon's early dusk cold biting winds answer him back.

If he knew her train of thought well, his sweet little 'firecracker,' Princess Anna of Arendelle herself, was surely set ablaze with her inner powder keg of fiery combustion within the horse-drawn enclosed sleigh following close behind the experienced ice traveler and his trusty reindeer's sled.

And from the way Anna's cute face looked to be glowering at that double horse drawn sleigh's driver, Kristoff did know his Anna pretty darn well.

Especially after that rude way, there was no other word for it, she had bossed Elsa, Rapunzel, Pascal, Olaf and himself included, whilst the designated driver of the other sleigh, Hans Westergaard, received a literal cold shoulder, when some baskets filled with cold gherkins 'accidentally' spilled out onto the injured man's lap as Anna mightily hefted them onboard, refusing Hans' offers of aid to carry the luggage aboard for his new passengers.

Anna had arranged the seating on the new Vis-à-vis carriage after a few terse arguments from her queasy-stomached cousin who preferred the covered sleigh's more comfortable interior and dual-horse team smoother ride over a snorting, insulted Sven's open sleigh.

And when an acquiescing Elsa had too heartily agreed for an unhappy Anna's taste, especially when the shocked and offended youngest girl was informed that she wouldn't be the one to Captain the new sleigh that she and Kristoff had just purchased, it was just too much for our sweet firebrand.

Though Anna DID have some 'moderate' experience in driving his sled with Sven, Kristoff was not at all convinced in the wisdom of allowing his 'still in training', reckless little gal to be at the helm of the new, untested craft—not to mention an unmatched pair of yet unpredictable horses in Sven's sturdy, compensating for her driver's error place.

This new sleigh required someone more competent at equines to take the reins. He may not have liked the man, and he was nowhere close to trusting the former treasonous criminal, but fair and
honest Kristoff had to rationalize the greater judiciousness of letting horse-proficient Prince Hans handle the craft rather than his accident-prone, haphazard, klutzy wife.

After all, though Kristoff was no chauvinist by any means, when it came down to it, to be able to master a brand new mismatched team of horses, harnessed together to a hopefully not rickety, modified trade-in sleigh, a man's firm hand was necessary.

By either luck or curse, this redheaded guy was all Kristoff had to rely on, at hand.

"Isn't having me sit here next to you almost the same as having Anna? I'd have loved to have been with you guys to visit the trolls and the valley. I love your troll family, Kristoff. And, oh, oh! I wish I was there! Oaken's barn sounded like fun, too, even if he is dumb." Olaf chants until Kristoff rolls his eyes at his snowy front seat passenger. The blonde was in frustration at Anna's decision to stick by her sister like glue, especially where that guy was concerned.

"I'm glad you weren't..." Kristoff mumbles under his breath, recalling with a pleased smile some intimate honeymoon affairs between himself and his energetic Anna that one curious snowman was not invited to witness.

"Well, Anna said you wouldn't be lonely if I stayed with you and Sven to keep you company, while the three girls and Pascal would rather be up there with JustHans on his sleigh. So here I am! What do you want to chat about next, Kristoff? Elsa's been training me to be a good listener as well as a humorous conversationalist. But I can sing if you like! I love to sing, especially 'In Summer!'" His dark charcoal eyes gaze about the falling dusk as he composes his new song to an old familiar tune.

"I feel the warm summer breeze,
See bunnies and hares hop dandelion leaves
White throated dippers fly past the birds and the bees
In summer!"  Ba ba ba ba ba ba ba!

The tactless Olaf begins to warble out rather too loudly for Kristoff's now earshattered taste.

Carried on the wind from ahead, to hear the raised volume of the happy snowman's new summer serenade to the moving landscape all around him, the two females—one older and one younger, onboard the Vis-à-vis sleigh who knew their share of the 'birds and the bees' look to the third young woman, aged between the formerly mentioned experienced married women, who did not.

Elsa was now seated across from Anna and Rapunzel in this state-of-the-art vehicle with the comfortable plush interior, in wide roomy three passenger benches that faced one another.

The unlikely driver was raised higher at his outdoor post at the helm in the forward section of the sleigh, keeping his eyes on the road most of the time during the uncomfortable silent kilometers. Every now and then, though, Hans Westergaard's glance would steal back to gaze upon the back of the head of the platinum blonde almost longingly.

Confronted before with the perplexing reality of keeping her sweet, innocent, elder sister at a safe arm's distance away from that devious scoundrel, 'take charge' Anna conceded to both men's judgement that Elsa and Rapunzel—the two less outdoorsy types than herself—would be better off in the smoother riding, covered from the elements sleigh.

After Kristoff had agreed it was for the best, Anna had given in to the perspicacity of their argument. She would just have to personally join them in the new sleigh, as 'watcher on the wall' per se, to satisfy her own suspicion as to Mr. Westergaard's questionable honor and dependability.
So once a few food baskets and immediate necessities were distributed out to the new sleigh's ample roominess, Anna abandoned her new husband to unexpectedly jump onboard the new sleigh, just the moment before Hans, after an earnest conversation with Kristoff on travel length and route choices, had climbed back up to his driver's seat.

Upon swiveling around with a coy smile to welcome the two lovely young ladies and Pascal, who would be his new 'shipmates' on this landlocked journey, Hans disappointed grin was instead greeted by the twisted lip smirk of the unscheduled third female passenger, whose opinion of him, was, by far, less favorable.

And understandably so. Perhaps this journey is the opportunity for me to make amends with Princess Anna and maybe, also get a chance to prove myself unpretentious in her sister's eyes...

Hans’ eyes smile as he envisions the pretty face of Queen Elsa in his head, glowing her indescribable shine back at him, bringing a verse to his repentant mind.

'But if we walk in the light as He is the light, when we have fellowship with one another, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son, cleanses us from all sin.'

Though a dubious Anna's stern standoffish warning to 'back off' turns his expression to a doleful resigned smile, he comforts himself with the prayer of hope springing eternal nonetheless.

"'Knock and the door shall be opened unto you'?" Hans whispers aloud to the horses ahead as he gently, yet firmly, holds the unbalanced reins as would a true, professional driver. He instinctively acknowledged each of the two vastly different horses at his command. Albino Fresian Iriserende's sleek elegant trot required a loose rein in his left hand, while he had to hold tautly Guddy (fine name for a creature of this noble line), the draft horse Dolahest gelding who was more accustomed to utilizing his shorter body's muscular pulling power as a pack horse for agriculture purposes.

But Prince Hans had a deft hand for manipulating any horse, even more than he did for humans. Soon, the mismatched equestrian pair were well under control after a few kilometers under the enthusiast horseman's able hands.

Losing the Biblical quote's inner meaning with a snide sneering: "What's with this guy and doors anyway?! Does he have a thing with doors?" Anna mockingly murmurs just loudly enough for Hans to hear up front. Her pent up ire rises with each kilometer of watching Elsa blush under each of Hans' stolen glances back at her.

That was the foremost reason why Anna had switched Rapunzel and her sister's seats. Anna believed that Elsa's back to the front would garner less unwanted eye contact.

"Olaf is correct to extol the splendors of your beautiful country's summer season." Leaning down to speak with the compliment meant chiefly for Elsa's ears, Hans gazes around the fast-paced sleigh with enlarged, clear eyes. The Danish prince had been in studied awe of the Norwegian stunning sunset cast over the glimmering waters of the fjord peppered lands to the west, the lush green fields to the south, and the rolling snow capped mountains looming in the north and east—where they were headed, en route to Trondheim.

"I'd been on that ship so long, I had almost forgotten how magnificent a countryside vista could be." A few quiet kilometers later, Hans calls back, once again trying to break the ice.

"Why, thank you. I believe it is splendid countryside." Elsa comes out of her shell to cordially respond, as a ruler proud of her nation. A protective Anna subsequently kicks her sister's feet with her own, with a conspicuous shaking head and look of reprimand to 'not speak to him' back at her.
"That's right! This beautiful place is a far cry from that stuffy galley you had to be crammed in—working your poor fingers to the bone, cooking and cleaning that ship and help rig it, too! All for that mean old patch-eyed pirate." An observant Rapunzel saves the conversation from that uncomfortable pace as she projects her voice forward so Hans could hear up in the driver's seat. The exchange with her new brother-in-law was a welcome change to take her mind off her worries for a bit.

"If accomplished with an uncomplaining heart, there is pleasure to be found in even the most mundane, unsavory tasks if we keep His presence close in times of trouble." Hans answers Rapunzel's kind eyes with a pair of his own.

"And it sure helps, too, if you find the right companion to share it beside you. I still can't imagine, you, of all people, doing the washing up and chopping up vegetables and peeling potatoes like a scullery maid in that dark little kitchen, Elsa!" With an intimidating smile and nudging elbow to her rib, Rapunzel tries to add to their chat her prim and proper cousin. "I wish I could've been there to see you do it all." She squeezes Elsa's hands.

"Yes, she was quite invaluable and amazing in the galley. I never did get the chance to tell you how impressed I was at how quickly you picked up scalloping and sautéing techniques." Hans not only verbally praises Elsa's skills with his gracious words, but he also reaches an ambidextrous arm back to lightly touch her long length of braided silken hair with pride.

After allowing herself a close-eyed split second reverie of pure bliss at his tender touch, reserved and timid Elsa suddenly remembers herself and that they had an audience. She stiffens in her seat, with her back to his sweetly yearning hand. She becomes rigidly straight and tense, before peeking up to look very, very guiltily into Anna's boiling, fuming eyes, after the younger more experienced in these matters girl puts what she thinks is two and two together.

Elsa tries to imagine how incriminating Rapunzel's teasing words from before must've sounded to her sister's suspicious ear.

"HEY! HANDS OFF THE BRAID, FANCY MAN!" Anna jumps up from her laid back position, in her previous attempt to appear civilly disinterested in anything that man had to say about the weather and landscapes and such. But when her eyes catch sight of this obvious display in the corner of her peripheral vision, (which nearly counted as the back of her head as previously warned) the feisty girl reacts by instantly slapping his forearm away from so familiarly touching Elsa's tresses, as Hans pulls back in contrite self-reproach.

"Anna! Don't freak out!" Rapunzel berates the youngest member of their team with a fierce whisper.

"And where were you, Cousin, when that louse was being all 'impressed and amazed' with Elsa! ALONE in that dark galley with him—all those days?! And nights, too, I suppose!" Spitting nickels, in her own pointed whisper at Rapunzel, with fury in her accusing eyes that were growing smaller and more irritated with each quickly passing kilometer the sleigh was traveling.

"Anna! Such a thing! Please stop being so rude!" A distressed Elsa tries to quietly quell her sister's anger and pulls both their heads closer to the center of the sleigh for more privacy. She begs her offensive sibling to lower her lashing out, unctuous tone, directed at the gentleman above them.

"Who's being rude?!" A hmphing, self-righteous Anna shrugs in defiance as she wraps a fiercely possessive, shielding arm around Elsa's unsettled head.
"Uhh…you are. Hans probably heard everything you said." Rapunzel retorts close into Anna's red ear in a reprimanding whisper like an older sibling, knowing Hans' own ears must be burning from all the slander.

The compassionate female felt the need to defend her lifeboat mate, who just happened to also be Eugene's little brother.

*No, I can't think about Eugene right now…*

Rapunzel's tummy gets nauseated again from all the upset, despite the more stable ride. She sits back in her seat, breathing hard as she can't halt the flood of her husband's many handsome faces flowing through her brain.

"Well, *I don't care* if he—" In full blown combustion, a twisted lip faced Anna begins to shout out in a noisy spout of rebellious defiance, upon finding out that her as pure as snow big sister *may* have been tainted by that feigning to be a gentleman cad on that blasted boat ride.

But Rapunzel snaps out of her unbalanced, bilious state enough to throw a quick palm to the gutsy girl's fire-breathing mouth.

"Anna! Hush!" The cautioning brunette shakes her bristling cousin's trembling with rage shoulders. "Why do you keep trying to split them apart now that they've found each other again?" She hisses in a whisper soft enough so that Elsa couldn't overhear.

"Anna, please try to understand! He's been so kind to us!" Elsa finally finds her voice enough to plead, her customary high strains at a low rumble as she tries to contain her own surging confused emotions puzzling over this perhaps ill-fated relationship with the man Anna still obviously despised.

So how could I ever entertain the thought of...even considering that I might be... in love with him?

What do I even know of love? I know nothing of its mysteries beyond the fact that my sister's love means more to me than any...perchance ephemeral...passing pounding of my fool heart?

Queen Elsa of Arendelle's self tormented childhood, despite having the advantage of loving, caring parents who only wished to help their daughter, was spent in such fear and doubt that she could ever live a normal happy life. It made her never certain of the emotions she always kept her distance from to ever thaw her frozen heart fully, until recently.

These past two years with her dearest friend—the other half of her soul—her beloved sister, Anna, gave Elsa the certainty that if her heart was to continue to beat, it would be only with the encouragement of Anna's warmth right at her side.

The Lord God above blessed her with a gift—that little sister who had chosen to sacrifice her own life, to save another she loved far more.

Me.

Oh, Anna, what do I do now? Allowing myself emotions is so new to me. I'm not even certain what I feel. I only know I don't want to lose what we've got now—help me, please!

To look into her sister's usually happy eyes, now glaring back at her, Elsa agonizes the emotional options within her spinning mind.

Silently calling out for Anna to rescue her again, every confused upset thought begins to form ice
crystals across Elsa's entire body, right down to her trembling fingers. She squeezes them tightly together, wringing her hands, trying to stop the dangerous frosted outcome from unfurling.

But right now, with a crazed-eyed Anna turning her back to Elsa stubbornly, perturbed that she could fall for this...this...charmer's sly tricks as well, despite being warned off, the sun sinks low beneath the horizon and the cool night's moon emerges with its empty, vacuumed absence of warmth.

A clammy and cold Elsa couldn't find her way out of the ice storm spiraling around her petrified heart as the icy thought solidifies of losing the love of her adored sister in exchange for the dream of a forbidden love with...

Someone she knew she could never have.

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me..."

The beautiful ethereal voice of a man who was once a high ranged tenor choir boy in his youth chooses this serendipitous moment to bridge the tense, argumentative gap between sisters in the best way he knew how to reach out and calm a disturbed heart with the soulful lyrics written by a fellow seaman named John Newton who had found his way through the darkness to the Light, some hundred years ago, that touched Hans' own broken spirit in the moment he needed it in more ways than the lonely little rich prince could've imagined.

"...I once was lost and now I'm found
'Twas blind, but now I see."

Each crystal clear word was glorified by his soft, yet strong velvety timbre in perfect pitch that breaks through the cooling down dusky darkness over the silent, empty road as it also pierces into the pounding cold heart of the pale frightened woman seated only a few feet behind him. His songful golden strains warmed her irresolute heart until the fearful chill inside her passes.

But the effect of his intended soothing voice also succeeded in calming Anna, as both anxious girls listen to the holy song's sweet lyrics, and Anna's face pauses in its anger to turn back around and gaze up towards them.

"'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
That hour I first believed."

Gently finishing the perfectly performed melody, so close to his own heart, Prince Hans had no idea how Providential his chosen hymn was for bringing peace between the two siblings when he glances back from the helm of the Vis-à-vis he was driving, to be gratified to see the now tearful sisters in a fervently hugged embrace.

Tears of regret for their silly argument, once again caused by this same blighted man—though now in reverse—was streaming down both their cheeks.

"Please forgive me..." and "I'm so sorry!" are simultaneously spoken in each sister's weeping eyes now merging into smiles as they give each other another hug and sisterly kiss.

Within a precious melody, all was forgiven between these closest of sisters.

"Wow...there really is magic in a song." Sensing the healing power of the touching tune distinctly,
Rapunzel comments lowly with a relieved exhale. 

She, an only child locked away in a tower all her young sheltered life, had read about them, but never had experienced a sibling fight up close before. The multi-coloring Pascal finally settles down amidst the tense covered sleigh's passenger car to a relaxed, contented medium cadet blue, after the pair had witnessed this truly tenderly heartwarming scene of renewed sisterly affection.

Just then, the quickly timed, trotting horse-drawn sleigh comes to a slowed halt.

"Whoa, Iriserend. Whoa, Guddy." Hans' melodious voice once again soothes the abruptly stopped horses until they come to a standstill. "Is everyone back there all right?" He calls into the covered sleigh, meeting four pairs of nodding, curious eyes with his compassionate ones before he gallantly leaps down from the sleigh's driver's seat to meet up with Kristoff, who was ambling towards him partway.

The girls watch the two handsome men converse in the dark night, their silhouettes illuminated only by the parted clouds over the full moon.

"You really think he's changed, Elsa?" After a few moments of silently observing, whilst the two sisters were still holding each others' hands, Anna sucks in a deep breath of air before she ventures to ask the soul searching question.

All eyes that were fixed upon the serious discussion between the tall men, who appeared to be assessing the area as they pointed hands and arms in one direction or another, now turn to look at Elsa for her thoughtfully considered answer.

"On this journey—I know the words sound crazy—but I feel I've glimpsed his soul, Anna. I…trust him." Elsa replies honestly, recalling each one of the genuine soulful encounters she had had thus far with the earnestly reformed Prince. She looks at her sister with her open heart on her sleeve.

"His…soul? I didn't know he even had one." In a grumbling, still somewhat cagey way, Anna murmurs under her breath. But the truce struck between them still carried water within Elsa's wells of pleading eyes for understanding. That was reason enough now for her singularly concerned and caring Anna to relent the majority of her anger with a tender smile, trying to see things from her dearest friend's point of view.

"Well, I trust you, Elsa. And…I'll really try this time. For you, Elsie." Anna embraces her big sis in an even bigger bear hug, squeezing her tight. "But I'll still be watching with eyes in the back of my head! And if he ever hurts you—if he ever even just looks at you wrong, I won't promise not to snap his skinny butt in half like a twig!" Anna reaches a hand out the sleigh to reach a bowing down low tree branch, which she cracks in two between her spirited fingers demonstrative easily.

"He is too skinny." Rapunzel chuckles to lighten the mood as audience to the now turned lively exchange between the girls.

"Rapunzel!" Elsa is surprised at this gossipy verbal attack that was uncalled for upon the royal prince.

"Worse than a little girl!" Anna chortles wickedly at her archenemy's slight, bony physicality on parade for all the world to see this morning, as compared to her big, beefy, manly brute of a Kristoff.

"Anna! He is not!" Elsa strangely feels secure enough to defend him with her own knowledge of Hans Westergaard's very in-shape body.
"Well, I wouldn't go that far—from what I've seen close up!" Rapunzel chides Anna's release valve of ridicule of the understandably somewhat emaciated to all sinew and bone young man who had been worked for years as a slave on that wicked pirate ship. "Although, he could use some fattening up to be more manly." Her eyes were more used to feasting on a certain man's more well-endowed upper body muscle structure. My Eugene has got some gorgeous ripped pecs, not to mention his divine picturesque obliques...Sigh...

"No! He's absolutely perfectly masculine!" A mortified Elsa cries out shrilly, disbelieving, after their near emotional breakdown earlier, that her two female companions were so debasing such a perfect specimen of a man in this crude and appalling manner, who was due some decent respect as a member of royalty, when—

"I am glad to see you three ladies in a more jovial, equable mood. It does a man a world of good to be greeted by such lovely, glowing faces full of mirth." Hans innocently comments as he returns by agilely slinging his long, thin legs and extremely tight behind down seamlessly to sit on his perch at the covered sleigh's helm before them.

This causes two of the three 'lovely' ladies to break out in titters of giggles.

Hans gives a quizzical look as he turns around to the females whose eyes were all on him.

"And who, might I ask, Queen Elsa, if I may be so bold, is 'perfectly masculine'?' That is, if I may be privy to highly sensitive, feminine conversation details." Hans can't help himself from inquiring, with a sneaking suspicion, as to who they were speaking of. He gives a side glance directly at Elsa's deer-in-the-headlights, guilty doe-eyes as he idly watches Kristoff's sleigh veer Sven off the well-beaten gravelly road, to turn down a side path. A wildly waving back at them Olaf nearly tumbles off the front seat when able-bodied Kristoff's quick reflexes catch the plummeting snowman from danger.

Elsa's habit of wringing hands while she quickly thought up a suitable response was unnecessary, for Anna found her pipes first.

"Guddy!" The orange haired girl was almost hysterical with giddy laughter at her own inside joke. The other two girls soon join in the laughter of her fibbing boldness, as she recklessly scurries up to the sleigh's front beside a surprised Hans to lean over and pat the chestnut Dole's rump playfully.

The action of which causes the shocked, plodding draft horse to oddly throw his befuddled head back, making the skittish ivory mare next to him panic and back up, to rear on her hind legs. Iriserende breaks into a mad gallop while the Dolahest gelding strapped to her side as a team, does his best to keep up or be trampled by the well-chiseled, muscular Fresian breed.

"Whoa, girl! Slow down! Please! Iriserend! Whoa!"

"Princess Anna, would you-?" An anxious though ever-polite Prince Hans turns to the stunned, wide-eyed Anna, whose own rump had been plunked down on the driver's seat next to him with the thrust back action versus reaction of the bolting horses after she had startled Guddy, and subsequently, Iriserende.

With a non-judgmental, sweet, trusting smile, Hans hands Anna the reins. He then utilizes all of his 'too thin' muscles in fluid movements to courageously balance and climb out upon the disoriented ebony horse's back, even as the horse was frantically galloping at a wild pounding hooved pace.

In vastly differing degrees of delight, respect and awe, the three wide-eyed girls watch how Hans
valiantly leans his entire limber frame down to embrace the panting mare's pallid neck as if she were a frightened lady in need of a tender embrace.

Soon, the normally gentle and docile horse finds her center within the brave man's steady heartbeat and gentle whispers against her ear. Iriserende slows down to match Guddy's powerful, yet stabilized sturdy pace again.

When the out of control double horse-drawn sleigh finally comes to a complete stop, Anna needed all the restraint of her promise to Elsa not to use the reins at her disposal to whip Hans Westergaard's taut backside in punishment.

But somehow, after all his heroics, she didn't quite have the heart to do it anymore.

Not quite.

Principally perhaps, because as they stop near a knoll with a stream, Anna was close enough to be able to just about hear the former villain still clinging to the now tranquil mare's neck, humming low an age-old Scottish tune intended to calm and soothe any feminine frayed nerves.

"Greensleeves was my heart of gold and who but my lady Greensleeves…" Hans looked just like a princely knight in shining armor serenading his lady love.

Shake shake shake

"Oooh! Why does that guy still have to be such a show-off?!!" Her head shakes in full denial. Anna's only semi-impressed thoughts turn sour upon watching an obviously awestruck Elsa immediately dash out of the stopped sleigh to rush to both heroic man and mare. The terrified young queen needed to see that both finely well-muscled creatures were both in one piece yet.

And Elsa is prayerfully grateful to be granted his small smile peaking up as she pets Iriserende's heaving chest in comfort.

"What the hell are you playing at, pal?!!" Just then, Kristoff, looking the panicked pungent reindeer king he was, practically standing, riding high upon the sleigh pulled by a full speed Sven's huffing and puffing over-raced back, comes bounding and thundering around the tree-lined glen's knoll like a wild raging bear.

The by now hot blooded blonde leaps down from his own sleigh to vehemently stomp towards the other thought gone rogue sleigh where a recovering Hans was just about to alight from the sanguine horse's back. The slim gentleman lands directly on his two able feet as he dismounts before more than a few admiring eyes to stand mere inches before a seething and angry Kristoff.

"Believe me when I say, sir, I was not playing. It was quite…inexplicable as to what frightened the horses. However, there were more than a few mysteriously snapped branches in the darkness that could have set Iriserende off on her first day's outing." Hans particularly gives a red-faced Anna, with the reins still clutched tightly in her tensed hands onboard the sleigh's driver's seat, a hardly noticeable raised brow. He naturally assumed the guilty girl would not wish to be called out to look so foolish as to have caused this unnecessary bout with danger before her worried husband's anxious eyes.

Anna's big blue-green eyes just stare back down at him. Her gaze then vacillates between the two mens' faceoff that she knew herself to be catalyst of.

"Like these?" Hopping up and down on his sleigh, a readily descriptive Olaf shakes about his two
own arms in physical demonstration of said 'branches'.

"Twigs? How skittish is that pretty pony you chose?" Putting his fists away, Kristoff scoffs at the mere thought of the silly prancing horse being too touchy out on the open road as he supposed.

He gives a too agreeably smiling Hans an incredulous look, doubting the man's vaulted horsemanship for the first time.

"I imagine I saw something dark and furry run across the path in between her hooves just moments before. Didn't you, Elsa? I thought I heard you say so." Rapunzel, her years of living close beside a natural born fibber of a thief for a husband, gives her stiff cousin an 'in' to help Hans out, hoping to mildly add some credibility to the poor, heroic man's cover story to save Anna's face before her guy.

"What was it?! What was it?! What was it?! A bunny? A dwarf? Or maybe a smew? Don't you love saying that word, 'smew?' He must be a cute, widdle ducky-wucky.

"Well, I…" Ignoring Olaf's inane ranting of ducks crossing the road, Elsa's voluminous eyes lock with Iriserende's similarly large ones as both were recipients of that man's soothing song this night to calm their ungovernable souls, before she clears her throat to come to her little sister's aid as well. "I did think I saw…a fox out there. Yes, it certainly was, a red fox." Elsa is carefully sure to speak the truth that would always set one free, according to the Good Book, although she was certain that the Ten Commandments were creaking on their stone tablets at her slightly stretched truth and mischievous glint in her eye.

However, from her honest and awestruck point of view, there was a boldly daring and dauntless red 'fox' of sorts out there in the dusky darkness playing with the horses. Elsa's big blues now lock with Hans' willing, comprehending greens with meaning. From the bemused smirk on his lips and questioning quirk of his noble brow upon her, Hans caught her drift entirely.

"Well, I guess that would do it to any beast—even ones familiar with these dark paths. Those wily foxes spring out of nowhere sometimes, as if they're possessed. Good thing you managed to calm the horse before she injured herself or Guddy, or even worse, crashed the sleigh. Good teamwork there, Anna. I'm proud of you. Looks like your sleigh driving training has paid off. " Kristoff notes how his little wife was still doggedly clinging with tight fists to the reins clenched in her astonished fingers. Her mind was stunned at how Hans' little manipulative tale, meant to chivalrously cover a lady for honor's sake, snowballed until she came out smelling like a rose—and looking like a hero, rather than a witless troublemaker.

"Yeah! Teamwork! My driving skills and Hans' fearless horse…play…make a great combination." Her intriguing choice of combined terms makes the red-haired man, busy at work unhitching his horse, bring a similarly colored toned blush to his cheeks. Hans lets out a little embarrassed cough to match his abashed grin, which a shy-eyed Elsa yet again finds so alluring in this so-called worldly prince.

Anna herself couldn't believe the congratulatory words complimenting that guy were actually coming from her own mouth! But all the heroic daring-do and excitement was wearing at her resolve to hate Hans Westergaard forever as his gentle, trustworthy smile replays in her dizzy head.

Is that the same one you gave Elsa that made her trust you so much?

Maybe he's for real this time…I don't know!

Anna deliriously ponders in some far reaches of her spinning mind as she half dives, half stumbles
off the end of the secondary sleigh's driver's helm right into Kristoff's timely, strong arms.

"I gotcha, Baby." He croons in her ear as he scoops up his crazy trust exercising, overwrought with excitement wife to drape her compliant limp body in his amply muscular arms over Sven's welcome and sturdy back.

As Kristoff finishes unhitching Sven from the sleigh, his quick, experienced outdoorsman scan told him this would be a pretty good spot to set up camp, after all.

"Boy, Kristoff, being heroic, doing harrowing death defying sleigh riding stunts sure makes a girl sleepy." Anna yawns and mumbles. After a long day on the open road, starting with the early morning's seaside discoveries, and feeling it her sisterly duty to stand guard as sentinel over poor, delusional Elsa all the day long—she was plain tired.

"I know. You just take a little nap on Sven while he's enjoying a long drink at that stream over there. I'll fix everything here up. Go on, old buddy." Slapping Sven's grey rump affectionately, Kristoff doesn't even have to finish his final thought of "make sure Anna doesn't slide off." He already knew that trusty Sven understood his mind completely, as he watches his big, best friend reindeer and little best wife woman—both equally exhausted, amble over to the quiet stream's edge.

"Let's get these sleighs fixed up to bed the women." The male in Kristoff was now grateful for the choice of the covered sleigh as he looks up with a frown at the iffy cloud cover crossing the full moon that might yield a summer night rain shower on their traveling 'circus.'

But he wasn't too worried now that the two skinny little gals and the snowman would be able to safely stretch out under the sleigh's canvas roof, should the droplets choose to fall. So he tosses a few blankets and the female clothing bag into the emptied out Vis-à-vis to be ready for the females to all bunk out together for the night.

"You up for first or second shift?" Kristoff, after seeing to a tired out Sven with feed and deciding on a tree covered spot for his bedding, presumptively asks the older than he young man, almost ready to accept Hans now as a partner into this dangerous jaunt into the unknown, after a full day's travel proved that the 'spoiled' prince's true horse sense was unfeigned and worthy of note.

"There's too much excitement to be found out here in your glorious countryside for me to retire just yet. I'll gladly take the first shift, if it so pleases you, Mr. Bjorgman." Prince Hans gracious upperclass aristocratic tone still applied, even as he was kneeling at the muddy stream bank. He asserted himself to lower and scoop up two full large pails of water to carry back to their double sleigh camp area beneath that large birch tree they had both parked under.

"And where are you going with those? Never mind—I don't need to know. We'll start out again at daybreak. Come wake me up in four hours." Only half interested, a tuckered out Kristoff smirks as he lies out on the green grass to lean against an already slumbering Sven's furry body that Anna was still snoring loudly upon the back of the comfortable reindeer.

Kristoff wouldn't say that he'd had a tougher day than he was generally accustomed to. But from tending animals and chopping wood in the wee hours of the morning before dawn, then planning wracked brain best routes and setting out on the open road with this chaotic adventure full of snowmen, lizards and females—not to mention, criminals—the hardworking ice harvester was pretty drained.

But everything was all right, because Anna was right there with him—right at his arm's reach.

"…Yup, it pleases me."
Before Hans could avert his eyes when he discreetly finishes making sure Iriserende and Guddy were satisfied in drinking their fill of water, Kristoff's hungry arms do indeed reach out and capture his slumbering beauty, with his large yet tight muscled body totally covering hers like a cuddly bear—making any other blanket over Anna unnecessary.

An embarrassed and red-faced Hans makes his courteous exit as he graciously leaves the pair to their own open air evening's amusements.

He begins to make his quiet rounds through the clouded moon's dark night, back to the double sleigh camp where he brings one pail of water he had drawn from the clear stream to sit beside the covered sleigh, for the women, should they require any feminine ablutions before morning.

He purposely makes soft, clanging noises with the pail's dipper, so as not to frighten the pair of young women inside whom the young man outside could vividly imagine were getting ready for sleep. One would lay across each plush bench amidst the bevy of blanketing to ward off any cool chill, even on a summer night such as this was.

"I bid you 'good evening', ladies. Here is some fresh water for you. If you require anything else, please don't hesitate to call on me. I will be close by all night, so have no fear, and sleep securely." Hans announces to the thin air without glancing into the coach, for propriety's sake.

"Hey! Wait, Hans! Here's a blanket for you, if it gets too cold out there." Rapunzel sticks her neck out of the sleigh to offer the extra woolen covering to their dutiful guard.

"No, thank you, my lady. I'll be fine. Caring for the horses should help warm me up. Besides, the cold never bothered me anyway." He says with a tad of conceit of his own well regulated heat factor.

"Oo-kay…well, good night, Hans." Rapunzel says kindly, pulling the blanket back in with a smile.

"Good night, Princess." He responds smoothly.

Hans thinks to himself of all those cold early spring and late autumn adventures upon his beloved steed, Sitron's firm, tan blonde back, glinting gold in the moonlight. He had loved to pet, and curry and brush, until every horse hair on Sitron's muscular hide gleamed.

But another blonde mane, glimmering of gold in the scarce moonlight, peers her head from the sleigh, and captures his attention, mesmerizing him.

Hans pauses in mid-stride to bow his head to her respectfully.

The bare-shouldered queen bestows upon him a timid little approving nod and shy smile 'goodnight' all her own, which sends his uncertain-of-her-true-emotion-for-him heart soaring as high as the whooper swan that crosses the clearing moonscape sky towards the Vinje Fjorden's mouth it lived upon, not so far away.

Humming a contented tune now that Elsa had acknowledged him, Hans turns to go back to work for his team of unhitched horses, asking the serene moon if second chances were even possible for a man like him.

"He~ey! Wait up, Just Hans!" A strangely uncanny voice breaks through the still of the night, over to Hans. "I'm not sleepy at all. Can I help you groom the horses? I bet I'll be good at it, if you teach me how. Then, I'll be as good as you—good at sword fighting and singing, and dancing, and saving damsels in distress from out-of-control sleighs." After hopping down from the Vis-à-vis, a wide-eyed, sweetly pleading Olaf waddles alongside the long-limbed man who was genuinely
trying to focus in all sanity to listen to the babbling snow creature.

But Hans was becoming more thoroughly ensconced in all things magical created at Queen Elsa's
delicate, exquisite hands.

"I can imagine you will be, Olaf." Hans was not as condescending as he was bemused.

"Well, maybe not the sword fighting. I don't think I'd be too good at that. Mostly because I'm a
peace loving snowman who abhors violence of any kind. Besides, splattered blood doesn't go well
with my white snow. So I wouldn't like running somebody through with my sword at all. Woo!
Ick! Bloody snow! Ooh! Bad!"

Olaf was quite animated in his explanation as he and Hans arrive where the horses were tethered to
a thick trunked oak tree and Hans immediately begins to curry Iriserende.

"Uhn, uhn, uhn, ladies first, Guddy! Wait your turn, please!" Olaf chides the Dole Gudbrandsdal as
the shorter ruddy brown steed nudges Hans' natural-born horseman's elbow for attention.

Hans fondly finishes both horses' currying, giving a keen Olaf some pointer tips as he feeds and
cares for the steeds as if they were cherished friends, rather than new acquaintances, leaving Olaf
chuckling with glee at each brush stroke.

"Stop it, Guddy." Olaf berates as the chestnut horse tries to take the obligatory nibble at his carrot
nose.

"Would you like to try to brush out the plumes on Iriserende's lower legs? The effect is lovely
when long and silky, but after a long day's drive, her silvery feathery fetlocks do tend to tangle.
Besides, they're more at your comfort level." Hans kneels down to assess the strands of hair
beneath the pale horse's knees and hocks. "They're called 'fetlocks' and they require a proper
steadfast currying. Do you think you're 'snowman' enough to do it, Olaf?" Hans affably quips, he
quite warming up to the cool little fellow.

"Are you kidding?!!" Olaf was proudly in seventh heaven as he is trusted to do some real work at
last. "Aye, aye, Admiral!" Olaf salutes in all seriousness at his learned lifeboat commander. For
JustHans was patient and good enough to impart the knowledge most other men would not waste
upon a snowman.

"Admiral? I'm afraid to disappoint you, my good snowman. But this sorry excuse for a prince
never made it beyond the rank of First Lieutenant." With a regretful smile etched on his pretty
features, and though Hans was an excellent officer in the Danish navy, as thirteenth in line, every
one of his older brothers demanded to be of higher rank. So no promotions were ever to be in his
future there—no matter how accomplished or heroic Master Hans Westergaard rose to be. "I'll
never be worthy enough to be in the navy again." He says wistfully, full of regret that his unseemly
crimes against this beautiful country made him be disowned in his own, too.

And that meant his officer's rank in the Royal Navy was stripped as well. I deserved that, too...

"Well, I think you would make a grand Admiral, Just Hans!"

"Why, thank you, my little friend. You probably are the only one to ever think so." Hans responds
with an amused and slightly embarrassed smile.

"From what you were telling Cousin Rapunzel when we were in the lifeboat—of your sea voyages,
and how good you are at cartography, navigation, geography and other skills, you sure sound sea
worthy! After all, you got us across the sea to find Elsa! So, you'll have my vote. That is, if I was
classed as a citizen and allowed to vote. Hey! You wanna sing a song about being an Admiral at sea instead? I know a real zinger!” Olaf starts humming to the horses whose tails were swaying in time with his happy tune.

Using this auspicious moment to take a walk around the perimeter, Hans' keen, sharp senses were never far from overlooking the pair of parked sleighs underneath the birch tree, where the emerging moon seemed to favor shining its brightest rays upon the little solitary group of travelers.

Hans turns his watchful eye until it rests upon a dutifully alert Pascal, who was at his post perched upon the canvas roof in midnight blue colored shades.

Though the coast was clear, both the chameleon and the tactician in Hans Westergaard were inexplicably uneasy tonight.

Hans instinctively felt something was amiss in the all too still atmosphere as the vigilant guard deftly produces a hidden dagger from its secreted place in the side of his tall black boot, as swift as the wind. He adeptly holds the weapon in a defensive stance, with the all too familiar glance of cold steel reflecting his determined eyes in its blade.

For in quiet surveillance of the five human, plus five animal (and/or snowman) friend adventurers who were currently at rest in this primarily unpopulated dark Midwest Norwegian plain, in the still of the moonlight, three mysterious figures silently move in the ominous shadows with something eerily dangerous shimmering within their darkened concealed grip…
"A Horse By Any Other Name"

Act I

Chapter 18

But the dawn's morning sun begins to rise nonetheless after the moon relinquishes its watch over the uninterrupted night.

Dagger yet in hand as it had remained the entire restless night, Prince Hans stirs from his concealed vantage point close beside the parked Vis-à-vis sleigh, once an eagle-eyed scan of the tree-lined open plain is satisfied.

Was it tensed nerves on this clouded moonlit night? Or was it a biting conscience pricking its icy fingers into his heart again?

Hans could not tell all through this constantly guarded blackness where every one of his keen senses were wide awake and prepared for any incoming enigmatic danger - that never came.

'He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.' (Psalm 91:4)

Praise be to the Lord, my God.

With that early, early morning prayer spoken on silent lips, Hans gazes beyond the sky whose deep purple Heavens have now turned lighter azure blue. After one more reassuring swift trek around the camp's perimeter to the quiet tree line, the tireless man sets about a new duty. God's blessed sunlight had lifted away any imaginary shadows from the fields, if not from his heart. as Hans Westergaard greets the coming sunrise of the day.

And she's taking me back to the skies...Ah..Ahh...

Chirp chirp chirp!

More than songbirds were singing faintly from somewhere in this breaking dawn.

Sniff. sniff. sniff! "Mmmmmhm...that smells yummy, Kristoff! ...Like bacon...you're such a yummy husband to cook bacon for me in the morning..." Princess Anna, in her slumbering non-morning person delirium, turns over on her comfortable pillow. Her cute little nose was aroused by the pleasantly pervading aroma coming from the camp nearby. She was so exhausted after yesterday's harrowing and unexpected events that she had slept like a baby—straight through, despite the nippy and cool summer night's open air 'canopy.' After all, Princess Anna had been upon her favorite and invitingly firm mattress, which just happened to be her big hubby's warm chest and compliant arms that had enveloped her small body in his equally exhausted embrace.

"Bacon? Morning? What time is it?" But her fuzzy bear Kristoff (whose shirt had somehow been unbuttoned to display his warm pecs and abs for his tiny little misses' benefit in the chilled night) awakens with claws bared as well. "Why didn't that fool wake me?!

After his groggy eyes snap open, Kristoff unceremoniously jumps up, thusly plopping a squeaking Anna back down on a rudely awakened Sven's snorting back. Kristoff stands, adjusting his
eyesight range in the new dawn's light to thankfully see both sleighs yet parked where he had left them. Both horses were still tethered to that same tree and that redheaded twit was kneeling down and singing some happy, soaring tune at the roaring campfire.

To boot, there was a certain helpful blonde sous chef already at his side, it appeared.

_Hmph. He's still here. Unfortunately._

Kristoff shakes off that queasy fear that had gripped his distrusting heart for a few disoriented moments, changing into a smirk of conversely relief and frustration as he stomps towards the pitched camp.

"Why the hell didn't you wake me up for my shift last night, pal?!" Kristoff tosses in the mild cuss word for effect as his limber body stalks up behind the pair of heads bent close together over the open flame.

"Ah, good morning, Mr. Bjorgman. I trust you slept well." Hans chooses to ignore the man's angry query and instead merely politely answer, as his hands deftly flip the thinly sliced ham and fatback intermingled in the pan over the roaring fire that it was nearly the bacon Anna's hungry nose had sensed earlier. "I wasn't tired, and felt alert enough to keep watch over the camp as yet. I also didn't want to disturb your lady wife in her slumber." Hans smiles in the direction of the stream. "I only wished for you to be fully rested for the next leg of our journey, sir. Please, forgive any distress I may have caused you."

Hans Westergaard was far too good at quickly fabricating deceitful excuses to admit to a fuming Kristoff in front of the pale blonde skittish lady's ears that he had detected prowlers about in the dark still of night.

"Prince Hans was very alert and vigilant in keeping watch for us all night. I can attest to that, Kristoff." Gazing up from the toasting bread station where she was kneeling, Elsa was doing her best to avert her delicate sensibilities from staring at Kristoff's muscular frame. Arendelle's Queen, who had emerged very early from her covered sleigh's cozy shared 'bedroom' with Rapunzel, after listening to the quiet sound of Hans' steady breathing from where he had leaned to perch just outside her section of the Vis-à-vis nearly all night, gives testimony to Mr. Westergaard's exemplary guard duty of their campsite.

"Doesn't anyone ever listen to me when I talk? We have to take shifts at night to stay fully sharp-eyed of any danger—not go all 'gung ho' solo like some hero." Kristoff vents, waving his animated arms about until he remembers his open-chested shirt and bashfully buttons it up in the presence of the queen.

"Well, you follow orders next time, okay?" Kristoff's body that was indeed more fully rested than he might have been otherwise, causes the well-built blonde to be more forgiving. Upon hearing the queen's words that all seemed well and in order in the camp Kristoff's honesty couldn't deny the man's kindness and consideration.

But someone else's tiny pitchers of ears didn't look on Hans' selfless actions so kindly.

"And just how long have you been out here, too, Elsa? Hmmm?" Anna, her unkempt dress in a state of mess, her braids all askew, comes charging up to the campfire scene where Elsa and Hans were rather too cozily leaning over the flames together, cooking the breakfast meal.

Well, that's all Anna hoped the pair had been 'cooking' last night after she had trusted them enough to fall soundly asleep on Kristoff's chest that served for her own bed.
"I...had another one of my bouts with insomnia, as you know well, Anna. I merely heard Prince Hans tending to the horses nearby with Olaf, from time to time. Good morning to you, too, little sister. Here, Anna, let me." Elsa calmly explains to her accusatory little 'marm' chaperone, ending it with a loving smile and big sister invite to fix up her baby sibling's messy braids of hair, as Elsa was wont to do each morning at the castle.

"Good morning, Elsa." Anna turns into a little girl again as she always gurgles whenever Elsa's delicate artful sculptor's hands take great pains to gently caress and straighten her frizzled orangey locks with a quickly produced comb from her grey Arendellian shawl's pocket folds.

Queen Elsa had a talent for hairstyling. Her own flawless blonde tresses still appeared picturesque even when loosed artfully, as her own long braid was this morning. The ever present golden comb was a necessity to the young woman who owned just a minute touch of vanity—enough to want to look presentable, no matter how early in the morning, for any audience, as any refined female of the day possessed.

Especially one of the 'red fox' variety who was sure to greet her first with his lonely eyes.

"Hey! Olaf and I got the horses all fed and watered and cleaned up to be ready to go soon, like you asked, Hans. Oh! You're finally awake, sleepyheads! Guess I can't blame you two, just a few days off your honeymoon..." In her insinuating mumbling way, knowing the joys of honeymooning well, Rapunzel, with Pascal on her shoulder and a hay sprig chewing Olaf waddling to catch up behind her, comes trotting back to the campfire.

"Morning, guys. Wow! You two! That smells incredible!" The older girl tries her best to be bubbly as she used to be every morning in her comically inventive ways to get Eugene's lazy bum out of bed during more happy days of marital bliss before all this started. Rapunzel bravely feigns a smile as she sniffs the air's savory scents.

"Howdy, pardners! Just been a-seeing to the horsies. What fixins' are you rustling up in that there pan?" Olaf was putting on a strange, foreign accent to match his straw chewing out of the side of his mouth and waddle-saunter as he and his private flurry join the group around the blazing fire.

"Oooh, look at that—so this is a 'campfire'!" An amazed Olaf reverts back to his naivete soon upon arrival. His entranced big black curious eyes can't help but reflect the glow of orangey reds and yellows as his two adventurous branch hands long to reach out and—

"Olaf." Although monitoring the frying ham in fatback on one side of the pan, as well as the large egg omelette cooking on the other end of the ingeniously built stone-pile level plateau for the wide pan to rest upon for proper frying temperatures, Hans still maintains an observant gaze, along with the quiet command to offer the snowman a warning glance.

"Aye, aye, Admiral JustHans!" With a seafaring salute, Olaf continues their friendly nautical themed banter, causing Hans to blush violently at the innocent, playful words of the simple snowman that he knew might cause a stir with—

"Don't call him that, Olaf! 'Admiral?' What silly Navy would recruit a criminal like you for their highest ranking position! Hah! As if!" Anna scoffs as Rapunzel directs her anger to help set the makeshift 'table' they had made from baskets in the sleigh they'd put side by side together to act as a low breakfasting counter.

A zipping up his mouth action Olaf shrugs up at the crimson-faced chef who gives him a rebuking raised eyebrow back. Just then, Elsa suddenly gasps after burning her distracted fingers upon checking the ice pick she was using to toast the bread on.
"Elsa! Are you all right?" Hans immediately drops his own cooking utensil to grasp the girl's injured fingers within his, even as the ice already forming at her lightly burned fingertips is transferred onto his warm ones. But Hans doesn't even flinch.

"I'm…fine." Elsa breathes in pleasant surprise when a fearless Hans instinctively raises her singed three middle fingers to his lips and kisses them, causing her involuntary cryogenics to reduce intensity at his soothing touch.

All thoughts of her own scorched digits disappear in his kind eyes and tender lips, still at her fingertips, amidst this rising dawn's light.

"She said she was fine! You really don't listen, do you, pretty boy?!” Anna's eyes flash at him as she none too delicately, in neither word nor touch, grabs Elsa's slightly charred, but ice cooled hand in hers. She hauls her sister off with her to the makeshift table and forces them both down to sit. "I'm hungry. When do we eat?" Anna demands, pounding both fork and knife on the table to vent her anger.

"Anna! Manners, please!" Elsa chides, as her throbbing heart finally stops racing enough to look up at Hans from where she and her little sister were first to be seated at the basket counter. Both girls were kneeling on the grass for their seats at this outdoor buffet.

Kristoff returns just then from seeing to Sven to add the thirsty reindeer to the two horses already drinking at the stream's edge where Rapunzel and Olaf had left them.

"What did I miss?" Kristoff hunkers down at his glowering wife's side. Elsa's arm was still firmly linked with hers possessively. His imagination didn't need to go much to see that there had been some sort of emotional fracas before he had arrived.

"You missed the hidden culinary talents of Queen Elsa's deft hand—that is, before she seared those poor delicate fingers, Alas!—whipping up this excellent Aeggepandekage for us to be thankful for." The head chef gives his lissome assistant an obliged gently smiled nod.

"And thank you, Lord, for all You've provided we earthly travelers on our journey. Amen." Hans bows his head with this short morning meal devotional before their gathered table, to which a pleased Elsa, an extra mumbled behest added Rapunzel, a bemused Kristoff watching his Anna go from fuming to reverent in 10 seconds of recited prayer flat, and even a sanctified looking Olaf and pastel pink Pascal join in.

"Breakfast is served. Everyone, please do be careful, the pan is rather hot. But we seem to be at a loss for fine porcelain dishware at this auspicious al fresco repast of ours." Hans then lays on the charm thick as he, with a helpful Rapunzel, who had taken up Elsa's task by saving the only slightly blackened toast from being totally swallowed by the flames when they fell in earlier, carefully serve the whole pan of 'bacon' adorned herb encrusted omelette with the fancy Danish name to sit upon the little low table.

"Whoa…that is one big omelette. Did you use up every one of the eggs that the old fisherman's wife had packed in that basket?" Kristoff didn't mean to complain, for his growling stomach was grateful. But the conscientious man knew a thing or two about scarce supply conservation on the open road that he doubted this rich prince did.

"Well, upon inspecting our 'larder', so to speak, Olaf and I discovered that probably due to last evening's unfortunately bolting circumstance, the satchel filled with the eggs did not fare so well." Hans begins to explain his actions of forced culinary resource.
"They were all cracked up and gooey and yellow dripping everywhere on the white cloth of the basket they were wrapped in! Ewww! Icky! Yuck! White and yellow do NOT go together." Olaf shivers at the splattered ochre thought as his eager-to-spill lips come unzipped suddenly.

"So how did you guys salvage enough to make this? It's really tasty! You have to give me the recipe. I know Eugene will...love it." Imagining her dearest boy was nearby, a sad Rapunzel takes another mouthful with one of the golden spoons that were blessedly saved in the cake box that had not been chucked overboard by an overzealous Anna. "How did you manage it?" She recovers quickly.

"JustHans is not just good with swords, and singing, and dancing—and horses and cooking. He's good at straining broken eggs with a cheesecloth, too! And he taught me how, so now I can rescue every egg you smash up dancing in the kitchen when you steal a brand new crumb cake in the kitchen when Gerda isn't looking."

"That only happened once! Okay, twice." Anna cries out, guiltily remembering after she gulps down another forkful of the delicious egg, cream and herb concoction that Elsa (and Hans) had created.

Elsa had briskly stirred the retrieved eggs whilst Hans, after slicing up the ham and fatback for a bacon facsimile, expertly identified some forest herbage to select for the cookery spicing that a nimble fingered Pascal gleaned.

"He~ey..." Though she was busy stuffing her face, the word 'cake' abruptly reminded Anna of something special. "Wasn't this the metal platter that Gerda served our kransekake on?" Anna's suspicious wide-eyes wildly examine the once totally flat, fancy embossed metal plate that somehow must've been bent and fashioned to work as a dumb old frying pan instead of her all-important cake platter.

"Uh-oh..." Putting his only utensil butter knife on the table, Kristoff was glad he had just finished choking down his breakfast. He had had a feeling there wasn't going to be any peace at this table for much longer, if he knew where his little firecracker was going with this.

Ba-Boom!

"WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE REST OF MY KRANSEKAKE WEDDING CAKE, HANS WESTERGAARD!!?" Like a raging tempest, Anna explodes, jumping to her feet with an accusing finger pointed at the wide-eyed and innocent looking man, who swallows the remainder of the small piece of 'bacon' on his omelette nearly whole.

"Y-your wedding cake? Oh...Do forgive us." A gulping Hans swallows hard, feeling rather small and inadequate as Anna storms over the baskets to glare down at him.

Mere inches away from his scared face, her hands ball into fists before being stuck firmly on each of her jutting out hips. "Why do you always want to ruin everything for me?!" She demands with a weeping whine, looking more like a thundering dark cloud about to storm than a pigtail braided sweet girl.

"Well, it was all cracked and smashed up and really unsalvageable to even recognize. So I tasted how sweet and saccharinely sugary it was." Olaf’s blissfully smiling mouth smacks lips together at the early morning mouthwatering recollection. "And then we fed the rest to Guddy. Iriserende turned her nose up at it—I guess because no lady would want a broken up, crumbly mess of—"

Dropping the other shoe, Olaf coolly informs the fate of Anna's precious prediction wielding of children to come superstitious wedding cake tradition.
"You fed Guddy my wedding cake...? Guddy ate the rest of my kransekake cake...?" Anna's steaming anger turns into a wobbly-kneed whining of dreams dashed. Kristoff's long legged leap over the low table showed he had already anticipated this break down result, just in time to steady his lively wife's whimsical overacting. "Now we'll never have those six babies, Kristoff!" Anna's inexplicably plaintive shrieked words causes her to collapse into an exasperated and embarrassed to no-end Kristoff's understanding chest. These hysterics quite perplex Hans with the hysterical disconnect.

The furrowed brow man reaches a hand across the table to zip up Olaf's troublemaking mouth again and it surprisingly shuts—tightly this time, as Elsa and Rapunzel both appear to be suppressing giggles at their littlest 'sister's' sweet, yet saucy, endearing personality that never ceased to entertain.

"I am truly sorry—I didn't realize the crumbs of that cake meant so much to her. Now she'll probably hate me even more, if that's possible." Pouring the remainder of the water buckets onto the campfire to put out every ember, Hans whispers to the two remaining females in attendance, as Kristoff picks up an almost despondently weeping Anna to load her onto Sven's sleigh. He then hitches the fed and rested sorrowful eyed at Anna Sven up to get a move on in the wee early morning hours of daybreak.

"Anna's Anna. She wears all her hopes and dreams on her sleeve. But that's why we love her." Rapunzel answers as she, Olaf and Pascal help Elsa clear up the now scattered table to have Hans lift the heavy baskets neatly onto the Vis-à-vis sleigh. That's when Elsa touches his arm lightly.

"Anna's heart is too good and pure inside to ever 'hate' anyone for long." Elsa says softly with her own set of hopes and dreams riding on a sleeve never to be seen in the light of day.

"Thank you for that, as well as the wonderful meal you permitted me to help you create." After a moment spent absorbing her words, Hans rebounds with a tease, once his own heartfelt gratitude is conveyed for her indulgent generosity extended to his remorseful soul concerning her sister.

"And where do you think you are going with that, Your Majesty?" Back in the swing, Hans familiarly grasps her wrist to halt Elsa's steps as she starts walking towards the stream with that criminal, formerly kransekake pan greedily devoid of their combined efforts in hand.

"To wash it clean in the waters of the stream." Elsa was not trying to be poetic, nor philosophical, though her platinum blonde hair, aglow in the fresh sunlight, had its own lyrical effect on the young man who had spent a sleepless night dreaming of her.

"Your Majesty, please if I may—" Hans begins to chivalrously step in. But again, Elsa would not play the part of the helpless maiden, though his persuasive hand was yet affixed to her wrist.

"No. No, you may not." In this second, the pair are both transported back some two years to their first encounter, when the exchange between them was much the same, though the sentiment passing between their eyes now was decidedly different from what it was then.

Hans nervously clears his throat, believing this the correct moment to pose the burning question on his heart again.

"And what of you, Queen Elsa? Is a worthless man worthy for a pure heart to forgive past wrongs?" He dares ask her crystal clear blue eyes tentatively, his guilt-ridden ones begging, in this everlasting moment, for a precious second chance.

"Forgiveness comes from a heart that truly loves the Lord. And mine walks with Him always."
Calmly composed Elsa gives an encouraging, glorified smile, just as dazzling to Hans’ beholden, grateful eyes as her absolving words. His hungry soul was beginning to hope against hope for this paramount reward of the essential gift of her requisite forgiveness at last.

"I'll be right back. Please hitch the horses to the sleigh so we can depart." Sounding all regal, though feeling tremulous inside, a touched Elsa was certain there were glistening tears forming suddenly behind those soft, velvety green pastures of his eyes. Hans finally gives up claim to her slim wrist and Elsa continues on towards the rushing stream, unchallenged, and pleased.

Hans’ grateful, humbled gaze follows her every graceful step as the sun completes its ascent into the sky, taking his praising heart along with it.

Once the pair of well rested horses are hitched and everything packed up, Hans directs Iriserende and Guddy to follow Kristoff and Sven's sleigh back to the road where they briskly travel another forty kilometers alongside the glimmering waters of the Vinjefjorden all the sunny morning long.

"Anna's prettier than most people
Sven, don't you think that's true?
She's got a cute smile, makes life worthwhile
With a nice behind in those feisty pants
Through and through"

Kristoff had kept Anna preoccupied with his singing while he bravely tackles trying to teach his all-thumbs gal the magic of playing the lute as they drive.

The instrument's poor, battered and bruised strings were never so tested, nor were Kristoff's ears, but Anna was slowly finding her effervescent smile back again in its chords.

"We STILL can try." Dejectedly slapping the poor relieved lute back over the sleigh’s front seat to the back, as if the broken superstition was its fault, Anna comments out of nowhere to the noonday sky.

"You can count on that, Baby." The strapping lad verbalizes his sentiment upon finishing his ‘yoik’, for, as part Sami, this form of poetic musical expression was part of Kristoff's makeup. He leans his blonde head over to her adorably agitated one to capture a lasting, tongue-tied kiss. His one unencumbered big hand freely wanders down her tensed spine to explore, with the newly inspired song still fresh in his spry young mind.

"You're a good guy, Kristoff." Anna concludes in all seriousness, meeting his brown gaze that always brought a smile back, even when she was bummed.

"Thanks for noticing." Kristoff was gratified he could be sure that Anna preferred his simple song to the more flashy and smooth, with big words and lofty high ranged melody of that former fiancé of hers.

Picking up Kristoff's thoughts, Anna wishes her eyes really WERE in the back of her head. Her neck was aching something fierce for the constant swiveling around to check up on the goings on of that certain sleigh driver behind them.

But when Hans innocently catches one of her glaring looks, he amiably gives a little wave of hopeful, wagging fingers to which Anna tersely flips back around forward, rather than acknowledge him.

"That jerk! Do you think he's a danger to Elsa, Kristoff?" Anna whispers fiercely again what's been
eating at her the whole trip thus far, as if Hans could hear her from where he was several sleigh lengths back. She vehemently continues on her abnormally pensive and sober state of mind as she turns to her husband for his advice on the pressing matter—for once.

"Look, they're not alone. Your cousin Rapunzel is back there, with Olaf, too. And, don't worry, Elsa still can be pretty mean with that ice of hers. So, I'd pity that guy if he tried to get fresh. I for one wouldn't mess with the so-called 'Snow Queen' if I were him, 'cause it could get pretty cold down in Southern Isle prince's southern regions, if you get my drift." Even experienced married man Kristoff's ears go bright red by the time he finishes his embarrassing statement.

"NO! Ick! I meant really dangerous stuff!" Anna spazzes out at her totally male hubby's icky incorrect take on her deeper meaning suppositions.

"Oh." With a little smirk at his 'mistake,' Kristoff huffs with a sigh, to glance over his shoulder at the scrawnier man with the lovesick look on his face.

"Nah, just look at him. He's in pretty sad shape."

Anna does just as her husband directs, physically spinning in her seat to take a long gander at that despicable redhead, whose sweet treacly, droopy puppy-dog eyed expression made her almost reconsider her question.

**He does look like a lovesick puppy. I don't think that's what he looked like when he and I were—**

"Not that long." Kristoff's slighted, semi-jealous voice calls Anna's attention back to present day reality. His sideways look and rough hand readjusting her chin to face him or forward, gives his little wife her walking orders.

"He seems kinda 'de-fanged' to me, since we found him—beat up by those pirates, and all for protecting your sister." Kristoff assesses in his honest, fair-minded way.

"Oooh! This is crazy! All because of that stupid Eugene we have to rescue now! You know, **EUGENE**? Hans' big brother!" Stolen treasures, pirate ships and Hans Westergaard's reappearance all took their toll as Anna vents her frustration fully now that poorly feeling Rapunzel was out of earshot.

Suddenly, a bell goes off in her revolving brain.

"I know! Since you don't think he's too dangerous anymore, I'll just let Elsa have this nutty, insane fling with him—and then when he breaks her heart, that'll be the end of it, once and for all! Then, I'll go to work to find her a proper prince and—"

"W-whoa! Wait! You're **hoping** he breaks her heart? That sounds kind of mercenary for the good gal I married." Kind hearted Kristoff didn't like at all the way that man's presence affected his sweet Anna's disposition.

"Yeah, but…that's the best way to get him out of her system! Totally like I did!" Anna's relationship with Kristoff was so honest and genuine that she could speak about her past near misses with another man as if Kristoff was her best friend.

Because, beyond her reestablished sisterhood with Elsa, he was.

"But you had **ME** to fill up those cracks in your heart. Might not be so easy for your sister if it all falls apart for her. She's different than you." Kristoff was more of a love expert than he gave
himself credit for. All those childhood years of growing up under love guru Bulda's thumb must've lodged somewhere in his thick skull.

"Don't be silly! Of course she'll forget him! We're sisters! She's exactly like…me…?" But by the end of bright-eyed Anna's fierce admission, upon self-circumspection it transmutes into more of a frowned realization that Elsa was NOT 'exactly like her.'

"You're right…Why does life have to be so hard when we grow up?" Anna gives up her headaching contemplation as she tugs at her frazzled double braided ends fairly hard before Kristoff's muscle-toned warm arm reaches out to welcome her perplexities in.

"I dunno. 'Cause I'm not a 'love expert,' remember? But I do know that Elsa's a smart cookie and you did say you were going to trust her with knowing her own heart, right?" Kristoff tries to imagine what Cliff and Bulda and the rest of the singing and dancing troll crew would say about the man they once prescribed to 'get the fiancé out of the way and the whole thing will be fixed!'

Well, he's IN the way again—and trying to make a comeback now with Anna's big sister. But is he truly in love with Elsa this time? Problem is, he was so oily and conniving before—I can't tell if he's for real now. It's about now I really miss my troll family. Words have never been easy. You'd know what to say for me.

"But you don't have to listen to me. I'm just an average, working-class kind of guy." The brawny man admits aloud, keeping the remainder of his own counsel and his worries to himself.

"You could've fooled me, my big, lovable hunk of semi-sweet chocolate." Her anxiety settling down in her new husband's mellow voice, Anna combines two of her favorite tastes in the world—dark chocolate and Kristoff Bjorgman into one adored treat.

She wraps herself entirely around the firm bicep arm of her rock—her Kristoff, as his caring anchors Anna from all the concerns and questions obviously preying on her mind for her beloved sibling's welfare in Elsa's first timid steps into matters of the heart.

"I love you, too, Baby." He responds in her hair, not even needing to give Sven a clicking tongue signal of 'giddyap' for the intuitive beast to put some speed on as the sleigh moves across the country into this second leg of their strange journey.

Many kilometers into their drive, Hans Westergaard's heavy-lidded eyes were finding it hard to stay open. He hadn't slept in over forty hours, but that wasn't entirely to blame.

There've been longer stints of sleep deprivation.

It was more the monotonous plains and endless roads on this rocky, barren stretch of land that was far less than inspiring to a lately freed imagination longing for the green grasses and golden fields he'd been deprived of seeing when trapped below decks on that pirate ship.

That or the fact that his passengers had chosen to grow rather silent for the last ten kilometers or so.

"How is she?" Leaning backwards and down without losing the tautness of the imbalanced reins, a lithe, ambidextrous Hans reaches his flexible neck back as far as it could without snapping to whisper almost directly into Elsa's semi-startled ear, as she was seated with her back to him in the Vis-à-vis car.

"Sleeping." But as Elsa's quickly swiveled head leans back to speak with him in a similarly concerned whisper, their lips nearly brush. The mortified young woman snaps her head back
around to see Olaf, whom she had ordered to keep his bantering mouth zipped shut since Cousin Rapunzel fell ill (fatback and bacon may not have been too good an idea, though it was too tasty for her to pass up) ‘blink, blink’ up at her, before going back to his silent swaying in his singing, ice cube brain. He swings back and forth rhythmically seated beside his red-faced queen.

"Lucky her. Yawn. Do pardon me."

Elsa just makes out Hans' softly spoken, tired words and courteously quick pardoned covered yawn to the wind.

That's when the icy queen decides that her company out there may be more convenient than either he or she being silent and alone.

Truer words were never spoken.

"May I…join you out there in this magnificent, fresh open air?" A demure Elsa politely asks, though already squeezing her slim, sleek form through the front sleigh car opening before he answers. This snow Queen employs a diamond bijou display of her ice prowess to strategically balance her scintillating high heels in between the fast moving vehicle's suspension coupling, almost mid-air.

"My lady! That's dangerous!" A groggy eyed Hans warns when Elsa, her ice glazed body practically floating upon the well-controlled frosted rimes of water vapors in the air beneath her capered feet, rather agilely climbs out from the passenger car (as a leaping Anna did yesterday with unhappy results) to gracefully perch beside him on the driver's bench. Again, withstanding the bitter cold of her lustrous icy touch, Hans' stable hand was offered and accepted to help her gracefully alight.

"Since Cousin Rapunzel is peacefully asleep, I thought you may prefer some company to not." Though her trained ice was relaxing, Elsa was finding it more difficult to be as bold and daring as she imagined she could be, when, with the horses' reins clamped tightly in his hands, the stiffened man's now wide-awake eyes were fixated upon hers in an unwavering, unreadable stare that was both appreciated and discomfiting to the shy queen.

Elsa folds her fidgety hands together, as was her habit when she was in nervous doubt.

"Am I wrong?" Elsa asks, her voice quivering. That old, cold gnawing unwelcome feeling was creeping up inside again.

"Forgive me." Hans shakes himself, too, from his brown study. "It's only…I always entertained a dream of driving horses alongside the woman I…" Hans trails off here, for only in his half-conscious state would the guarded man have admitted his childish dream to anyone—let alone her.

But the unmatched team must've sensed his unrest. Their speeds divert from one another, ever so slightly, calling his attention back to them.

"Whoa, there, girl. Iriserende, bring that trot to a canter until Guddy can pick up the pace, please. Giddap, Guddy." Hans almost sings his soft commands that are almost instantly complied to by the two now re-balanced equines.

"You are truly proficient with them, aren't you…Hans?" The queen's utterance of his first name sends Hans' senses soaring yet again. He was grateful for the cool breeze whipping in his face to keep him grounded. "I, too, love horses. Especially noble breeds such as Friesians and Fjord horses." Elsa deftly changes the subject to a more conversational topic.
"Yes, Fjord horses are incomparable…Elsa." He returns the familiar name with a sweet smile. "No reflection on dear old Guddy, but I do wish my own Sitron was here. I’ve often wondered whatever became of my poor horse, during my rightful, indentured punishment." Lowering his already soft tone, as for neither horse to overhear, Hans murmurs to the baking overhead sun. His closed eyes and upturned head drinks in its rays. He recalls such summer days of swift winds and blazing sun, spent flying along crested hillsides, over mountains and meadow and glen—by the seat of his pants upon his noble steed's strong, golden back.

Elsa watches Prince Hans' closed eyes reminisces of riding astride his beloved friend in past glory days of youth.

"Sitron? Is that his name? He's fine." After a few more moments of enjoying his handsome features glowing with the pride and fond memories of him and his favorite horse, Elsa pipes up.

Hans' intense, inquisitive gaze and intrigued eyes suddenly snap open upon her, causing the Queen to avert her own. She was half-sorry she had spoken up out of place to interrupt the man's reverie. But she plows on nonetheless.

"After you…left…I made certain your horse was cared for at the palace stables." Elsa answers, marveling at the strange attraction she had for the handsome golden stallion.

"You still have him!? How is he? Is he eating well? He's still rather finicky, isn't he? Does he miss me? I mean—have you perhaps glimpsed him around the stable when you go riding?" Not a shred of exhaustion left in his body now, Hans recovers by firing off enthusiastic questions, one after the other, like an eager schoolboy in the hopes of hearing something of his one and only childhood companion—equine or no.

"Oh, dear…!" Elsa chuckles at how sweet and innocent the adult man beside her seemed when speaking of his close friend. "When last I saw him, he appeared quite content—especially with the fresh offerings of Arendelle's wild blackberries that I pick for him each morning, when we ride up to the hill where they grow each summer." Elsa's own vivid recollections show on her lovely features, of pleasant summer afternoons spent wandering her castle's grounds upon the golden Fjord horse with the long, feathery tail whom she had befriended in his rider's absence.

"You…personally…cared for Sitron yourself, Queen Elsa?" Amazed and astounded, Hans' gorgeous green eyes illuminate at the realization of the Arendelle Sovereign's compassionate kindness bestowed upon the—albeit blameless—horse that belonged to the man who had wronged her, even to the point of attempting to—

_How could I have been such a fool?_

Hans' regretful heart is touched to the core by this beautiful woman's selfless benevolence.

"Oh! Yes, I hope you don't mind that I started riding him to give him exercise. But when we found we liked each other so well, he and I never stopped going out for our daily early morning run after chapel. I do pray I haven't spoiled his fine training with all those berries and treats in the afternoons after our trot around the shore." The elegant blonde turns rather cute as she bites her hesitant lower lip, uncertain if she had overstepped her bounds here.

"Mind? Not at all! I couldn't be more pleased that Sitron was so well looked after!" Hans was genuinely smiling from ear to ear by now. Elsa was pleased that she pleased him so. "Thank you, Queen Elsa. Sitron means the world to me."
"No, you needn't thank me. Caring for…Sitron…each morning has been my…delight. He's a very special, well-mannered, wonderful horse. You should be very proud of him." Elsa compliments the man's lifelong equestrian companion.

"Sitron has been fortunate to have deserved such particular royal attention from the kingdom's ruler herself." Hans marvels at his beloved steed's good luck these past two years, as compared to his own punished fate.

But Sitron did no wrong. I, and I alone am to blame for all my unscrupulous actions.

"Sitron…I'll have to get used to that name. Yes, it fits him perfectly." Elsa concedes after a moment's reflection of associating that particular name with that particular stallion.

"What name did you assign him, if I may inquire, out of curiosity? After all, a horse by any other name…" Hans was so giddy with excitement that his Sitron was so blessed to be safe and fawned over that he was rather waxing poetic.

"Ohh!" But when the pale queen suddenly reddens at such an innocent query, Hans' curiosity was more than piqued.

"You must've called him something." He prompts with a growingly inquisitive smile.

"Yes, of course. I called him…'Prince…Prince Ha…'" Elsa, mid answer, realizes how self-incriminating the moniker she had assigned for the stallion belonging to the man who haunted both her nightmares and dreams these past two years, sounded for the noble Fjord horse.

Hans was giving her his all-entrancing green eyes encouragement to go on, right now, Elsa compelled to reply.

"Prince Hansome." Mortally embarrassed at her whispered revelation, she covers her mortified with shame eyes, biting her bloodless lips dry. Her cheeks flared hotly which was a new sensation for this snow queen.

Prince Hans' (the human one) vanity was fueled by the obvious derivative of Queen Elsa's choice of titled descriptives to name the horse that belonged, as she well knew then and still does now, to the comely young man sitting so close beside her that she wished she could become invisible. With all of these revelations, Hans' flushed head was so reeling that he had the feeling that the road was no longer beneath them any longer. His intensely flushing equally diverted eyes join in a mutual blush, until he finely divines to break the uncomfortable silence to say:

"Quite a noble name to flatter any stud." Stealing a bashful glance at the woman with the beautiful blonde mane glowing in the sunlight beside him, Hans' then naughty, teasing eyes peek over out their side to be rewarded by a sheepish Elsa sneaking a coy look beneath long lashes back at him.

Her pretty mouth lifts without a shred of fear into a radiant smile amidst their shared, soft laughter tinkling through the ethers as both bask in the noonday sun's brilliance.

Iriserende and Guddy look back to see what all the mirth was about between their driver and the pale woman laughing beside him on their horsedrawn sleigh. The seemingly endless kilometers Hans felt before now melt under the forgiving, merciful, hopeful gaze of the brightest star in the galaxy, who deemed to lower herself down far enough from the heavens to grant undeserving him company...

She's my angel—with the dust of the stars in her eyes…
Even the formerly drab achromatic road's milieu morphs into vividly glowing, lush foliage—full of life and beauty, as the horses now run in perfect sync reflected in the Vinjefjorden's bluest of blue mirror running parallel with the shimmering sleigh.

Though a dark shadow followed in the clear water's reflection not too far behind…
"The Juoska Will Make a Man out of You"

Act I

Chapter 19

Making good time, the road wears on calmly enough under the bright summer sunlight as the travelers continue their journey past the Fjorden river towns of Hestnes and Rodal on their determined trek eastward.

That is, until nearly sunset when an ominous dark thundercloud decides to pause in its skybound meanderings to start to drizzle a rain on their parade.

"Oh no. This could be bad." Olaf's plain spoken comment just then was an understatement for the snowman. The sudden summer storm's warm droplets of moisture beginning to fall were proof of what happens to snow when it does get wet.

The happily humming snowman's face becomes all lopsided as the pelting raindrops that hit his carrot dribble down to loose the integrity of his facial structure where he was sitting on Sven's sleigh between the couple.

"Hold it, Sven." Kristoff's soft mellow voice calls out to his reindeer pal before turning to the only two passengers he had aboard his open sleigh. "It's gonna be a pretty fierce storm, so—Anna, I think you should go in Hans'—er, the other sleigh—now, before it pours."

Kristoff catches his designation of 'that other sleigh's' driver, knowing how it might set his impetuous girl off.

"No way! If you can brave the storm, big man, so can I! I was born ready! Not to run from a little rain!" Princess Anna had more than her share of a stubborn streak and she folds her arms defiantly. "I'm not going anywhere."

"Anna, there's no use in two of us getting wet out here. Why would you stay and get soaked when we have a covered sleigh with empty seats available right behind us? Believe me, I've seen skies like this before. It's gonna come down pretty darn hard." Kristoff's experienced traveler eyes glance up to the looming dark cloud just above their heads as he shields them from the incoming first droplets with a large knuckled hand.

"Because I'm a rugged, outdoorsy—er, tough guy—too!" The independent-minded sweet caramel colored little girl leans over the back of her sleigh to root through their sparse luggage until she whips out her trademark fuschia cape with its pom pom tassels to sling the little cap over her head, as if that was all the necessary cover she required to battle the rainy onslaught. "I'm not eight years old anymore! And I don't like being ordered around like a child! This is half my sleigh and I can stay here as long as I please. So there!"

"Yeah…right. Why do you never want to listen to me?" A flustered Kristoff frowns with a sigh at her, at times, damnable stubborn pluckiness. He was already feeling the wetness seeping through his more water-resilient sealskin cap. "You may imagine yourself invincible but you're snowy friend here decidedly isn't, Anna. Be the adult heroine by saving Olaf before the raindrops turn him into a slush puppy. There's the covered sleigh. Get going—and tell Hans to watch for my signal."
We'll be stopping off in a few more miles." Kristoff points a directing finger backwards to his frowny faced wife.

It took a good man to send his girl over to her ex-fiancé's care. But Kristoff was more concerned about her health in not catching pneumonia than he was her catching anything from that guy.

"Ohh, all right! If I have to, Grumpy boots. Just for Olaf's sake—not yours. Come on, Olaf." After a long scrunched up brow and puckered mouth glare at Kristoff, Anna begrudgingly gives in to their argument after watching the worsening raindrops melting effect on her little snow buddy.

Grabbing hold of Olaf, she wraps her slushy snow friend beneath her vivid cape's folds quickly. Then, with a sigh, she gets up to hop from the sleigh side without waiting for her husband's usual help. But his punishing hand connects with her rump instead with a resounding SMACK!

"Get a move on, Feisty pants." He smugly teases as Anna glowers backwards from the road to give her hubby a snarky, nose-up-in-the-air farewell.

"That's no way to speak to a responsible adult." Anna trots briskly between the descending raindrops towards the halted sleigh behind theirs, being sure to keep Olaf's wriggling three-part snow form safe under her wraps until she arrives.

And there it was.

That same extended hand. That same inviting smile. That same pair of intoxicating eyes welcoming her when she got there.

"Here! Get him inside!" But instead of accepting Hans Westergaard's proffered help up into the Vis-à-vis sleigh he was at the helm of, a rather perturbed, sourpuss Anna shoves a dizzy Olaf up into the accommodating Prince's surprised arms.

"Hiya, JustHans." Olaf's branches wriggle in greeting as the prince delivers him into the passenger car to Elsa's waiting arms.

"I can get in fine all by—ergh—myself, thank you very much! Men! You all think we're so helpless." Anna haughtily states, hefting her own rain splattered becaped person up into the sleigh's passenger area. She saunters past Hans with a sling of her wet braids back defiantly.

Anna's one wet braid slaps the leaning over man right in his unfortunate green eyes, dazing him for a few seconds.

"That Kristoff gave instructions that we'll be stopping off soon. You just watch for his signal very closely, okay. That Kristoff said so, and we ALL have to heed his command, don't we, girls?"

Anna tries to include the two wide-eyed girls in the car in her slighted rant under the canvas covered roof.

She trips her way angrily through the rear passenger car that a shocked Rapunzel and stunned Elsa have to steady the fuming, tipsy girl until she finally sits down.

"Ooh! Men!" She expels through gritted teeth with a wrinkled brow on her reddened face. "I'm only here because Olaf will melt if he gets too wet. That Kristoff made me leave." She adds the last bit like she had a bad taste in her mouth in uttering her husband's name before her shocked audience.

Up front, Hans raises an eyebrow, glad her anger was not directed at him so vehemently—yet.
But a mad at the whole male race Anna seemed to notice his unwanted attention on her.

"I do hope you can be half as competent a sleigh driver on these slick muddy roads as 'Nature Expert' Kristoff is, Mr. Westergaard." An uppity Anna tosses back, at her 'most favorite' man, over her shoulder as Hans was still wiping at his whipped eye while he takes up the horses' reins and braces the incoming thick torrents himself atop his elevated perch, as well as the annoyed girl's snide words directed up at him.

"I will endeavor to adequately follow your husband's expertise on these perilous roads, Princess." Hans answers her politely but then his own bit of witticism can't help but peek through.

"At least, half of them." He projects back to the car as he clicks his tongue for the horses to proceed, despite the pounding pelting rain upon him.

"Hee hee hee." Rapunzel giggles at the young man's clever comeback jibe to stormcloud Anna. It quite reminded her of a certain other handsome stranger who could always make her smile with his well-spun words, even on rainy days.

"He's NOT the least bit funny, Cousin." Anna, not amused, folds her arms, still steaming at Kristoff's masterful 'orders' that had started her off on this bad mood. She gives her cousin a dirty look but the elder brunette only shrugs to Elsa with a toothy smile, while Pascal imitates his girl to a sheepish yellow degree.

With a big sigh, Anna stubbornly turns her back on everyone, looking out the back window at the grey, dreary rain she could identify with right about now.

Her thus far silent sister was quietly stroking Olaf's snowy head and tickling his gurgling happy tummy, trying her best to stay out of 'Hurricane Anna's' way before she imploded. Elsa's exotic purple-shadowed eyes were forward, knitted more in fretful anxiety for the two men out there, braving the harsh elements, not under cover of any sort, while the unrelenting rains progressively increase.

"Perhaps if I could…” The Ice Queen appeared to be turning some options over in her intelligent mind after studying Olaf for a few moments—moreover, studying his ice flurry cloud she previously construed.

The quiet, tall blonde suddenly becomes animated, swiftly lunging forward to kneel on the bench beside an astonished Rapunzel. Queen Elsa then focuses her frosty powers to rapidly freeze the granular ice tufts mere inches above Hans' already drenched head to instantly form a super-cooled fog until the frozen water vapors create a constant thin coating of icy glaze to hover over, much akin to Olaf's cloud.

Looking upwards curiously, Hans immediately grasps that it was Elsa's innate powers that were fabricating the pelting rain to sustain a perpetual hazy, foglike shield directly over his head, in a meter long circumference. She uses the vastness of her mind's control to transmogrify the falling moisture into less deleterious fine ice crystals called 'snowflakes.'

"Snowflakes? You are magical…” Hans breathily whispers in his smile, as once again his razor-like intellect is pleasantly mystified by this unique young woman's capabilities. He turns, with cleared vision, to see how Elsa was holding one hand up towards the airborne crystalline water droplet fog over his head, with her other arm extended out towards Kristoff farther ahead with a similar demonstration of her growing ice prowess.

Though not wishing to distract her intense focus, Hans notes how hard her increased breathing was.
So much so that he could feel her huffing cool breath puffs glaze over his own shoulder several feet away from where she was peering out from the sleigh to join under the fog cover over him, to precisely keep her fixed aim with another fog cover over a soaked Kristoff as well.

"Becalm your racing heart, my Queen. Embrace the elements around you—one deep breath at a time." Hans' soft voice was as warmly melodic as it was solidifying her confidence. Elsa was somehow always able to hear this Danish prince's tones in that special place inside she never knew existed, that it seemed only he could reach.

Her fiercely palpitating heart quiets when her heavy-breathing soothes to a more sedate temperature. Elsa found even more powerfully controlled in this calm state of awareness than in her passionate frenzy.

"There you go." Hans proudly speaks encouragement to her no longer wild eyes. He was yet astounded to be traveling under a small window of clear snowflake filled sky, as the torrent of rain still pelted all around the roads, the horses, and the rest of the sleigh—except for where she covered the heads of both he and Kristoff.

"Thank you." She responds in a soft voice to gaze upon the man wearing her kingdom's cloak so chivalrously well.

After traveling a few miles like this, Elsa was now not only able to control and maintain the two small 'snow' globes above the men, but she was also able to entertain other thoughts—such as gratitude for his stabilizing concern.

"That should be my line—for your amazing feat of holding up the rain for me, Queen Elsa. Though I've heard red hair takes on a foxy gleam when it's wet like this." He whispers quite wickedly out of the corner of his eye, alluding to her previous connection between himself and the sleek animal he found rather tempting. Hans was feeling rather emboldened with the pair of their heads now so closely enveloped together amidst this harmless snowflake spun snowglobe within the queen's magical field.

No one else could hear what passed between them, for all the thrashing rain beats buffeting around the sleigh upon the rhythmically pounding concurrence of raindrops on the canvas roof.

"It does." Elsa answers in all honesty, feeling equally just as freed from her repressed emotion within their cozy vacuum. But the wetness on Hans' flattened slicked back hair, dripping down his grown crimson cheeks to grace his licked lips still causes the 'good girl' to redden.

Back in the car, Anna may not have been able to hear what was going on in the conversation, but she was able to see Elsa's deep blush enough to give rise again to her own red hot anger. Lost in her own miffed irritated world, glaring out the back window, she had held her tongue too long.

"So what's going on out there?! Can I play, too?!" Anna yells loudly to be heard over the noisy din of the rain. She possessively tugs a yelping Elsa back in, which dually causes Elsa's strained focus on a pleased-as-punch-to-be-dry Kristoff to falter. The messy-haired blonde man was unceremoniously barraged by the fierce rains again as result. ("Gee, thanks.")

Anna then sticks her own curious noggin into the protective meter's worth circumference of calm from the raging storm outside.

"Hey, this is amazing! I didn't know you could do this for people, too." With an awestruck whispered voice, Anna is wowed by Elsa's gained powers on this journey. Her big sister had never attempted anything like this before at home, and it brings Anna out of her mood for a minute as a
pleased Elsa reenters the wintry scene with a warm hug around her spirited little sister. "I like it!"
A giddy Anna sticks her tongue out to receive a ticklish snowflake on it, just like they did when they were kids, racing out in the snow when it was first starting for the two children to play.

*Just you and me, Elsa and—*

—*what's that guy doing here, too?*

Anna's dreamy, nostalgic thoughts of happy days of youth with her forever best friend of a big sister were dashed by the slicked back dripping wet nape of the red head called Hans Westergaard.

*Wow…so that's what he looks like after a bath…*

She mentally slaps herself for that leftover stray 'drool' as she shakes herself out of this 'Helsa' winter wonderland to yank Elsa fully away into the passenger car where the pounding rain on the roof had made Rapunzel feel rather 'sick again.'

"Ohh! I'm so sorry!" With Anna's persistent distraction, both physical and psychological, Elsa loses focus and control over the fog cloud above Hans' head as well.

And this time, it doesn't merely float away to dissipate as it did for Kristoff. This time, the rain was transmuted into hail.

"Hee hee hah!" Anna silently giggles at the man's obvious discomfort.

"Ouch! Ah, ow—" Hans can't cover his harshly covered skull for fear of losing his maintained control of the uneven team of horses' reins, needing especial care in this confusing storm. So he just takes the icy punishment down his collar like a man, until Elsa was able to deconstruct the magic ice hail above his head so that normal rain was all he had to contend with again.

"Don't worry, I'm sure you'll master that delightful technique soon, Queen Elsa. With a little more practice and focus training, I'm sure you'll be—" Hans calls back in a raised voice to be heard above the recurring rainfall. In Elsa's eyes, the glowing smile on his handsome, dripping wet features adds to that indeed 'foxy' gleam of his red hair as the sunset begins to break through the storm cloud that mysteriously parts.

"—impeccable…" Hans quietly finishes his sentence with inquisitive eyes upward just as the copious rainstorm suddenly lets up.

Right on cue, too, as Kristoff's arm could be visibly seen raised and pointing to the left.

"'There's the signal. Irideserende, Guddy, follow that Sven, if you please.'" Hans confidently brushes back the water streaming down his by now drenched, mahogany red head. He was feeling rather invigorated by both the cool wetness and Elsa's eye-opening exercise.

"Shall we, ladies?" Hans clicks his tongue for his team of steeds to curve around the muddy road's bend in pursuit of the sleigh forging ahead in the sunset.

As the dusk begins to settle after the unexpected sudden summer rainstorm, another silent sleigh takes the half-revolved same turn…

By the time Sven's sleigh pulls up to an invitingly well-lit, double cabin style building, it was nearly dark.

"It looks like you got hit, too." Commenting on Hans' similar wet head as he dismounts his own
vehicle, Kristoff comes lumbering off his sleigh, flattened blonde hair sticking to his neck with water droplets still dripping down his strong chin.

"Soo…thanks for that interesting cloud cover back there, Elsa. It really cleared things up…while it lasted." Kristoff was honestly grateful for any helpful kindness the ice powered Queen had up her sleeve, albeit short-lived.

"Yeah! Wasn't that amazing?! It might've lasted for longer, too, if Anna hadn't pulled her away." Olaf was too brutally honest as Anna tweaks his carrot nose behind his back, with an angelic look on her smiling face and she scoots in front of the big-mouthed snowman.

"I should've figured you were behind it." Kristoff smirks with a mildly frustrated sigh as he takes off his cap to wring it out in his soaking gloves.

"What'd I do now?" Full well knowing that she was a 'disobedient little wife' on the sleigh before, a peeves Anna pretends to be all innocent, with her dry mittens cupped behind her coyly, shrugging him off.

"Look, there's a good kitchen with a good cook in there. Why don't you girls get something to eat while Hans and I see to Sven and the horses, and pick up some supplies from the mercantile. Take Olaf, okay—and try not to get in trouble." Kristoff was starting to get used to being in charge on this journey. It was quite a change for the much-bullied, sweet-natured laid back boy of his youth, who had learned at an early, parentless young age to bow to the seniority of the rugged ice harvesters and become accustomed to taking a back seat to the domineering troll family later on.

This command role was decidedly different for the now even-tempered somewhat henpecked husband of today. Though his bossy little wife believed herself in charge, someone level-headed had to lead this unlikely rescue party in reality.

And there was no way in hell Kristoff was going to allow it to be HIM—even if Hans Westergaard was proving to be of some worth.

The tall blonde smirks at how the slighter man who was obviously well-versed with horses was giving each of his 'team' a brush rub down before he even considered his own sopping wet state.

"I'll be in the store picking up some supplies. You come in and dry off when you get the chance. There's no room for pneumonia patients in this circus." Kristoff announces in his rough way, not yet sure how to address the former villain/former suitor of his wife's.

We'll leave that for another time. He thinks as he enters the general store and uses the glass polishing towel lying on the counter to attempt to dry his soaking wet hair a bit.

"Hey, Olsen! A little service, please!" Kristoff gruffly complains, when the scrawny, somewhat timid, yet kind-hearted general store owner doesn't immediately appear as he usually did when anyone came wandering into his rural out of the way store, a-ringing the bell.

"Hello, Kristoff, my boy! Long time no see! What have you been up to?" The older man with receding mousy brown hair and smiling, weary eyes comes out with a familiar slap on the big 'boy's' solid back.

Kristoff seemed to be well-known wherever he went here in the North Country.

"Just…here and there. You know me." Kristoff was still unassumingly modest enough to be self-deprecating with his old acquaintances. He never wanted to blow his own trumpet at his astonishing good fortune and turn of fate to be connected with royalty and living in the palace now.
"I've been hearing that from your wife. Have you been dragging that poor sweet thing 'here and there', as you put it, without a thought to her delicacy, little Kristoff?" A large woman comes bustling in to grab his left hand to display his jammed on wedding band. Mrs Olsen almost bitingly accuses Kristoff of mistreating his new bride, as she was wont to find fault with everyone—including her docile husband. She was so well known for this throughout the region for her loud bossy mouth that most traders and travelers pitied the man and avoided his 'old lady.'

'Little Kristoff' knew for a fact that his Anna was far from mistreated and had absolutely nothing to do with the word 'delicacy.'

"Hello, Mrs. Olsen. I see you've met my new wife." Kristoff looks down upon the dark haired, plump woman with a resigned smile.

"Well, I may have peeked in the restaurant at our guests. Your little woman is the bright gingersnap one with the big appetite, is she not?" The busybody, middle-aged lady asks as she scurries around the counter, practically knocking her husband out of the way.

"Yup, that pretty much describes Anna." Kristoff answers as his attention was more on assessing the tensile strength of some new rope leads he was perusing in his big hands when the door opens with a bell ringing 'di-ding!'

"'Anna!' What a sweet name for a sweet girl! You've chosen well, Little Kristoff." She finally finds something nice to say with the compliment in a treacly tone.

"Actually, she chose me." Kristoff was quite pointed in saying, knowing full well that Prince Hans had just entered the room and was no doubt listening in.

"Oh my! Come in! Come in! That was a terrible sudden storm, wasn't it?! You're soaked to the bone, poor boy! Come and I'll dry you off, my dear. Are you a friend of Little Kristoff's? What is your name, poor little lamb?" The shopwoman commandeers a wide-eyed and shocked Hans as she leads him away into a back room, for it was a rarity to see such a fine specimen of a svelte man, obviously of some breeding from his regal deportment, up in these more rugged parts.

Hans gives Kristoff a pair of pleading eyes for assistance, to which Kristoff merely shrugs at 'Mr Popularity' with the ladies, thoroughly enjoying Hans' discomfort.

_Hmph! Couldn't have happened to a nicer guy._ He muses with a chuckle.

**Di-ding!**

Kristoff turns, only mildly interested to see who entered the establishment. But he felt somewhat responsible after sending Mr. Olsen on a 'scavenger' hunt to find a certain special type of grappling hook as well as fill out his order for oats and grain to feed the horses (and don't forget the free cooked carrots from the restaurant for Sven.)

"Hello? Did somebody just come in? The owner will be back in a few minutes, but I shop here so much I could probably tell you where anything is…? Hmmm…" Kristoff walks the small general store in a few wide strides. Looking up and down the three or four dark aisles where anyone could've maybe rushed in when he blinked, but other than himself, the store was empty.

"Ookay, I'm hearing things now. Way too much of Anna's strong coffee—Whoa! Where'd you folks come from?!" Turning around, Kristoff was not normally jittery, but something hanging in the very atmosphere after a strange sudden storm such as this, had the man who has always been in tune with nature, on edge.
And the abrupt appearance of three dark figures moving in the shadows at the other end of the mercantile's fabric cutting table was enough to set him off.

"Dat lea guhkesaigi." (*Long time, no see.*)

"Bures, ulca gonagas bardni." (*Hello, little Prince.*)

"Gaanda mii du nanna lea? (*What is your name, Boy?*)

"Wh—what? Sorry, I don't understand anything you're saying. Do you speak even a little Norwegian—?" But before Kristoff can rationalize what was happening, the three dark skinned elderly people obviously hailing from a far northern arctic based clime from the thick deep blue wool clothing trimmed with yellow and red bands peeking out beneath each of the mysterious trio's big black fur hooded coats, take a step closer towards him.

"Dat lea guhkesaigi." The oldest man of the bunch with white snowy streaks through his once long black hair leads with eyes black as coal to land upon Kristoff.

"Bures, ulca gonagas bardni." Upon reflection, Kristoff decides that the wrinkled though yet rounded tanned Eurasian face was that of an aged woman, whose leathery features were worn deeply with years of care.

"Gaanda mii du nanna lea?" Now the suspicious-eyed third member of this puzzling trio possessed a baffling oddity in both his elaborate garb and characteristic air of mysticism that the down-to-earth young man couldn't quite place.

The three indigenous reindeer herding Laplanders move from the shadows even closer as they purposefully repeat what they each said before in their cryptic Uralic native tongue, but this time more slowly and succinctly, as if speaking more definitively would make the tall blonde man understand their words.

He strains his ears, craning his head down to listen better to the foreign language he'd only heard once or twice before from a distance, when the ice harvesting men he was raised with were doing some reindeer trading with the inscrutable Saami...

"Listen, I'm sorry. I know you probably can't understand me, either, but I really can't get your language at all." Kristoff speaks very loudly and deliberately apologetic to the three older deadpan dark faces.

"Ahkkut, Okta giella ii leat goassege doarvai." Is what the old Saami woman actually says in her native scratchy sing-songy voice in response to him after a moment. But about halfway through the sentence, she moves in to tenderly touch Kristoff's befuddled cheek.

And as her wise old eyes lock with his, everything up to now indistinctly out of focus suddenly becomes clear to Kristoff and he plainly hears her fragile voice as if it were only he and she in the world, all else swallowed in eerie silence...

"One language is never enough, my grandchild."

"Whoa, what just happened? How did you do that?!" Kristoff staggers back, bumping into items hanging low on the store shelves recklessly as he moves away in stupefied confusion, his brain reeling from the overload of information.

"You did hear the words of your grandmother communicate in your head, did you not, pale golden one?" The long white haired Saami elder concludes from the sheer astonishment evident on
"Wait! 'Grandmother'? You must've got the wrong guy! I've never understood a word of Samek in my entire life! Who are you people? And why are you messing with me now? I've got more than my plate full already, without this." Wanting no trouble more than he had, a puzzled Kristoff begins to back away from the strangely cryptic native peoples this land truly belonged to, and they to it.

*I mean, I know the mountain men who raised me thought I might be part-Saami, but I never could remember a thing about my young childhood so I just let it go..."

"The mutes—the memory—is a capricious thing over the years, even for the Honorable Spirit Wind Whisperer. Are you certain that this is the boy?" That third old Saami, the one dressed in the traditional long gaktis tunic Saami robe of a Noaidi—Shaman—raises some chary doubts to the other two.

Although, just in the past decade, Protestant Father Lars Laestadus, a kind-hearted yet savvy Puritan missionary, had integrated Lutheran Christianity with the old Saami belief system that had been in place for thousands of years in the region. Many Saami embraced the ideal of One True God's love, though some still clung to remnants of past rituals, with a great number of Saami slowly accepting Christ into their hearts as a 'God who cares for the lives of all people', including the downtrodden pariahs of society such as they were often unfairly treated as shunned nomadic wanderers, despite their growing shared belief in the same God.

"Honorable what? I think the storm's got you nice old folks spooked." Kristoff scoffs now with a condescending smile at the small trio, none measuring more than 5 foot 5 inches in comparison to his massive 6 foot 5 as he turns his puzzled whole foot higher back on the three harmless little old loonies to return to the counter with his select length of rope and other various discounted supplies he'd picked up from the well-stocked shelves along the way.

"Olsen! I'm ready to go! Where's that feed, already!? And don't forget Caroline's glazed carrots from the restaurant for Sven! He asked for them specifically when we pulled in."

Kristoff takes out the weather worn old leather pouch, he'd had for forever, from his belt sash where he kept secured his hard-earned money. Then he economically begins to busy himself counting—precisely—what was to be doled out to the shopkeeper.

But the stoic young man was feeling a tad uncomfortable all alone in the empty store with the trio of enigmatic strangers' eyes boring a hole in the back of his skull, then exchanging some hushed words between them, dark beady black eyes staring up at him, as if he were some sort of—

Out of nowhere, all three aged Saami reverently fall to their knees, as if they had just been possessed of some great idol to worship.

"What now?! Come on, guys! This is getting embarrassing now." The red-faced easygoing laid-back 21 year old was feeling pretty darn silly himself, and more than a little shamed for the elderly natives bowing at his curly-toed boot feet like he was somebody way more important than the working class ice harvester he was.

"Riegadit golle maanas Baiwe boahtit farmi dii vuorbi." ("Golden child born of the Sun, the time has come to fulfill your destiny.")

"Um. Okay. You're officially weird." Said under his breath with a crooked smile on his lips at the comical scene of the colorfully dressed elderly trio at his feet, Kristoff's eyes bug out at the
strangeness being played out—especially when the Lapland trio begin to hum their foreign tongued yoike chant.

They were holding hands and swaying rhythmically on their knees on the floor when the mercantile shopkeeper comes bursting in to chasten them.

"What are you type doing in here?! This is a God-fearing institution. You natives know your sub-arctic voodoo magic isn't welcome here. Leave my store now."

Kristoff had never even imagined in all his wildest dreams that kind, even-tempered, quiet Mr. Olsen would've exploded with such ferocious racial prejudice against his fellow man—especially the elderly of any color or race, who at the very least, deserved respect.

"Olsen, these old folks aren't hurting anything." True-hearted Kristoff was too utterly good to fall into the pitfalls that many a self-righteous person often did as he watches with pitying eyes the small north Eurasian indigenous people rise to their worn out feet and hobble towards the front door without so much as a word of protest—as was the plight of their entire downtrodden race in that day.

"You side with those wandering homeless natives, boy? I guess you ice harvesters aren't much better. Just take your supplies and leave my store." There was more fear than anger in the middle-aged shop owner's eyes as he throws down the two sacks of grain feed at Kristoff's feet that he'd just brought up. He then scurries into the back storage room again, slamming the door behind him, so petrified of the Saami mystics' magic under his roof.

"But I didn't pay yet. Don't you want your money for all this stuff?" A frustrated, grimacing Kristoff whines. His trusty coin purse ready to be honestly employed was still in his shocked hand. "Fine. I'll pay you next time, Olsen. Just put it on my tab. You know I'm good for it." Kristoff cranes his neck around the corner to shout, far more loudly than his low timbres generally allowed.

He then struggle to gather up the sacks, and all the ropes and gear spilling over his already overfilled arms. Just about to put his shoulder to the door, he recalls he left something behind.

Darn guy...

"Hey, Hans! Time to...book...it...?" Kristoff's thick eyebrows knit in befuddled humor when, right on cue, the tall, lithe aristocrat comes unceremoniously bounding from the rear textile supply room, where Mrs. Olsen had 'kindly' taken him to towel off and to show him a new outfit of dry clothing to the surprisingly yet innocent young man.

But that didn't seem to be all the stout and portly woman, well past her prime, was offering. Prince Hans Westergaard, though deft with sword and ship, was rather none too versed, it seemed, in how to handle a middle-aged lady's 'hands on' expertise in measuring up and down the unpleasantly distressed young man for an agreeably form-fitting pair of dry pants.

"Yes, that does sound more than ideal. I find I wasn't...at all interested in making a purchase today." Rapidly tucking back in the oversized billowy sleeved inner sark Kristoff had loaned the shirtless man from his own meager luggage, Hans rather diplomatically addresses the delicate subject as he quickly smooths back some ruffled and loose strands of hair that nearly matched the color of his now flustered, near molested, cheeks.

"Must be tough to be born irresistible to the ladies." A patronizing Kristoff chortles, finding the situation funny despite the other peculiarities of this less than amiable visit as he eyes a flustered Hans self-consciously pull back on his removed Arendelle cloak (for the fitting of course, dear!).
"I wouldn't know." Swift fingers refastening the dampness-be-damned cloak, a bashfully mortified Hans knew he was being mocked, the blush still on his cheeks as he manfully hefts the two grain horse feed sacks over his scarred shoulders, lightening the load for his already weighed down traveling companion.

Kristoff opens the door. "Let's just get back to the humdrum sanity of the open road. It's nuts around here."

"That sounds more pleasant to me than my most recent proposition." A rattled Hans gives the taller man one of his rare discomposed genuine sentiments.

For the first time the two men share a smile as their rivalrous camaraderie had expanded to a new level of shared youthful humor. As they walk through the front awning, Kristoff sees Olsen's silhouette through the side window, he knocking on the windowpane as he silently words that he'd pay up soon. But when Olsen pretends to not notice him, the overwhelmed blonde gives one huge exasperated exhale. The pair prepare to leave with the verbal I.O.U still hanging in the air behind them, and Kristoff steps out into the suddenly biting cold, wind-whipping darkness.

"Varut! Nuorhtuuvoinna mu diksu jos boahtte aigi." ("Beware! The Spirit of the North Wind is anxious of your future.")

In the dark of the clouded half moon, the Saami nomadic man's voice eerily rasps out, stopping them in their tracks as the two young men stride towards the lean-to shelter for their waiting beasts.

"Aww, not again. This is getting to be too much." Though bewildered, Kristoff was far less reactively apprehensive than his companion. The blonde's eyes go quite wide to watch the recently woman-handled pampered prince immediately spring to action, Hans dropping both sacks of grain to the ground with a swiftly produced dagger at the gleaming ready to slash through any imminent danger like a professional blade man.

Where the hell did he get that?!

"Hans! Put it away!" Kristoff gruffly barks the command, as he takes a fiercely protective stance between the three grizzled to leather aged natives hailing from beyond the country's tundra far north and the one unexpectedly armed and dangerous youthful resident of the Southern Isles beneath Norway's far south.

"But, Kristoff—!" A pensive eyed Hans appeals to the brawner man by his first name.

Prince Hans, hardened in these past two tormented years after a lifetime spent in constant defense, both mentally and physically from twelve mean-spirited older brothers, had learned more than his share of self-preservation techniques over his friendless, rejected youth.

"I'm asking you to trust me." The small assured smile and Kristoff's restraining hand on Hans' dagger grasped forearm that accompanied Kristoff's quietly spoken request diffuses Hans' agitation. The unnerved redhead had been on edge since last night due to these unknown intruders which had put his mind on prime guard.

Sensing deep certainty in the big blonde's unguarded eyes, Hans lowers his weapon, even to the point of re-sheathing it in his tall boot's hidden side. With a trusting unspoken nod in his direction, the slim man moves to stand beside a surprisingly docile Iriserende and Guddy with a wary eye still on the strangers as he loads their sleighs.

"You possess the wisdom of your forefathers, Spirit Whisperer. Your Juoska is nearly complete."
The white-haired elder now announces to Kristoff's perfectly translating ears, though he understood little of the unreadable emotions on the deeply creased forehead of the leathery face for the man's true meaning.

"Spirit Whisperer? Juoska? Look, I don't know how to break this to you, but I think you've got a case of mistaken identity. I'm no legendary foretold Saami hero. I'm just a regular ordinary ice harvester nobody named Kristoff Bjorgmann who doesn't know a thing about your culture. I'm no one special."

Though leaving off he held the title of 'Prince Consort of Arendelle' now due only to his recent marriage, modest Kristoff still always considered himself a normal working everyday Jon as he reaches over unconsciously to pat Sven's gratified supportive neck.

"I thought you forgot me!" 'Sven' says through his demonstrative voiced smirking interpreter.

"No, I didn't forget you this time, old buddy." The real Kristoff answers his wobbly throated furry friend as he digs through the packets the storekeeper wrapped atop the feed buckets.

The droopy-eyed reindeer practically leaps for joy at his best friend's words, panting excitedly when the man produces a special cooked and seasoned carrot that a justified Sven half gobbles greedily before pausing to leave the remainder of the half chewed beta carotene rich vegetable for his pal. "Nope. It's all yours this time. Thanks anyway, Sven." The three Saami watch with interest as Kristoff seemed to be having a sociable conversation with his extremely tamed reindeer.

"But it is who she opened your heart to hear that day, that made you the man who you are today." Rhyming a cryptically sung yoike, the old woman now vocalizes as she touches a twisted old withered hand to Kristoff's chest, right over his pounding heart, causing Sven to cock his head at her inquisitively.

"I don't understand. Why do I need to know this? Who are you? What are you trying to tell me?" Kristoff pleads to the old woman with the deep soul in a whisper, never feeling so curious in all his life as to his genealogy as he looks into the fathomless depths of the elderly woman's mysterious, yet comforting, eyes.

"You will remember how you were chosen when the moment is right, little one. That is when your reflection will show who you truly are inside, if you search deeply and honestly within."

Did she say that aloud? Or was it merely a thought broadcast to him with an instrument beyond her inexplicably unmoving lips?

Kristoff was growing so addlepated his mind was beginning to not be able to think straight. as he and Sven share an equally perplexed stare.

"And when the Bielgomai rears its ugly head through the darkness, you will require this, Christ Bearer, to fight for the Light in His holy name, to drive the evil back from our land and back into the sea."

The previously dubious Noaidi shaman now acquiesces to recognize Kristoff for who he was and Whom the golden haired youth's namesake was, more definitively, after keen eyes watch the interaction that was foretold between chosen man and beast.

Conveyed amidst this puzzling, mysterious conundrum, the nomadic shaman reveals from beneath his large fur trimmed bearskin cloak, he was holding some arcane secret within its folds.

"A Saami long bow and arrow." A thoroughly impressed Prince Hans breathes, as the shaman
brings the curved wood out. The young male had made quite a study of nearly all forms of weaponry in his days of ignored youth spent tucked away in the palace library. And the boy who had his own modest experience in the field of archery was intrigued in seeing the most famed, most sought after bow in all of Scandinavia in real life before his curious eyes now.

Widely know for its fine craftsmanship, specialized refined wood, all hand-carved, specifically treated and painstakingly polished to create the ultimate superior weapon that was wholly instrumental in a young man's 'Juoska'—the legendary journey for a Saami from boyhood to manhood when he was fully able to string such a fine bow himself and send its arrow flying straight and true...a Saami man's rite of passage...

A mystified Kristoff merely stares down at the golden tan well lacquered bow as the man's dark skinned bony hand transfers the legendary bow into Kristoff's lighter complexion brawny ones.

The impressive composite bow, delicately handmade and passed down through generations, was created by the Saami who took great trouble to perfect the compression spruce to be able to bend so the finely honed bow would have the maximum reflex strength of the polished conferrous rare woods curved into a 72 inch length of highly sought after scarce goat willow.

"But why give this to me? I've never shot an arrow before in my life! So, I'm hardly the one you should be entrusting this to." Kristoff is finally able to ask, belittling his own shortcomings as he tries to hand it back over.

"Twenty-one midnight suns have passed over this land since the Great White Woman prepared you for this. Your moment in the sun is soon to come. Ancient legend goes:

'This bow will speak the Spirit Whisperer's name through. And with his arrow, so too flies his soul, straight and true...'

The eldest of the three Saami extends a gnarled bony hand to land on a hesitantly amazed Kristoff's shoulder with the prophesized yoike and enigmatic phrasing.

"Ollu Iihkku." (Good luck.) The aged Lapland sage murmurs directly to Kristoff's confused eyes before he turns to disappear into the dark night.

"Baze dearvan." (Goodbye.) The convinced dark shaman Noaidi priest nods his farewell after placing a revered hand over the recurve limb of the decades old honed wood of the cherished bow as he hands Kristoff the bow's sleeve quiver filled with special crown dipped nock shaft arrows.

"Kristoff, Ipmil lea johtalit don." (God go with you, Kristoff.) The old woman had wells of tears in her eyes, Kristoff was sure, as she grips both his big hands in her little ones to christen them with both her kisses and tears.

"No, wait! Don't go! I need you to tell me more about—" Kristoff was not skeptical anymore, for he believed they were speaking truth, freely given and taken between he and these aged nomad wanderers in some strangely unique bond he'd never felt before in his orphaned life as he recalls the ice harvesters' sparse rumors of him as being part-Saami.

"Jos Eadni mu cabmi lea..." (You have your Mother's eyes..."

The old woman, who called herself 'Grandmother' moves back slowly, as if parting from him was almost too painful for her to bear, as she holds onto his full warm hands within her shrieved bony trembling palms, emotion evident at last in her warm final words.

Until she finally lets go to join her companions to melt into the shadows so completely vanished
without a trace, it was as if they were ghosts, never there at all.

"Were you able to interpret anything they were saying in that strange tongue? I'm afraid I didn't understand a thing, though you appeared able to." A pondering Hans softly interrupts the hushed silence with the wondering curiosity, causing a mixed up Kristoff to question his own teetering sanity.

"Did I?" Yet Kristoff could gaze in a mystical daze down at the conclusively incontrovertible physical objects of bow and arrows and quiver actually held in his spellbound hands in the darkness to prove those Saami were real.

And just in the snap of a finger, the heavy dark cloud hovering overhead in the sky dissipates, allowing the fresh moonlight to stream though at last.

Along with it, as if preordained, comes the trio of girls. Rapunzel, like a true 'big sister,' was tugging Anna, who seemed to be dragging her heels into the ground a bit upon seeing Kristoff. She squeezes Elsa's hand for support as Olaf waddles up behind them.

"You fellas ready to go?" Rapunzel seemed to have been elected as 'spokeswoman' for them after the three ladies had had a 'heart to heart' talk over the meal.

Looking sheepish after their first tiff earlier, Anna was in a more content, pleasant mood once she'd had a dose of her older cousin's advice on men and married life—plus a full tummy of chocolate frosting on her lips, Anna licking her sticky with sweet, gooey goodness fingertips.

For half a moment, Hans almost feels the urge, but just stops short of doing the honors himself, by gentlemanly handing Kristoff his handkerchief to help Anna, while he gazes raptly at the taller, young blonde woman with the corseted blue print frock, illuminated in the moonlight instead.

But the strapping ice harvester was almost too preoccupied to notice, until Rapunzel's elbow in his gut brings him back to reality and he distractedly wipes his wife's chocolate smudged face, without either comment or eye contact.

"Are you still…sore at me?" Anna asks her silent husband in an unusually timid, shaky small voice, when he just stares straight past her into the thin, dark air—like she was invisible.

She wouldn't have admitted it before, but Anna was feeling like a naughty little girl all evening after their very first argument over being disobedient and defiant to his doting, caring concerned responsibility for her health and welfare, when the earlier rainstorm also fell over her rebellious heart.

That guilt and the fact that she just spent so many extra orts frivolously on chocolate confections of every sort in vengeful, 'getting evenness', that the sweet, normally happy girl was feeling so down and out she could just pop.

"Oh, Kristoff! Anna's been a bad girl! She's so sorry for making you angry!" Spoken in the third person cutely, Anna throws herself wholeheartedly into her husband's unexpectant arms. Kristoff powerfully wraps her up in them as he passes his new set of bow and arrows in their quiver to an observant Hans, who casually adds the weapon to the supplies he was loading into the sleigh he was already adeptly hitching to the reindeer.

Elsa's keen eye that had been following Hans every action, now focus with curious interest on the new items he was covering up under a blanket.

"No, why would I be?" Kristoff replies with a smile.
Anna's heavy heart soars at his gentle words and increasingly affectionate soft eyes.

"I could never be mad at you, Sweet cheeks." His hand reaches to pat her rosy cheeks, petting them adoringly, then giving the rosy pair a gentle squeeze, showing her that all was forgiven.

Though he never even knew they had had a fight.

"Anna, I was just talking to these three old Saami people and they said—" Kristoff was the most honest and accessible husband a girl could ever want. He needed his relationship with Anna to be always out in the open, but he didn't quite know where to begin, so as not to cause any excess alarm.

"They wanted to give your husband a gift to mark your happy occasion." A cunning Hans swoops in to smoothly fill in the gaps for the disoriented blonde.

"Oh! A wedding present! Wow! We're famous! How sweet! What is it!? What is it?!" She asks excitedly as a little child as Hans uncovers the bow to display it before her enthused eyes. "I always wanted to try one of those! THANK YOU!" Caught up in the minutiae of wedded bliss again, Anna was wildly yelling and waving in every direction to the pitch black road, though there was no one to be seen in either way to receive her gratitude.

"Okay! Let's get this show on the road! I'm gonna shoot me some arrows tomorrow!" Anna cries out her newly revitalized battle cry after standing on tippy toe to secure a happy again kiss on Kristoff's bewildered, yet satisfied lips. He was becoming more grounded to earth again by her love reflected in his eyes as he and Hans load the women and friends onto the sleighs.

"Thanks for that." Kristoff goes up to Hans as if to discuss the roads ahead. "I guess they don't need more on their shoulders to worry about than they've already got. Good call." Kristoff relinquishes to Hans' own wisdom here in holding one's own counsel in impending predictions of doom where bow and arrows may be required weaponry.

However, there was one point of contention still eating at Kristoff's mind.

"Exactly how long have you had that nifty little dagger tucked away in your boot, Mister? I guess you never felt the need to share that strangely intriguing point of information with your unsuspecting friends, hmm?" Kristoff may have been more perturbed with this unsavory discovery a day or two ago, but Hans Westergaard was starting to grow on him—just starting, mind you—with the way in which he always had his back.

"Friends? Thank you for that…Kristoff." A smiling Hans seemed genuinely touched and pleased.

"Yeah, and that's still 'Mr. Bjorgman' to you—because I have a new bow with a quiver full of arrows to prove it." Kristoff smirks at the other man with a glint behind his challenging eyes.

And as Kristoff returns to his own sleigh, his investigating gaze travels up to the contouring shadows crossing the mysterious dark side of the moon…
In the midnight's overcast dearth of light, the gorgeously tanned and well-sculpted muscular physique of a shirtless man pauses in his unpalatable forced toil to stare down at his two painful hands.

The scrapes and blisters he had 'manned up' enough to endure the past few hours spent in the difficult job of employing a shovel through hard permafrost encrusted soil that had not been broken for the past three hundred years were now splitting and bleeding incessantly.

Despite the cold evening chill, the salty sweat that had been stinging both his already bruised black eyes now trickles down his exhausted bicep muscles along the popping veins of his well-formed arms and across his still-half frostbitten extensors until, by bad luck, his own body salt and acids burn at his freshly opened wounds.

"Owie! I don't see how you pirates expect the delicately refined skills of these talented hands to pick any locks to your precious secret treasure in this state. Damn, that stings!"

Tossing down the heavy shovel to display the bleeding scratches on his chafed palms, not to mention his already beaten and battered body from his failed mutiny attempt of the Pearl Lady, Flynn Rider now bewails his painfully blistered and bloodied palms as his yet arrogant voice calls up from the hole he had been digging himself into.

Literally.

Since their clandestine arrival under the cover of darkness some five hours ago after the previous night's secret reconnoiter of the area, a beaten down Flynn had been an unwitting and unwilling participant in. Then accomplished thief had unhappily had his back put to work doing one of his absolutely least favorite tasks, his tall form bent over an endless amount of dirt to break ground in such tough soil, digging.

And boy, five hours into their happy jaunt, Flynn's exhausted back was sure aching.

"I don't do 'dirt.' I don't even like potted plants! Never mind that garden Blondie always plans for us to plant in the castle's backyard." In a whiny voice, Flynn grimaces aloud under his breath in the dark at the packed dirt crater he had spooned the soil from one exerted shovelful at a time until he was physically six feet under—

No, scratch that. That sounds bad—I'm six feet down in the dirt.

"If ye're hands be worthless, thief, ol' Houtebeen's sword might be amiable to relieve ye of zem all together so ye have no more complaints mumbled under ye're breath." The sneering patch-eyed pirate's ready face, made even more sinister and hideous by the lamplight he was holding, had been looming over the two meter wide pit Flynn had excavated. Houtebeen was so close and full of eager curiosity that the thief could smell the foul odor of the aged pirate's putrid breath through the captain's rum-soaked beard wafting over him.
Ewwwww…everything about this guy reminds me of the color of mud.

He looks up at Houtebeen's sneering red face lording down over him.

I really hate mud…

With shifting, sunken black eyes, Flynn dejectedly wipes the filthy sludge old Houtebeen's dragged pegleg had just catapulted at his eye sockets and cheek—and even some into Flynn's opened mouth at eye level, to which he spits out, disgusted at the thought that this wasn't just plain dirt. It was the dirt of a graveyard where age-old bodies had decayed within.

Yuck. I need a good gargle.

"So which be it, thief?" Houtebeen cruelly removes his cutlass from its scabbard hovering threateningly closer to Flynn's hands, as the exhausted man leans them against the cool dirt wall he had created for support.

"Did I mention I suffer from claustrophobia? Ever since the orphanage when the bigger boys locked me in that old, smelly trunk, which, by the way, as a kid of four years old, was good incentive for teaching myself some pretty nifty lock picking abilities. Handsome little devil I was, if I do say so myself." Flynn rattles near the end of his response with a somewhat quirky smile, remembering the lonely days of a little, abandoned whelp left at the front doorstep of the orphanage—who didn't belong to anyone, anywhere, except to himself.

And that's who taught him how to survive.

"Enough of ze mumbling, thief!" Captain Houtebeen's redheaded temper explodes. He had had just about his fill of Eugene Fitzherbert's 'fond' childhood memories.

"Who's mumbling? Was I mumbling? You must've been hearing this grave's former occupant's final gasp, angry at us for invading his hallowed space. No complaints here from me though, Cap'n. Just connecting with old terra firma here." Patting the unsettlingly disintegrating dirt wall, Flynn smooth talks his way out of the dicey situation. Then he grabs up the discarded shovel in quick hands to industriously return to his tunnel burrowing down through some poor deceased's uprooted gravesite in the eastern rear side of the Nidarosdoman's cemetery of consecrated grounds.

"That be better, ye cunning scoundrel. Enough of ye're fast-talking mumblings." The unctuous Houtebeen angrily growls. "Job! Ye keep an eye on zis unscrupulous blackguard while ye're captain has a look around zat zere river to make sure we've not been followed."

As cued, the dark Caribbean man swiftly appears from the shadows had had been almost totally swallowed up in, save for the whites of his cynical eyes.

"Hi there, tall, dark and—" Flynn takes a sweet talking approach in an attempt to beguile the bristling, taciturn man who had previously beaten him to a pulp to perhaps garner some—

"Just dig, t'ief." The quiet, sullen, dark-skinned first mate grunts out the three terse words. He was clearly able to spy the wily conniver's sketchy dishonesty in the lamplight he was passed.

"Fine. No one cares if I have morbid fear of dying in confined spaces. It's only me…" A sighing Flynn gives up with one final mumble, mainly because it reminded him of this pretty girl with seas of green eyes he longed to swim in again.

The same girl who cared for him way more than the no-good crook ever deserved.
So Flynn damns the pain of his raw blistered palms and manfully continues his now more dangerous shoveling as it angles beneath the top soil turf through the cold, grimy clod with an undaunted smirk that had her plucky name mumbled upon it.

"Rapunzel…"

*Come on, Blondie. Shine that magic of yours to light this thief of yours way out of this mess he's gotten himself into.*

Flynn thinks in the pitch darkness as he steels himself to the task, not only physically straining, but also risky. The innate human fear of being buried alive should his tunneled squirrelled out hole collapse around him, and end all of Flynnigan Rider's swashbuckling daydreams once and for all.

But Eugene Fitzherbert, once he got past the blustery bravado and cocky smooth-talking, knew that he would miss most of all his greatest treasure hunt's most brilliant jewel to surpass all other precious gemstones he'd ever tried to steal before—his little piece of sunlight named 'Rapunzel.'

*But if I close my eyes, I still can see your light…*

Flynn stalwartly plunges forward as he chunks out the packed dirt to his left like an intrepid mole burrowing his way blindly, as the cold, dark world starts to shudder and shift above his head frightfully...

"Eugene…"

Almost like she heard her husband's thoughts come to her across the miles, the soft words hanging on the lips of the slumbering girl was full of longing and trepidation—and above both, love.

A calm Elsa, with eyes full of compassion, within the quiet parked Vis-à-vis coach, shares a glimpse with Pascal seated next to her on the bench opposite to where Rapunzel was stretched out, resting with arms dazedly hugging herself in a fetal position.

The soulful eyed chameleon alters his light greenish scales to a more melancholy grayish shade whilst Elsa comforts the lizard with a soft stroke of the head.

Arendelle's Queen, too, was meant to be sleeping, but while the horse-drawn sleigh had spent most of the night following the one in front of it, they had circumnavigated the Orkla Fjord, leading through the more eastern provinces of Skauva and Vinjeora. Then they began weaving their reindeer and horse trails through the many small fjords that dotted this northeastern section of her kingdom's scenery, all whilst cousin Rapunzel's grief was eating away at her.

*She loves him so…*

A sympathetic Elsa tries to put herself in her brave cousin's shoes. Though the two girls wore vastly differing styles, there was something fraternally familiar about their men.

*…My man…?!*

Though she was as yet having a difficult time wrapping her bewildered mind around the fact, a part
timid, part terrified, part thrilled Elsa could still hear Olaf's question from earlier—from when their
epic journey was just at its start.

And she had been pondering its mysteries ever since.

*Is he a good bad guy…or is he a bad good guy?*

*But aren't we each born of Man's sinful nature? It's what we all must strive to overcome—every
single day, made easier to achieve in our walk with Him. Right?*

*And if the Lord can move mountains, how much simpler a human heart?*

Queen Elsa feels God's bright morning sunlight begin to break through the dark night's lengthening
shadows that the sun's rays were slowly dispelling over the vulgar mountain ranges.

But now closer in the periphery, those grayish, dusty peaks were actually— if you looked with
fresh, not jaded, unsullied eyes—glowing glorious, awash in the purple majestic glow of a new
day.

Yesterday was a lot to digest for a young man just starting out in his new life, with a new bride, a
new home, new responsibilities—and now new problems and worries that came along with those
new predictions of impending danger and doom that he had been told he himself would somehow
be instrumental in defeating.

*Me? But how? With this thing?*

The tall blonde sitting on a large boulder under the dawn's early light that had fallen over the
peaceful glen they'd set up as camp for the night, stares incredulously at the wooden long bow that
had been handcrafted and passed down from generation to generation of Saami warriors—from
father to son, for hundreds—maybe thousands—of years in the rite of passage of the enigmatic
Juoska.

*So what's all that got to do with me? Were those old Saami people back there saying I'm a part of
their Clan? I really do have Saami blood in me, then? I know I've never met any of my real kin—
with my parents being killed in an accident when I was just a fella. The ice harvester
mountain men took me in then and they seemed to be intimating that I was at least part Saami —
but whenever I asked, those guys were never much on conversation. So I never heard much else
about who my real folks were.*

*But they did teach me the valuable lessons of having a good work ethic out there in the frozen
tundra areas, where I learned that a hard honest day's toil gave a man dignity and self-worth. I'll
always be grateful for that.*

Kristoff's musing mind heeds his own thoughts. He stands from the rock perch he had been seated
on, in deep contemplation of what to do with the foreign device that he had been gifted by those
mysterious three people last night.

*Oh yeah, last night...*
Kristoff allows himself the hint of a silly wistful smile in recollection of how his little ray of sunshine—his sweet, little Anna—had somehow mistakenly convinced her spirited mind that he and she had had their first fight as a married couple, over the dumbest thing he couldn't even recall now.

However, to reassure his emotional new bride that he was truly not vexed with her, the fun of making up the argument after a several long tedious hours' drive, in the sleigh for the first time was memorable enough to convince her.

Once the other sleigh and a dropped off Olaf was securely placed for the night in the quiet mountain base location, Kristoff directed Hans to make camp while he and Anna went on ahead to 'check out the safety of the perimeter surroundings.

But that wasn't all the newly wedded couple, bursting with youthful hormones, were checking out under the soft, pale summer moonlight, beneath a pulled up tarp cover so that all unobtrusive Sven had to deal with were sound effects of Anna being quite a giddy, forgiven giggler.

*Crazy Anna! There was nothing to forgive. Though I did enjoy the benefits of you thinking there was...*

*Ahem! The big and tall man still possessed the sweetness to clear his bashful throat loudly.*

*Right. Let's do this!*

Slapping his hands together, a red-cheeked Kristoff, with his adrenaline well pumping by now, stretches to his full six foot, five inch height as he grasps the long bow bequeathed him in one strong hand and the quiver bag full of various pointed honed bone arrows with his other.

He raises one of its thin shafts up to the bowstring as he had imagined he'd seen one held by the hero of a children's storybook. Now to fulfill his own tall tale's 'destiny', Kristoff draws the length of bowstring to arrow shaft ratio as the purple and pink hues of the dawn rise over the mountain peaked horizon.

*Boing!*

But the young man whose hands had never picked up, never mind shot, this type of weapon in the entirety of his life finds this simple enough first step to be a tad too demanding—what with all its strange foreign taut strings and sight crosshairs parts going all awry under his inexperienced hand.

"Oooh, this thing doesn't like me...!" An aggravated Kristoff angrily murmurs to himself in vexed disappointment as the wooden compound bow with the heraldic markings on its well-notched, tried and true curvature, drops to his depressed side.

He had been trying all morning, since before the first light and with all those inspirational speeches of him being some 'chosen Golden one', 'Saami legendary hero', 'Spirit whisperer' and the like, the sweet, innocent young boy that still yet lived within Kristoff Bjorgman's untainted heart wanted to believe that he would just magically become this ultimate, mystical archery master with his first flown arrow.

*Reality check, Kristoff. You get nothing for nothing in this life—and you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.*

The humble young man mocks himself, for ever entertaining the far out fantasy that he—a nothing ice harvester, mountain man, orphan boy who may even now claim some Saami roots—two
groups of the Norwegian working class's poor outcasts, would ever be considered as more than the low rank in society he was born to.

But that never bothered him one iota before.

Kristoff had always lived an honest life, true to himself for himself. The confident man found much pride in the sweat of his brow and the work of his hands. There were no false vanities nor delusions of grandeur that he could ever aspire to anything more than his station in life.

Not that he ever wanted to anyway. It was just by luck that the girl he fell in love with just happened to be a princess of the kingdom.

Did that matter to down-to-earth Kristoff Bjorgman?

Nope.

He would've married Anna if she was a poor fisherman's daughter who washed windows for a living.

*Now there's a scary thought...*

Kristoff amuses himself in envisioning his accident-prone girl dealing with fragile glass on some rickety old window ledge several stories up.

But his knowing smile deepens with the assured thought that his strong arms would still always be there to catch her when she slipped.

"The arrow, with a proper fletching, does tend to fly better when its spine is held perpendicular to the nock point between the bow's riser."

*Oh...that all-knowing voice again.*

Kristoff's already ruddy face from all that morning's exertion reddens even deeper at being caught only half aware, daydreaming, when he was supposed to be practicing with his new sharp tipped 'legendary toy.'

"Good morning, Mr. Bjorgman." A polite Hans didn't intend to sound overbearing, but he couldn't help himself in the tease upon watching, for the last several minutes, while he was feeding the horses, how poor Kristoff was proving so inept with his new bow and arrow.

*The man doesn't even know how to hold its anchor point properly!*

Now Prince Hans, formerly of the Southern Isles, more than any of his twelve older, begrudging brothers, just happened to have some awards back home on archery that attested to his own mastery of it.

Hans Westergaard was declared an uncanny natural at archery, even at an early age. Although deemed too small to stand taller than the standard long bow's twenty-eight inch curved height, the eager to please boy took it up anyway, as if the red-headed lad had archery skills in his blood running straight through the Scottish heritage of his veins.

After awhile, he was even able to hit moving targets, right on the mark astride his galloping trusty steed, Sitron, all through his childhood, pleasing many an approving audience, though never his cold, uncaring father, nor entourage of jealous brothers watching, still, even in his memories...
"Oh, it's you...'Morning." A brusque Kristoff remembers how Bulda had ingrained some degree of manners, though his salutation came out rather too gruffly due to his own frustrations.

Hans nods at the greeting, albeit late in arrival. Mr. Bjorgman had his shirt off despite the cool chill of mid-northeastern breeze, displaying his ample muscular build's peak physical fitness.

From Kristoff's tight eight-pack abs of rectus abdominius, transverse abdominus, external abdomens and tendinous inscriptors, to around his well built external intercostals and seratus anteriors, up to his finely sculpted pectorals, then back down to his deeply carved abdominal obliques, the burly blonde had every bit as much musculature as all the pored-over encyclopedias on human male musculoskeletal anatomy a thin and bony Hans himself had always envied since he was a gangly teen.

*It's no wonder Princess Anna would ridicule me, if this is her standard.*

Kristoff looks at the strange way a smirking Hans was eyeing him. The big blonde grows self-conscious as he fumbles with his bow to hold it more…

*What was that? Perpendicular...?*

"What are you looking at?" Having enough, a ruffled Kristoff finally confronts the man whose eyes were boring holes in him beneath the purplish cloud strewn sky.

"Oh, do pardon me." Hans clears his embarrassed throat. "I was merely considering your lack of form—in archery, that is. A proper posture is essential in achieving success with your aim." The Danish prince smiles encouragingly from years of learned experience.

"What are you? Some kind of bow and arrow expert, too?" Kristoff scoffs as he defiantly lobs off another volley of wilted arrow shafts that traverse the air not more than a few feet in either direction from where he was standing.

"Modesty forbids me to say, but it may aid you in that I have much hands-on knowledge in this field, since the early days of my youth. Believe me, archery is a difficult sport to delve into if you have no prior experience or helpful instruction, at least. It's as if I could just be able to pick up some ice tool and instantly know the learned skill of splitting or cutting or lifting ice as perfectly precise as an experienced harvester, such as yourself." In animated expression, Hans was doing his best not to sound too conceited or lordly, for his diplomatic studies had given him a heads-up on fragile male egos as well.

But fortunately for him, Kristoff was too utterly good to own much in that ignoble bumptious self-intoxicating area linked predominantly with alpha male types. The fair-haired man was too fair and level-headed by nature, and at times, near angelic, to sink to those all too mortal, faulted pitfalls.

"I can just see you doing that." After hours of trial and mostly error with his bow, Kristoff pauses in his exasperated attempts to afford Hans a crooked smirk. He then turns to try just one more arrow. But when the latest one shoots so far askew in left field that it bounces and skitters across the ground like a bunny rabbit, his confidence follows suit.

"Ohhh, darn thing! Okay, I give up!...!" Kristoff sinks to his knees in total frustration, flopping to his back and covering his frazzled face with a bent arm over it, though the wooden Saami bow was still tightly gripped in the other. He just lies there still on the ground, feeling defeated.

After a few moments spent in silent self-pity in the dawn's early light, Kristoff is called back to his senses when a handsome silhouette covers the illuminating sunrise in the east over him.
"She is too fine a lady to surrender her so easily. You only have to learn how to hold her and stroke her gently—like a lover—and believe me, she will respond in much the same manner." A coy eyed Hans whispers to Kristoff as he kneels beside the prostrate young man. "But you would know more on this subject than I." He adds rather bashfully with a slight blush tracing his high cheekbones. Hans then holds out to Kristoff the six spent arrows that had been strewn across the field he had gathered for him.

"Stroke her like—" Kristoff repeats, as he removes the arm flung over his eyes, quite intrigued with Hans' interesting analogy concerning this new bow clenched in his big, brawny rough hands, that couldn't find the delicacy to handle.

"—you would tenderly hold your new wife." Hans' smile was wily, yet soft, in his underlying rudimentary meaning, not in the terms of technical names for the instrument's many intricate parts or titles of honed archer skills, but in basic, guileless ways that Kristoff could connect with.

"...Hold this bow...as if it were Anna?" It was like a light suddenly switched on in Kristoff's brain as his legs, almost unconsciously, leap his body up to his full, tall height. He was now cradling the wooden bow in his arm.

"Here, you'll be needing this." Hans takes this opportunity to slide onto Kristoff's left wrist and lacing it securely, a leather armguard bracer he had crafted from some excess parts of horse tackle that he'd gleaned from Iriserende's well-pouched saddle she'd come with.

"Thanks..." Eyes concentrated forward on his goal, Kristoff doesn't question the 'professional' archer's protective leather strap after the more experienced man had laced it to his wrist.

As the day breaking world suddenly goes starkly silent around him, and feeling a new surge of confidence within a daze, Kristoff thoroughly focuses on the same target on a tree, fairly far in the distance, that he had hung earlier, though no previous wilted or misdirected arrow had even come close to assailing it.

But this time, against the craggily grey mountain backdrop, with Anna's sweet smile in the forefront of his mind, Kristoff Bjorgman raises the golden hued, handcarved spruce and willow compressed bow. He gives it a fond stroke to its curved limbs at exactly the correct height over his head, exactly the correct placement of arrow shaft to nock point, exactly correct draw length on the bowstring between the riser through his sight window, until, as if in an out of body trance, he pulls the perfectly strung arrow in a skilled finger pinch technique, with even more precise aim to release —

_Zzzzing!_

The sharpened stone point cuts straight and true through the crisp morning, still air beneath the purple billowing clouds, directly in line with its objective goal and—

_Bullseye!_

The Saami arrow whistles through the air until it finds its target, dead center, so precisely zeroed in, that even Hans was impressed, especially after an invigorated Kristoff now swiftly loads and reloads, shot after perfect shot of arrows, until the target on the tree was replete with perfect bullseye hits.

_Clap clap clap!_

"Wow, Kristoff! You've got really good aim! Who knew? We thought you were just good at
delivering ice, and painting birthday signs. I bet I could shoot arrows almost that good if I had rippling muscles on my chest like you do. But I don't even have muscles…or a chest. So you don't have to worry about competition from me. Heh heh he. Hee hee." Olaf's inane giggles and clapped together branches loudly call attention to the impressive scene as he waddles from the camp over to the modest man, who was looking down at the bow in his hands, amazed at himself for abilities he knew he never had before.

_Maybe those old Saami weren't kidding._

Kristoff snorts a chuckle to himself as he gazes at his destined, legendary bow in eye-opening astonishment.

"By the way, Elsa sent me to tell you guys that it's time for—" Olaf begins to convey his original message when a loud, boisterous voice rings through the skies in his place.

"—KRISTOFF! BREAKFAST TIME!"

His little wife's big voice cries out from around the meadow's bend with her demanding, rustic beckon and banging clamor of pans.

Sometime after Hans had left the camp earlier, after he had already started the campfire before seeing to the horses, Elsa and Pascal had climbed from their covered sleigh to take the initiative and begin cooking the team's early morning breakfast.

And it looked like head chef Elsa was handling their 'frying pan'—now makeshift 'griddle'—very well indeed. Her platinum blonde hair done up in a neat bun, Elsa had become pretty deft at mixing up some flour, sugar, and water, plus the secret ingredient of finely chopped potato slices that she had found in their replenished food supply basket. She cleverly made her best quick spur of the moment recreation of one of the recipes a certain prince had taught his 'scullery maid' in their time together aboard that pirate ship.

A few minutes later, Anna had stumbled from her sled bed beside the furry neck that a tired Sven had extended into the sleigh for her to use as the fuzzy pillow she had been drooling on when, either (A) Anna had heard a suspiciously happily humming Elsa up and at' em at this crack of dawn by the campfire already, where Anna would not let her big sis and that Westergaard go _totally_ unsupervised. She could just imagine the pair cooking up something rather intimately at the roaring fire with that man in Elsa's hair again.

Or (B) Anna's own adorable hungry nose had scented the tasty aroma of toasted flapjacks and she would offer to kindly help her big sis set their picnic blanket table for the breakfast meal.

"Could that really be Potato Lefse my pleasured senses are all detecting? Please, allow me say, I am continually fascinated by your limitless aptitude, Queen Elsa. Good morning to you." From the nearby glen's target practice area, wearing his Arendelle cloak well, Prince Hans returns to the campsite to have eager eyes and rewarded nose be greeted by the lovely pale-skinned woman's tasty ministrations of flipping hot cakes of Denmark's most favored morning treat on the new griddle pan (AKA remastered, remitted, remalleated former Kransekake cake pan) upon the campfire's flames that quick-to-skedaddle Pascal had volunteered to crawl under to light the fire for the Queen of Ice.

"Good morning, Sir. I do hope I remembered all the amounts of ingredients to keep true to the original recipe you so kindly instructed me on, Prince Hans." A doe-eyed Elsa can't help but blush when Hans can't help his stray fingers from brushing those 2 pesky strands of loose hair from her coiffed, back-bun do.
"I am certain they will be all the more delicious if created by these delicate hands." Now not just symbolically brushing the back of Elsa's trembling hands that were still busily a-flipping hotcakes, Hans drinks in the girl with the meek wide eyes attempting not to glance up at his touch. But his undeniable oozing over charm was far too attractive for any girl not to be drawn into it for long, as Hans responds by gently smoothing those stray bangs again that a frazzled Elsa was attempting to blow back away from her forehead out of her eyes.

The hair again! You just have to have a thing with her hair, don't you, Red?!

"—KRISTOFF! BREAKFAST IS READY!"

'Good hostess' Anna practically growls her banshee-like screech so close behind the pair she was covertly skulking behind that Elsa is so startled she pulls away to toss a mid-flipped lefse straight up in the air. But fortunately Hans' quick reflexes grab hold to catch the steaming hot pancake in his hands.

"Hot! Hot! Hotcake!" He was playacting of course, chuckling as he passes the fresh off the presses flat potato cake between his two hands until the jocular redhead comically manages to land the escapee breakfast fare back into Elsa's well-aimed fry pan.

All to which causes the highly entertained Ice Queen to join in his lighthearted laughter before leaning down to blow some swiftly formed ice vergles and snowflakes in her super-cooled controlled hands over to his impishly waggish, teasingly feigned scorched ones. The chilled ticklish action of which, both soothes and entices Hans simultaneously under her cool breath's touch over his fingers.

"Ooh!" Secret observer Anna stomps a sabotaging furious little foot to the hard-packed grassy ground. But in her usual clumsiness, goes slipping and sliding along the wet dewy grass blades of morning.

And again, as per usual, Kristoff appears just then from around the bend of the glen where he was still pulling a shirt back over those admired rippling muscles for sociable decency's sake. He swoops in to stabilize his spinning like a ballerina/top out of control sweetie doing awkward pirouettes wearing her Scandinavian designed olive green frock beneath her puffball trimmed cape draped over shoulders bobbing in the cool morning breezes.

"Is breakfast ready? Why didn't you call me, Anna?" Kristoff was uncharacteristically full of himself with more than a full measure of the tease as he glances down to his breathlessly dizzy girl from where she was laid out in his arms tensely.

He was right. Holding that bow gently is how I hold Anna gently. Kristoff's face had a quirky grin pasted all over its bemused twisted lip as he squeezes her skinny arm, with fingers soft yet firm.

"You didn't hear me?! Why do I even bother?!" Anna throws her hands up in the air in exasperation until her short attention span catches sight of that new 'wedding present' of a longbow clutched in her hubby's hand as he sets it on the ground beside the picnic blanket she had laid out earlier (a shame I missed that). He then settles himself and a plopped Anna on the blanket to eat some of those delicious smelling—'manna' to a nutrition starved well-exercised stomach—potato lefse that Elsa had made with her own hands and Hans was gentlemanly serving out, from a politely extended tray as a proper waiter—not a Prince—would.

"Did you try it already?! Without me?! How does it shoot? When do I get my turn?!" Anna sprawls her lithe body over Kristoff to reach over him to touch and ogle the golden wooden limb of her thrilling new prize. She was so giddy with bubbly excitement (as the sheltered little Princess met
every new experience in her life, full of gusto) that Anna forgets all other concerns when she sits back to grab a flapjack in either hand to give a quick enthusiastic absent-minded big bite chew on each one in turn.

"Whoa, slow down, Feisty-pants! You're gonna get indigestion eating fast like that!" He chides with an amused smile as he then has to fend off the guilty faced girl who had just downed the rest of the hotcake nearly whole just that second before his warning came. She lunges back over Kristoff to grab the bow lying there, like a kid with a new toy for Christmas would.

"Hold on, flutterbudget. You're gonna have to promise to learn some safety precautions first before I let you loose with this sharp headed baby." Kristoff has to physically restrain his spirited squirming wife who was almost kicking and screaming to grab hold of that shiny new toy glistening gold with the rising sun in her bewitched eyes.

"Stop it, Anna. This is a dangerous weapon that only we men should be handling." It was humorous how diminutive snowman Olaf takes up that mantle as he aids Kristoff by yanking away the bow and its quiver of deadly pointed arrow tips out of the reach of Anna's grasping hands just itching to scoop up the bow and purloin some arrows to start blasting off in any given direction.

Hans Westergaard's tight bum bent over the campfire seeing to the firewood looks pretty darn fine a target about now, Anna begrudgingly had to admit, as she raises her arms mimicking the bow she wasn't permitted to touch—yet!—in his direction with a wicked gleam in her eye.

Anna decides to just chew on another pancake lefse instead, though the look on her face was far from satisfied.

Finally finished whipping up the remainder of the lefse batter to take as snacks on the road, Elsa and Hans had just sat down to join Olaf, Pascal, and a fondly bickering Anna and Kristoff with their first serving of potato lefse, for which Hans praises the Lord of Heaven and then the Queen of Arendelle for 'providing for the deliciously created meal that feeds both hungry stomachs and hungry souls for the good company,' when the final member of their rescue party comes bounding and tripping from the Vis-à-vis sleigh.

"Eugene! Somebody help him, please! My husband's in terrible danger! I can feel it! Please, take me to him quickly!" A disheveled and distraught Princess Rapunzel launches herself bodily from the sleigh car where the others had thoughtfully left the poor nightmare-tossed and stomach-turned young woman who had been softly moaning for hours, though she was sleeping, as if her very soul itself was in restless pain.

For it was. Her love for her beloved husband, her funny friend, her other half soulmate was so intense that Rapunzel's broken heart was certain she could hear his plaintive voice calling out her name in the darkness. And she could just sense through their true love's bond that her Eugene was cold and sad and hurt and scared—

And alone...

Elsa and Anna immediately jump up to their feet to comfort their hysterically weeping older cousin in a tight group hug that Olaf and Pascal soon are squished within as well.

Kristoff and Hans exchange a silent look as both men carelessly abandon their breakfasts to spring into action, their pensive eyes sharing a foreboding sense of trepidation, sending Hans running in one direction to quickly hitch the horses and Kristoff in the other to get Sven ready to move out all due haste.
But the big blonde doesn't forget to reach down to grasp hold of his new companion in all its
legendary golden glory glinting in the fresh sunlight. His Saami bow and quiver was filled with
arrows readied for the fight against this emotionally charged incoming storm with Flynn Rider's
fate riding in the heart of the eye of it…
"So...I've been getting pretty well adjusted to the infinitesimal amount of lighting down here as we enjoy one another's company. However, my internal clock tells me the sun should be up by now somewhere up there, topside...so—

"How about stopping for a breakfast break, Big Guy? After all, these massive biceps, stunning triceps and pretty impressive traps and delts of mine can't be expected to keep running on empty, can they? It's bad for the balanced nutrition of my four daily food groups." In spite of his aching overused stated arm and shoulder muscles, never mind the black and blue beaten up body trapped between the freshly dug dirt packed walls that were miraculously holding up in the tunnel he had been burrowing through all night, (Thank you, Lord) Flynn Rider's biting wit still was as ever-present as his winsome smirk beneath those trademark heavy eyelids.

"No." In stark contrast to the con man's elongated sentences, the dark individual at his back had only a one word terse reply. Job then utilizes his own pick axe to pointedly take a swing at the underground stone portal that Flynn had recently unearthed before their path, once the consummate thief found his bearings from the treasure map that his swift brain had already committed to memory.

"Why did I have a feeling that was going to be your answer?" As he ducks the crumbling dirt ceiling from above, Flynn glances back at the four feet of packed dirt he had broken through laterally until he and his 'shadow buddy' were pleased earlier to find a larger already carved out section of the tunnel structurally in place. They had been able to move forwards more at leisure, until the pair was confronted by this rather enigmatic lower level entry door hidden beneath the eastern cemetery plot section of the Nidarosdomen's hallowed grounds.

"Uhn, uhn, uhn! Let a professional get in there!" After watching with jaded lowered eyes the big Caribbean native give the immovable door a few powerful whacks extra with his pick axe, Flynn halts Job with a calm hand placed on his shoulder. "That is, please, allow me, kind sir." Flynn amends his command when the dark man with an axe at his disposal gives the former thief a dirty look.

Warding the sour face off with a trademark smirk, a shirtless Flynn Rider then masterfully cracks his knuckles together and flexes his injured digits in the air before he begins to feel his way across and down the stone door engraved with the scenic etchings that depicted the nation's canonized holy king—Olaf's legendary exploits.

After slow careful inspection, Flynn pauses at a certain spot on the monolith to rap a pounded fist upon its stone surface before leaning an ear to the lower left sector of the ancient solid stone entrance.

Job patiently looks on as a silent Flynn appeared to be listening for some untraceable sound as his nimble fingers peruse the locked impediment's carved face in deep thought.

"Aha!" Flynn's excited voice abruptly cries out, as sure hands spread eagle over the slab door in full
expectation. With a satisfied grin pasted on his handsome, yet totally smug features, the thief's eyebrows shoot up in a veritable salute to himself when the kneeling man's two outstretched extended thumbs simultaneously press the center of each encircled St. Olaf the Holy's symbolized coat of arms decorating either side of the tablet.

The subterranean door slowly makes a creaking noise as it unseals for the first time in three centuries to reveal a slight crack.

"Still got the touch." The muscular-chested man proudly murmurs to his vain ego as, in true showmanship swagger, he blows the dust from either golden gifted hand.

"Nevermind 'touch', man! Shut up and push!" Job orders the self-congratulating miscreant as the black man puts his own wide shoulder in to convince the secret entrance to allow them entry the rest of the way.

A sighing, exhausted Flynn follows suit. as told, damming the pain in his aching neck and scratched up bare back to shove the stone door until the gap widens, and the two tall men slip through the egress of the cavern.

Flynn's eyes strain in the dusty dark catacombs they stride into beneath the cathedral. Here a series of dilapidated and cracked stone monuments and carved tablets marked the last remains of many beatified holy saints of the faith where their relics had been relegated to this sub-basement from the small chapel's reliquary during Nidaros Cathedral's slow restoration after fire damage in the late 16th century.

"Now that's creepy." A never awestruck Flynn comments drolly upon spinning from the stone he had helped heave forward beside Job to come face to face with a gothic styled statue of the King in all its eerie realism, wielding an axe in one hand in his crusade to extricate heathenism of the old Norse code from his land. In the opposite hand, the sculpture held that squirrelly scepter Flynn himself was all too familiar with that symbolized Norway's power and authority.

Once Flynn extracts himself from the disturbing projected statuette attached to one of the dusty stone tables, he slowly begins to read the only non-runic Proto-Norse letters inscribed on many of the chiseled broken marble pieces lying upon it.

Suffering the ravages of time, accidental fires and era changing upheaval, most of the 11th century holy fragments were reused as building blocks in these lower level catacomb walls during the medieval period's turbulent Middle Ages, leaving only these few discarded left on the surface.

"Rex Perpetuous Norvegiae—Olaf den Hellige" (Norway's Eternal King- Olaf the Holy)

"Boy, you think they liked this old geezer?" An irreverent Flynn Rider incredulously glances around the dark spider-web strewn catacomb at the vast amount of archetype carvings and sculptures honoring the 11th century ruler of Norway depicted alongside many recognizable religious symbols.

Growing up as an orphaned throw-away rascal who ran from the cold dark asylum as soon as his independent legs could, to give his eager eyes escape to explore the freedoms of the big world out there for all its richness had to offer the poor discarded lad, young Eugene Fitzherbert never found much reverence for anyone or anything. And some omnipotent invisible God who lorded some mysterious power over people's lives was included, top of the list.

At an early age, the boy full of dreams of adventures who so dubbed himself 'Flynn Rider' after his fictional hero Flynnigan, rejected, nearly off-handed entirely, the stiff religion of the cruel cold
orphanage headmaster who was more interested in strict drilling the children and slave-driving work from the unwanted ones left unfortunately too long in his 'God-fearing' care.

But that same boy who had matured into a man was preordained, perhaps, to meet with the girl with magic not only in her hair, but also the glow of the sun in her smile changed Flynn's —Eugene's—whole perspective on the harsh unfeeling hypocritical world with her innate goodness and light. And that shine was soon to be accompanied by the sweet abiding faith of her good-hearted—albeit nutty—parents, who embraced the lost boy as a son, without prejudice nor need of elucidation of his sordid disreputable past that made God's unfailing forgiving Love all the more inclusive to him in their examples of generosity day after day, not only as churchgoers on Sundays. All the little ways Flynn Rider and Eugene Fitzherbert both came to see the Light thereof, as Rapunzel's caring family showed him that there must be Someone up there guiding our steps, for a worthless sinner such as he to have been blessed to gain not only his precious girl's genuine golden love, but also a family who took him into theirs as well.

God knows I miss you, Blondie. But I got a pesky orb to retrieve first...So, I might be a while, darlin'. Hey, you take care of the little lady while I'm gone, Big Fella Upstairs...please...

Maybe the sanctified relics were doing something to his jaded heart, but Flynn had to find some release to steel himself with a deep breath to get back to present reality, if he ever was to get back to a life with her.

That and Job's rumbling thunder low voice from where the tall man was industriously moving with his strong muscular arms a large cracked tablet that had been leaning against the dark room's interior door. The stone structure had been obstructing entry to this secret reliquary room full of old discarded relics, untouched and unremembered for thousands of years.

"Hey. You find us what we came for, now, T'ief." Purposefully placing before a distracted Flynn the folded up map Captain Houtebeen had transcribed from Arendelle's stolen orb, Job pushes aside the marble tablets Flynn had been transfixed upon to lay the creased map upon the stone table.

"Okay! Okay! Sheesh! Brr! I wish I had a shirt! It's too damp and cold down here with all these dead folk's relics for a guy to thieve properly! First grave-digging, now raiding some holy crypt's reliquary of its treasures could chill a man's bones. How low do you expect a respectable thief to go? Eww! I hate spiderwebs!" Flynn bellyaches as he waves gyrating arms about himself and the statues nearby, then gives the dark giant a twisted lip all whilst sleight of hand techniques pocket some new anomaly that had caught his roving eye.

"Low." Job's deep voice responds in a grunt as he finishes clearing the doorway that had been tightly sealed off from the rest of the cathedral basement area for centuries gone by to ensure he had an alternate route out to the Captain should the tunnel collapse on the thief who gets the auspicious spot of crawling back first.

"Gee, thanks." Flynn smirks, though his attention was elsewhere in this cryptic crypt.

"He may have been a great guy and all, but ole' Olaf wasn't much in the looks department, was he? Just look at that nose! Do you think they got it wrong, too? 'Cause I personally can attest that artists do not do fine Roman noses justice. Oh, looky here."

"Did you find somet'ng, T'ief?" Though exasperated at all the petty pilferer's ramblings, observant Job still notes the high pitched change in Flynn's tone. He detects something new was afoot from across the room where he had just peeked open the door he had loosened to peer his dark head
from the dark catacomb into a stairwell leading up to a more brightly lit higher floor of the Nidaros Church chapel. There, a few of the most devout members had already begun to enter the holy edifice upstairs and Job, fever from three stories down, could hear the faint sounds of the musicians' choir start their early morn practice run high above in their choir apse.

"Me thinks—ergh! I may have—ungh! Just put my finger upon it—ergh! My saturnine friend! Right on the nose!" Flynn, as usual, jibes his way through his ingenious archeological leap of faith. It was either genius or his fetish for noticing noses he could thank for this discovery.

*Whichever, works for me!*

Intrigued by his own wily curiosity now, cat-like Flynn suddenly stealthily begins to climb upon the dangerously crumbling marble tablets to stand on each of their peaks until his long arm could just about balance to reach across to the depicted saintly halo-ed King Olaf on the long tapestry hanging on the Northern wall of the crypt. On its rich fabric, the exalted ancient King was standing in a scene beside the saints of Heaven, pouring droplets of holy water and wisdom down upon those peasant believers who were giving supplication for healing…

But upon the tip of St. Olaf’s beatified nose near the tippy toppest of the 15 foot long hand embroidered crewel tapestry, just out of regular eyesight from below, was a spot that Flynn had at first considered an ugly characteristic blemish.

But now in second circumspection, sharp-eyed Flynn conjectured that blemish way up there, just may be a concealed lever…

*And levers were made to be pulled, right?*

The swarthy stubbly man throws abandon to the wind and yanks the lever amidst the tapestry at King Olaf's face, with a silent prayer this madness would all be over soon and he could safely get back home with his wife—

—Until a flying axe, that had been part of the kingdom's heraldic crest's regalia, comes zinging through the air from the opposite wall with exact trajectory to ensure the end of any would-be defiler, slicing asunder any hopes of quick exits.

"Oh, no. BOOBY TRAP!" But years of living on the edge of his seat gave Flynn Rider the advantage here. The agile young man had garnered quite a knack for slipping in and out of danger unscathed.

*Shhhkkk!*

The sharpened weapon that came hurtling from the converse wall of the dark crypt catapults its deadly streak towards Flynn. But the dexterous thief finds just enough bounce in him to push off the wall and leap to another dark ledge. The spinning axe just misses its chance to carve into his back by a razor's edge.

*There's a fine choice of words.*

After releasing a pent-up sigh, Flynn's gripped on fingers slowly start to weaken and let go, one by one, until the poor crazed-eyed man can hold on no longer…

"Wh-whoa! Oh no, no, no!"

But his survival instincts kick in at the last moment, as he uses the remainder of his strength and pliability to launch his open chested body back-flipping towards the long tapestry as grasping
hands and flailing arms catch hold of the thick embroidered fabric to slide back down to the safety of the ground, though his thoughts were traveling along with him at a comparable swift speed.

_Didn't some other handsome fella just show me how to do that with pinache recently? Never thought any kid could teach this old dog some new tricks! He was every bit as good as I am. We would've been great together. Note the word 'would'. Anyway, moving on…_

"Yeah! Baby! How's that for some quick re—"

**FWOOSH!**

**WHOMP!**

"—flexes? Oof. That's gonna leave a mark." An at first triumphant Flynn then dizzily grumbles as he sits squarely on the floor, rubbing the back of his addled head from where, by his constant companion—_bad luck_—the ancient hanging's riggings had been sliced apart by the flying axe to send the heavy tapestry tumbling down. And part of its flapped ends unfortunately descended to smack Flynn on his rock-hard noggin, a bulbous bump already rising upon the crown of his head.

"Look, T'eif! You uncovered somet'ng! You found a new map of da river!" Job eagerly points one dark digit upwards, several feet up to where, had the revered tapestry remained in place as it had for over seven centuries, none would be the wiser for the existence of this secreted map.

"Of course I did. I was planning that all along." A snide Flynn shakes off his own surprise mingled in queasiness with amply supplied bravado. He scrambles to his feet, squinting instantly keen eyes putting to mind the easily mapped coordinates simply depicted in numbered steps and a clearly marked 'X' as well as compass directions of N, S, E, & W for all the old Norse runes sketched upon it that the continental thief never claimed to know.

Along with the telltale cartography symbols of the Nid River to compass by.

After all, the _Nidelva_ –Nid River– would have to play a vital role here, again. For it was after his martyred death at the Battle of Stiklestad in the year 1030, or so the story goes, that the holy warrior King Olaf was transported in a simple wooden coffin and buried on a hill in the sands overlooking the Nidelva, high above the city of Trondheim. Though it was the Norwegian patron saint's life that stirred sagas and legends throughout all of Scandinavia in the years to come, acclaim for the King who dared to spread Christianity's healing Good Word to the people, lives on still…

_Some leaders trust in God, some not_

_Even so, their men well wont._

_God-fearing Olaf, fought and won_

_Twenty pitched battles, one by one._

_And always placed upon his right_

_His Christian men in a hard fight._

_May God be merciful, I pray_

_To him, who never shunned his fray._
The Nidarosdomen's high spire Cathedral stood atop a hill overlooking the river Nid. Its green double tiered turrets peering out over the rich Gothic architecture cathedral built over the trade city of Trondheim so majestically in the fresh morning sun was a scene that could take one's breath away.

With its decorated pillars at the entrance and ornate dragonstill trims and numerous statues of the saints glowing in the sun's rays, the Nidaros Cathedral reaches for the Heavens to the One who blesses it, as choirs within begin to sing praises to the Lord.

That is, if you were interested in giving praise to a loving, constant God, which one heartless, deformed—body and soul—peg-legged pirate had absolutely no intention of doing by exalting anyone other than himself.

"Vat took ye so long? Ze sun already be up nearly an hour, ye spineless wormfled scallywags!"

Captain Houtebeen's grey streaked red hair was as flaming hot as his angry, perturbed features that gruesomely greet Flynn and Job as the pair reemerge from the underground chamber crypt they had tunneled through earlier.

"Did ye get it?!"

"And a 'good morning' to you, too. You're looking very red in the face this fine morn, my anxious Captain." A vainglorious Flynn's quick tongue was feeling rather brash and cocky after his triumphal fresh delving into his former life of adventurous larceny. He swaggered across the grounds after hefting himself with swank from the six-foot dug chasm that he and Job had just crawled through.

Ahh, daylight again! Dark, deep pits are **not** good for my complexion.

**SLAP!**

And neither is that...ouch!

The maddened pirate backhands a backtalking Flynn in the mouth with his fisted cane, drawing blood from the man's jaw.

"Ookay...that hurt...I guess you don't want to hear about the new map with more exact coordinates that I just uncovered, then." Flynn licks his bloodied chops with his tongue, knowing he had a bit of an ace up his sleeve here, so he could test the waters.

"Vat new map, ye pilfering parasite? Vere is the jewel? Did ze thief find me my diamond?"

Houtebeen's already spent patience was all but nil, and Flynn had this way of rubbing people the wrong way. Especially, ones of the red-headed variety.

**Sideburns back there was a red...but he didn't seem to have the bad temper typical of the shade. Poor kid. He turned out to be pretty quick with his hands and all those slick moves that got me out of trouble in the end. And what do I do to repay him?**

Get him dead. Just like his old girlfriend—that stunning Queenie with the long gams. All my fault again. Sorry, kids, I think you two could've sung some beautiful duets together again, had I not blown it. No good lout I am.
And I'll never get the chance to say 'I'm sorry' to either of you.

Flynn's calculating, cunning mind only gives a moment to spare for such depressing thoughts of the ill-fated lovers.

"What diamond? Were you talking about diamonds? Sorry, no diamonds. Just a map carved in the wall of the dirty old crypt full of dust and broken stones. And did I mention I nearly broke my neck on flying axes from a booby trap? Do I get extra hazard pay for this job, or wha—?"

But Flynn's excuses are cut off by Job's succinct answer.

"Yes, Cap'n, he did." Job gives the flabbergasted, slack-jawed thief a no-nonsense look.

"I'm hurt, Job. I'm really hurt that you don't believe me. After all we've been through together? I really thought that you and I were developing a close—yet not too cozy—relationship, built on respect and trust in one another's abilities—"

"I'll take dis." The Caribbean man's hand plunges into Flynn's trouser pocket and feels around until he pulls out a rather large octahedron jewel from the jewel thief's filching pocket that had contained the lustrously rare, uncut, transparent crystal.

**Hey! That is not the close relationship I was referring to!**

"Damn! You are one sharp tack in the box, big fella." Flynn grudgingly compliments the man at the same time he was inwardly swearing at himself for getting caught with his pants down.

**Metaphor.**

"Good! Good! Since we have zis here, zen we won't be requiring zis filthy pig's services anymore. Get rid of him and his unhinged, vexatious mouth once and for all, Job. Now I will examine zis new little pretty…" Houtebeen's buggy, greedy eyes were drinking in the large, perfectly clear faceted crystal between his grubby fingers with an even bigger smile that begins to run across the wrinkled old lines of his hideous face.

"Listen. I don't know how to break it to you, Captain, since you've got your heart so set on it. But the quality on that thing is so bad that I wouldn't even call it a diamond. That's primarily why I didn't want to give it to you just now! Believe me, I've seen carats on real ice before and this ain't it. So you'll still be needing me to find you a genuine article, right? I'll do it at a special discount rate for you—considering we're old pals. How about on the house? To show no hard feelings, okay?" Flynn's voice was ranging from low and arrogant to shrill and pleading, with a gamut of anxious feelings in between, as the lifelong charlatan was delivering the most important con of his life—because it most probably would be his last one.

Flynn gulps, staring down the barrel of Job's raised and pointed revolver aimed right between his eyes. Houtebeen's smile and subsequent chortles of laughter dismay Flynn to no end as the aged seaman appeared to be tickled pink adding even more red to his tones at the thief's desperate pleas.

"A fake diamond, ye say? Zat's why ye were sparing me, ye say? Heh heh heh! At least ye'll die hearing me hearty laughter go with ye." Houtebeen breaks out in a belly laugh at the confused blackguard.

Flynn had no idea whatsoever what the dirty old pirate would want with some practically worthless rock crystal so much that he'd go through all the trouble of kidnapping and dragging Flynn all the way here to the sticks of stupid, cold Norway to pilfer from dead people's tombs.
"Look! No one on the market will buy that—it's too rough. I'm lookin' out for you! Just wanted to save you all the bother of finding a diamond cutter, a dealer, a middle man—believe me, there are some unscrupulous characters in that business who will try to edge you out of your take. I personally would advise to just have me lift an already prime diamond, for a quick and not too risky profit. I hear they've got some really doozies in France on that nice balmy Riviera. Or maybe, better yet, in warm, sunny, scenic Venice, where frostbite is never an issue when getting a gorgeous tan gliding on gondolas through the canal…Yes, I'm sure I could easily introduce you two to some choice gemstones ther—"

"Just shoot him already, Job! So we can have some peace and quiet." Houtebeen dismissively cuts off Flynn's loose tongue ranting as the pirate twirls the many angles of the lustrous, clear crystal in his gnarled hands.

"Wait! Hey! I did my part! I'm still an invaluable member of this team. And I've got that new map memorized in my head. We didn't have a chance to write it down—no pens provided. So, you've gotta keep me alive, at least until you find your precious treasure, right? Job, you can't be so sure of what you saw because it was up so high, can you?" Flynn flies one more tack to save his life—despite how worthless he was feeling now.

But his life meant something to Rapunzel, so he had to try.

"T'ief's got a point, Cap'n. We can slit his throat after we be findin' the treasure." Job speaks with the cool and collected wisdom that hot-headed Houtebeen hears.

"Yeah, after you lay your grubby hands on that stupid treasure, you can slit my—huh? What am I saying!?!" Flynn's eyes go wide at the realization of the words he was saying, and he wished his own hands were free to cover his gulping constricting Adam's apple.

"Very well. Just tie him up to zat tree over zere—to keep him out of our way, ze bilge rat. Ve'll kill him as soon as ve're sure ve're successful." The odious pirate captain nods to his first mate to, under threat of sharp knife, muscle an overpowered and out-weaponed Flynn towards a pair of oak trees on the far left side of the Cathedral's back wall.

"You wait here." The dark seaman harshly double knots Flynn to the tree's trunk so that the wily man couldn't move a muscle.

"Do I have a choice? Oh no, the gag. Why always the gag? Ugh…"

Job was sagacious enough to think to tie Flynn's rampant mouth shut with a quick gag, for finishers.

"Put ye're sails to ze winds, Job, while ze sun's still high in ze east!"

The timing was absolutely crucial on this weather perfect day. The anxious old pirate was so close to tasting success that it was agony to wait any longer now.

"Aye, aye, Cap'n." Job replies as Houtebeen entrusts the precious crystalline 'gemstone' to his first mate's care. The tall Caribbean places the crystal atop a pole the old pirate captain specifically carved according to the data gathered from Arendelle's orb held in his gnarled greedy hands.

Houtebeen had taken great pains to expertly whittle the sized pole to be able to advantageously cup the flawless transparent rough diamond in an unfettered high perch.

At his boss' command, Job carefully maneuvers the balanced pole the length of Houtebeen's scratchy voiced counted steps read from his transcribed map, six steps first to the west beyond the
graveyard, then twelve steps to the north towards the treeline.

When the captain finishes directing the dark man to the spot where the orb's hidden map identified, and the raised crystal stone has no positive reaction after a few paused moments, Job gives a nod to the irritated seaman who begins cursing someone under his muttered foul breath, before continuing.

Abruptly amending his bearings, patient Job adds five extra steps east back towards the cathedral, just in a location, that as his eyes look upwards, the sun was beginning to peek through the high green turrets of the church's spires.

"Dis is where da 'X' was on dat map in the crypt. Am I right, T'ief?" Observant Job sensed Flynn's sharp eyes widen after silently counting along with each one of the big man's steps in the memorized slight change in orientation.

The quizzical feigned doubtful look in Flynn Rider's unsuccessfully deceitful shrug assured the shrewd first mate that he was right on target.

So, as Job erects the correctly measured pole to the correctly placed out spot, in perfect line to fall between the tall double tiered green turrets, the crystal was balanced precisely in its hewn cradle as all three men watch with baited breath.

The sun's brilliant 10 o'clock morning rays begin to rise and shine above the easterly section, with a trajectory now even more refined due to the new map that Flynn had uncannily discovered behind the tapestry that depicted St. Olaf looking down from Heaven upon his subjects with the miraculous healing power to change the heathen heart of a nation. The rained droplets on the carving symbolized the legendary healing waters that sprung from the martyred King Olaf's burial spot—here on the steep bank near the western side of the Cathedral that was posthumously built around it, overlooking the River Nidelva's sparkling waters.

According to medieval Icelandic history throughout the Scandinavian area, the spring that flowed forth in the year 1031 AD was accredited with healing properties that made the blind see, the sick walk, and the crippled be whole again—much akin to Ponce de Leon's 'fountain of youth' that Captain Houtebeen had encircled the globe to find and fail time and again.

It was the very stuff legends were made of, that, through most of his adult life, the embittered seaman, who had hungered for the vitality to walk on fully functional two legs again, for the past thirty years longed for every waking second.

So when fate dropped anchor this new chance before his pirate ship's floundering course, no matter what the cost to his soul it took him to get it, the ruthless pegleg would achieve his goal—if it took Heaven and Hell to do it.

At first glance, the vivid sunlight gleams its vital rays upon the accurately raised eight-planed equilateral crystal that myths through the ages had stated was created by King Olaf's royal descendants with the explicit rule to only be used in this fashion should there be some terrible deadly outbreak of plague or illness among the people that would unravel the very fabric of their beloved kingdom. King Olaf himself had founded his country on the tenets of Christianity's teachings of goodness and peace and fairness—hence the law of the land was called 'St. Olaf's Law' that still holds true to the righteous laws of the Ten Commandments to this day.

Holding his breath, the insidious pirate watches as, just as foretold, the sun falls between the double tiers and the small parallel cleaved crystal is struck by its precise solar streaming rays. The iridescent light of which is redirected by the diamante-like crystal's refractions to aim at an exact
point on the steep embankment.

As the crest of the sandy cliff is illuminated and heated by the dazzling sparkling light, and all eyes upon it are astonished when, at first a small amount of liquid dribbles out, to grow steadily stronger until a small fountain of water springs forth from the side of the rolling sands on the steep hill near the Nidarosdomen's western side.

"He was right! Ze fool was right about ze legend of ze crystal!" Houtebeen was so elated that he was practically doing a jig on his one good leg as he rushes forward, kicking up sand recklessly as he races towards where Job was standing, to fall on his knobbed knee directly behind the trinkling spring.

The wild-eyed Captain comes just short of plunging neither his face, nor his hands nor his leg to be immersed in its mystifying waters he's yearned for so long.

Not just yet…Patience…patience…

But the hopeful elation drops to Dutch cursing despair when his wide, dark shadow against the eastern sunlight puts a damper on the streaming rays, causing the miraculous spring to dry up almost immediately.

"Vat?! Verdomme! You cannot stop yet! Not until I exploit your riches for myself!" Houtebeen doesn't realize that it was his own wide cast shadow befalling the sunlight-hungry spring until level-headed Job rushes back over to his stagnant, stubbornly rooted to his spot Captain, to bodily move the willful Pegleg so that the solar light could once more have free reign to radiate God's warmth again upon that particular clump of cold frost just beneath the soil—and permeate it with His healing light to coax the waters from it again.

It was a perfect analogy to a lost mankind's eternal plight, for a wayward soul's frozen darkness to be transmuted into the pure healing warmth of His secure proffered gift of Love...

The Holy Cross that rose high in the sky on the tips of each turret are aptly silhouetted on either side of the gently flowing renewed spring that pours out the healing waters to those hearts that were genuine enough to accept that Love…

It was just as King Olaf understood, hundreds of years ago, that he was to allow God to determine his life—to take Norway's history and change it, bringing the justice of the Lord to the entire Land of the Midnight Sun.

For the ascetical patron saint of this nation was inspired to unite all of Norway under His Healing Light as a servant of Christ, whom his heart trusted to defend this country, for all time…
The soft waves of the River Nidelva gently crash against the transport river ferry that Kristoff had commissioned. He had persuaded the usual sightseeing ferryman to allow their entire party onboard (that included reindeer, horses, and sleighs, plus many extra speciedalers passing between hands for the noisy overexcited ooh-ing and ahh-ing magic snowman).

The tall blonde man stands near the front bow's capstan, vigilantly scrutinizing the weather-worn craft’s movement forward. His eyes strain towards the distant hill still some kilometers west across the glimmering summer ripples of water.

Was the fresh morning sun playing tricks on his bedazzled senses? Or was there an inexplicable beacon of light streaming down upon the sandy slope near the left side of the Nidaros Cathedral as the edifice looms closer on the horizon?

Leaning further his raised knee onto the bow's capstan pole, the suspicious young man's heightened senses couldn't be sure, as a white throated dipper caws when it comes into view, its golden feathered wings in swooping aerial display.

"Why are you being so quiet, Kristoff? I mean—even more quiet than usual? Do you see something out there?"

Anna may not have always been the most observant of people, but her close bond with her best friend—her new husband—told her that his attentions were preoccupied by something up ahead that his yummy brown eyes were squinting to make out.

She trains her wide blues in a tracer gaze to discover what so piqued his interest.

"I thought I saw—Nah, must be nothing." Grounded back to real time as the feathered soaring dipper too makes an exit, Kristoff shakes the weird feeling when that odd light beam he'd been following flickers off as the river bends a curve. He turns away from the lightshow's entrainment, not wanting to add his peculiar new 'sixth sense' feeling to his little gal's troubles.

At least, not yet.

"So how're the horses holding up back there? They getting used to river ferry travel?" The responsible man redirects his focus and hers on their present predicament.

After all, he knew personally that good 'ole Sven had had his share of choppy river transport in their past. But Kristoff wasn't familiar enough with the pair of those new ponies some guy bartered for earlier in the journey, to speak on their behalf.

Especially that skittish white Fresian mare that Hans chose.

"Yup! Guddy's as good as gold!" She sings out in a voice more jubilant than the morning sunrise, giving Kristoff his reason to now smile.
"And Elsa is actually really good at handling Iriserende, once that Hans got the horse settled down." Anna scrunches her little nose up at the idea of that Hans being useful for anything. "See? She's having her hair braided right as we speak. Elsa's the best braider in all of Arendelle!" Anna proudly points around the ferry's main deck wheelhouse over to where her older sister was showering the pale horse with such attention, neither timid retiring female seemed worse for the ride. And though Anna was loathe to admit it, it probably did help that a certain handsome prince's experienced, firm, yet comforting, hand had been placed solidly on her hindquarters (Iriserende's, that is) for balance since the voyage began.

Hans appeared to be rather affable in entertaining the pair of high-strung purebreds whose eyes were all upon him whilst he was feeding Guddy.

"And your cousin? How's she doing?" Kristoff's concerned, compassionate gaze travels upwards, to where the short-cropped brown haired young woman was perched on the top side of the center captain's bridge on the maindeck.

With no fear of falling, faithful Pascal ever-vigilant on her shoulder, Princess Rapunzel was leaning so far over the edge of the wheelhouse that she was precariously dangling over its side in her attempts to see even further through the marine telescope the crusty ferryman had relented to allow fellow seafaring man—Mr. Smooth-talking Westergaard— to borrow.

In the two hours or so since the group began traversing the deep Trondsheimsfjorden as they now glide into the mouth of the Nidelva, the anxious brunette had been fastidiously wielding the scope, once Hans had lifted her up in strong wiry arms to perch on the roof of the ferry's bridge. The lifelong naval man had then instructed Rapunzel of the clever device's proper uses.

Pascal's one bulgy chameleon eye peeks over his girl's shoulder into the mahogany and brass handheld telescope, peering rather disturbingly down at the Prince and the Queen tending to the horses in the aft section of the boat's deck below.

"That was truly kind of you to think to ask the ferry Captain of his looking glass for cousin Rapunzel." Elsa suddenly comments after her upwards profiled sunning face the man was silently admiring, catches sight of her older cousin optimistically rushing to and fro atop her crow's nest higher ledge view above the center boathouse, trying to get the best vantage point for a gander at the land's shore.

"I gathered how the poor girl was so very eager to have her prayers be answered to perhaps glimpse first sight of the man she..." Hans trails off the sentimental statement he began. His own lifelong loneliness of yearning for someone so far out of his reach, sympathized with the young woman separated from her love.

Elsa's eyes smile shyly up at his auburn head gleaming in the fresh sunlight for his romantic nature and overt compassion for her friend as his hands were assiduously at work currying Guddy's wild mane from his un-seeable eyes.

"Any little thing I can do to ease her suffering." Hans says in velvety soft tones more to himself than anyone.

The tall, svelte man's kind eyes then connect with Elsa's crystal clear appreciative ones when both settle back down to their level on the main deck from watching Rapunzel studiously peeking through the lens of the telescope she was swinging around wildly.

For several long minutes their intertwined gazed couldn't seem to pull away from one another until Hans finally clears his throat, as if he could suddenly feel Anna's piercing glare from across the
deck boring holes in the back of his red head.

Ahem "Did you know that the modern two-draw marine telescope with day or night sunshade over it's five inch main lens possesses four times more the magnification than the original device that was invented in 1608 by a man who just happened to be named-"

A nervous Hans begins to prattle collected data from all the solitary library visits that lasted even long into the nights during his youth. He'd often fall asleep with such historical textbooks amidst an array of geographical, literary, and nautical studies, with only a small daguerreotype he'd saved all those years ago, of a Norwegian admiral, his loving wife and two little daughters, in an idyllic family setting.

"—Hans Lippershey, a Dutch spectacle maker. He put in the patent for the three times magnification device that would become an invaluable standard for marine navigational equipment." Elsa finishes his encyclopedic information sharing with some of her own youth's book-learned knowledge. Her brilliant smile was aware of the small pardonable 'sin' of showing off. But the woman inside of her couldn't resist preening before him.

Hans' eyebrow raises, with a sparkling intrigued smile of his own curling his lips.

"A beautiful queen with the sharp mind of an historian—I am impressed." Hans' bowed head and complimentary words cause a tender-eyed Elsa to blush.

But only slightly, for she was proud of the amount of retained knowledge that she had gleaned from all those years spent with all those library books as her only companions.

No, not only...Mama and Papa would always be there to explain what I read whenever I had any questions.

"Well, nautical history of all varieties was Papa's favorite subject. That—and our study of the founding of our nation."

Hans notices how Elsa's glazed over eyes showed gratitude for the time she had spent in the company of her dear parents. Now in reflection, five years since they've been deceased, the young woman was glad of her family's cloistered seclusion that had been due to her awakening ice powers—if only for the total close-knit life with her Mama and Papa that few other children who shared their lives, by that age, with the outside world experienced. All for her sake, her caring concerned parents had lived austerely within their castle's confines for twelve years in raising herself and Anna, before their loving guardians were taken from the sisters all too early.

"Papa used to tell us such fantastic fairytales about the legends that surrounded our ancestors, especially King Olaf's adventures. Papa would read us stories of the skaldic verses from the 'Saga of St. Olaf' nearly every night. He knew it by heart himself, and could recite passages from memory." Elsa was whispering by now, tears of pride for her good father palpable in her true blue eyes.

"Rather intense—at times violent—bedtime reading fare for a young impressionable girl. Though, in my opinion, you didn't turn out to be a 'hoyden,' did you?" The Prince, trained in psychology from his naval academy days, always seemed to know how to gain control of any situation. And so, Elsa's tears are abated by his humorous Middle Dutch referral of the ladylike demure queen as an 'uncivilized, ill-bred, tomboyish female' called a 'hoyden'.

"I should hope not, Sir." Elsa grins back at Hans' teasing eyes. "Papa believed it imperative for every future ruler of this nation to be well versed in the accomplishments and trials of our
forefathers' achievements. He only wanted to prepare me, despite not being a boy, as his oldest heir, to be able to serve our country, as all my ancestors before, with courage and honor and love of God, just as his father drilled into his heart." Elsa speaks the words rationally.

"I understand now, that no matter how difficult a child I was, Mama and Papa loved me enough to train me to take over his sovereign duties of being Arendelle's—and this entire country's—leader someday. I pray to the Lord everyday, that I may never fail my nation's sacred trust ever again." Elsa's lighthearted demeanor turns serious as she lifts her pale chin high to look with resolve upon the cherished Norwegian landmark built on the hallowed grave site of the nation's royal patron saint.

"Your father sounded like he was a fine man, as well as an admirable King and Admiral of your prestigious fleet, Queen Elsa. Growing up in the Royal Danish Navy as, at first, a sub-lieutenant, then full lieutenant soon thereafter, I invariably valued King Agdar's esteemed heroism for never leaving his crew in danger, even at the risk of his own life. Admiral Arendelle's lauded rescues of his shipmen against all impossible odds on the high seas, made him so well respected in naval circles, I always aspired to meet him one day. Now, even more so..." Hans was so glad that the normally reticent and quiet, introverted Queen was opening up to him, of all people, particularly on such a tender delicate subject as that of her lost parents, that he couldn't help but expound.

"Why, 'Now, even more so?'' Elsa curiously asks, gazing up at him, to permit herself this teasing and cajoling, despite her past sadness and present trepidation, all for the enigmatic mystery behind this compelling man's expressive green eyes.

"Oh, I—! Did I say that aloud?!!" An instantly, uncharacteristically mortified Hans Westergaard was still surprised by the way this enchanting young woman with the enthralling voice and dancing eyes could make the clever, composed, and all-together man in him fall apart like a puddle of jelly. The redness he could feel creeping up his slender yet prominent Adam's apple neck, across his noble cheeks, all the way over to his debonair sideburns, smoldered in ways that no one else ever before could jar the urbane young man's unflappable, smooth confidence, with just one of her shy glances.

"You did…and he was. Thank you." The dignified, proud of her father's achievements, Queen Elsa of Arendelle was chuckling, surprisingly at ease with this handsome, noble man who resembled her handsome, noble Papa in sweet, all a-blush moments such as these.

At that thought, her pale thin cheeks too color to a healthy shade as the tentative two enjoy this fleeting smile of peace, awash in the bright warming sunlight of day. All of which causes an eavesdropping Anna, who had been awkwardly, with no elegance whatsoever, clinging with her back to the wheelhouse around the corner, to grit her teeth that that guy set on edge whenever he flirted with her big sis, for all his trickling sugary-ness.

"There it is! I can see it! The Cathedral! That's gotta be the one we're heading for, right?! Eugene! I'm coming!" Interrupting the tender moment between Hans and Elsa, Rapunzel's frantic voice cries out, causing the skulking in the shadows Anna to leap several feet up into the air from her supposedly surreptitious angle of concealment below.

As she swings the borrowed telescope up and down until Pascal—who had been clinging to it—was dizzy, the ecstatic brunette nearly clobbers Anna with the mahogany and brass rod. Keenly watching from afar her amusing antics on the leeward side of the ferry, Kristoff covers an
exasperated palm over his eyes at his funny little wife's clandestine surveillance gone awry as the swinging telescope just misses braining the perky orange head squarely on the sneaky noggin.

"Where?! Where?! Where?! Let me see! Oh, hi, Anna. Why are you hiding there spying on Elsa and JustHans like that?" Olaf, who had been playing 'responsible midshipman,' had flamboyantly, with a knowing condescending air, been exhibiting his maritime skills, repeating the nautical terms he'd heard unpretentious seaman Hans utter on their recent lifeboat journey together, like he was a pro too.

A puffed up Olaf sways beneath his snow flurry before his 'adoring enthralled' audience— which included only a skeptical-eyed Sven, who simply munches on the hay the 'swashbuckling' Olaf was feeding him and a sleepy-eyed Guddy, whose long blonde bushy mane hanging over the Dole's eyes made his amused expression unreadable as the stout horse too chews his feed, uninterested.

"Not my carrot, Sven! No carrot for you either, Guddy! This one's mine. You get your own, you fuzzy wuzzy cutie-pie." Olaf happily babytalks to snuggle the furry head of the cuddly, starved for attention Gudbrandsal gelding as he gently yet firmly lays down the 'no carrot stealing' law again.

The brutally honest snowman obliviously pauses in his playful childlike enthusiasm to blink up blankly several times at the goofy-acting girl. Shrugging with a giggle, the able bodied snowperson hops over Anna's muzzy head from the towing hawser rope he had been telling his tall tales upon as his bully pulpit to land on Sven's sturdy back. With a twigged thumbs pointing upwards, Olaf gives the reindeer his uns spoken order for a lift up on Sven's tall antlers. At that extra elevation, Olaf's three parts all eventually leap to Rapunzel's high perch atop the ferry's bridge house where the impatient snowfellow pokes her knee with his branch until the spirited, yet generous, girl pats her lap for a curious Olaf to hop aboard.

His charcoal black eyes peer through the telescopic lens to get a sneak preview of the Nidarosdomen's front gates, where they could just make out the church-goers gathering for service.

"Ahh, I can almost hear the church bells ringing already." A closed-eyed imaginative Olaf blissfully coos. After all, it was natural for a being born of pure innocent child's love to enjoy the goodness and purity of spiritual love that Christianity's teachings prescribed. Besides, the music-loving crooner of a snowman adored the consecrated choir singing back home in Arendelle chapel, so here with this Cathedral's huge Gregorian choral apse and wide array of Heilagrisene (holy songs) that the hallowed Lutheran church's congregation enjoyed, he'd probably love it even better.

Olaf then places the telescope to where an ear might have been on his snowy skull-less head in a naïve belief the cool new apparatus would enhance his befuddled listening as well, until a head slapping, sane Pascal reclaims the wrenched nautical instrument back to return it to Rapunzel for its intended proper use.

The hopeful girl's green pupils scan through the telescope's lens over the glimmering waters of the Nidelva river to the hilly grounds surrounding the holy 800 plus year old edifice, through the unswerving eyes of love in search of her missing husband's stunning physique.

Please be there. Please be alive, my darling Eugene...

Once the ferry docks along the river Nid at the entrance port to the famed city of Trondheim, the men see to it their sleighs are unloaded from the vessel's cargo hold below deck. Kristoff and Hans then get right to work hitching their sleighs to their respected pack animals in all due haste.

By now, the sun was up fairly high in the sky between the double mountain chain ranges of Douvelfjell and Rondene, swinging from the southeast of the old city to the peninsula located to the
west of the holy shrine.

And for the first time in his life, Kristoff Bjorgman was having a bad feeling about the sun's usually heartily welcomed warming rays. The hairs on the back of his neck had been hackled for miles, but there was nothing he could do about it. Just silently keep moving forward, so as not to alarm a pleasantly chattering sun-drenched Anna in his sleigh's passenger's seat.

Behind the raw stamina of Sven's reindeer pulling power, the well-oiled runners of the ice harvester's sleigh glides swiftly as the wind that the perceptive young man had been picking up inscrutable signals upon, from one direction in particular.

The two sled teams make good time across the summery mountainous region leading towards the Nidaros Cathedral as the beautiful old hymn "Herre Gudi Dittdyre Navn og Aene" ("Lord God, Thy Wondrous Name I Praise") faintly rings throughout the hillside.

Hans directs his horse-drawn Vis-à-vis, with his two female passengers plus Pascal, to follow Kristoff's lead on Sven with Anna and Olaf through the bustling town center to the westerly road, then down towards the Cathedral's impressive tree-lined front gate.

When they arrive, they notice the gates left open and readied to receive visitors for this morning's Sunday mass services already in progress. The transcending liturgical music intermingles with the church bell ringing and impeccable choral and instrumental cantatas where a boy soprano's sweet ethereal voice invites the pious soul to step within its hallowed doors for worship.

"When I was little, I always used to dream of visiting this venerable Cathedral. Of attending its renowned Sunday services in the Seat of the Diocese of Nidaros, with Mama and Papa and Anna, once I had learned enough control to leave Arendelle castle." Leaning forward from where she had a comforting arm around a restless Rapunzel, Elsa whispers in an awestruck tone with tears biting behind her regretful eyes when Hans chirrups Iriserende and Guddy to canter the well trodden path into the sanctified shrine's holy gates.

"Perhaps this is your chance at long last, to come here, with Princess Anna, at least." Hans responds in a soft understanding voice over his shoulder to her as he dismounts the sleigh to hitch the pair of horses to a waiting post.

"Why don't you and your sister take Princess Rapunzel into the Mass while Mr. Bjorgman and I secure the grounds as we begin our search for her husband. You three ladies may inquire inside of any untoward occurrences of late around the chapel. Within the crowd of church attendees, I don't foresee any danger of devilry inside these sacrosanct chambers. What say you, sir? Shall the ladies attend church services while we investigate the perimeter outside?" Hans extends his question to Kristoff when the redhead finishes hitching the Vis-à-vis to the hitching post in the cathedral's parking area and Kristoff comes rapidly walking over to them at a quick pace to discuss their best options.

"Yeah, I agree." Kristoff's brown eyes carefully scour the unassuming church entrance grounds where everything seemed at peace despite the foreboding multitudes of gothic style and imposing statuary archways lining the Cathedral's front entryway.

"I know it looks like just a normal church service, but when the hairs on the back of Sven's neck stand up, I take notice. So I think it's a good idea to keep those three safe in the crowd, too. You and me will look for Eugene." Kristoff speaks to Hans in a low soft voice in confidence as not to be heard by any other ears.

He then pokes his blonde head into the Vis-à-vis passenger carriage.
"Elsa, take Anna and Rapunzel into the chapel, and wait there until we—" Kristoff, though lowliest in rank amongst these blue-blooded royals, had an overwhelming sense of hands-on responsibility to take charge of the situation.

Though once upon a time unaccustomed to being ordered by subordinates, Prince Hans, formerly of the Southern Isles, now immediately responds to Kristoff's command, moving in a swift gait to escort the pair of ladies from his sleigh's carriage.

He reaches to open the door to gentlemanly assist the elegant Queen on one arm, then reaches for her princess cousin with the other when the agitated brown head appears at the door.

"NO! Eugene is here somewhere! I can just feel it! I have to look for him too!" Rapunzel stubbornly yells at the two men trying to be in command of her as she pushes past Hans to let herself out of the sleigh's carriage to stand squarely on her own two defiant feet.

"Cousin Rapunzel, please. There may be real danger out there, with ruthless pirates on the loose, planning who knows what. Believe me, it would be best if you women stay clear while we scout around." The protective hero in Kristoff tries to calmly explain his machismo rationale.

"Why?! Elsa, tell them! We're not helpless damsels in distress. I've been on risky adventures before. My Eugene needs me!" Rapunzel retaliates like a fierce tigress as she turns from Hans to claim her tall platinum cousin's arm under hers for back-up moral support. Rapunzel didn't even know half of the extent that the 'not helpless' Queen Elsa of Arendelle truly could show if she set her mind to unleash her full ice prowess.

But on her own adventurous journey, Elsa had learned that restraint was more the better part of valor in life's struggle of self worth.

'Don't be the monster they fear you are...!'"

His clear melodic voice that had pierced her frigid cold heart then, still echoes its warmth in her very being to this day. Elsa was forever grateful that Prince Hans had stopped her from committing such an unpardonable sin which blood-soaked stain would not be easily washed away.

"Perhaps inside the Cathedral we may be able to glean some evidence of intruders or thefts that may give us some insight as to their current whereabouts." Queen Elsa states in a collected intelligent demeanor that once again impresses Hans with her head of state-like possession of mind.

"Well said, Queen Elsa. It may be the better strategem for us to divide and conquer, utilizing you three ladies' vast collected intellect and cunning to good purpose inside, whilst we search the premises without for your missing husband, Princess."

Hans finishes his sentence, addressing Rapunzel directly, gently taking her hand in this opportunity to cajole the girl whose heels were dug into the ground (both literally and figuratively) into accepting his proffered left arm, while Elsa snugly reattaches herself to his right one.

"Eugene wouldn't steal from a church!" Rapunzel scoffs, then corrects herself without even having to make eye contact with a skeptical everyone else as she concedes her lover's weakness with a deep sigh. "Okay. But if you guys find Eugene first—please save him for me." Rapunzel pleads, locking meaningful gazes with each of the two men, who nod sincerely back to her in promise.

"Can I come to church, too?" From below, Olaf's small wheedling voice beams up at them with a hopeful toothy grin.

"After all, I have the same name as the brave king they built this church for. And they could use
my excellent singing voice as a quick stand-in alto tenor for the choir."

Kristoff smirks at the chatterbox snowman who was inviting himself to tag along, as Olaf follows the departing trio. The tall blonde young man watches a reverently head bowed Hans escort Elsa and Rapunzel up the famed house of worship's frontal approach until they disappear into the esteemed Cathedral's front door beneath the gothic monument's ornate religious statuettes that adorned one of Europe's most celebrated Christian pilgrimage sites since the Middle Ages.

"Hey! Where's Anna, Sven?!" Kristoff demands of his own girl's whereabouts from a wide-eyed and guilty Sven, who was too busy listening in on the heated debate in the Vis-à-vis to notice the small caramel colored girl sneak away.

Kristoff's normally steady tones begin to panic when he returns to fetch his own, now in reflection, disturbingly silent passenger to find not a trace of his wife on or around their sleigh.

"Did you see Anna in there?!" Kristoff's wild eyes told volumes of his anxiety to Hans after the slender Prince returns from graciously depositing, through the Nidarosdomen's entry vestibule, Elsa and Rapunzel inside the holy establishment mid-service, to seat them in its rear pews.

"No, I did not. Where has she gone?" Hans answers with rising sentiment, his worry for the girl genuine.

"Crazy. She's just gone crazy. Why didn't you stop her, Sven?!" Kristoff smacks an apologetic faced Sven's rump in total frustration, though blaming himself for being just as inattentive even more fiercely. The man goes bounding around the western side of the Cathedral in an urgent hunt to find his AWOL little woman, who was just nutty enough to try to recklessly take on an enemy she doesn't know a thing about, to retrieve her kingdom's holy relic orb in a place she doesn't know a thing about, to save a thieving cousin from an unspecified danger she doesn't know anything about.

All in all, even if Princess Anna of Arendelle didn't know very much about anything else—she knew extremely well how to get herself into a load of trouble.

And that terrified Kristoff more than anything, because he knew his Anna had an uncanny knack for bad trouble finding her.
Kristoff's frantic eyed side glance was grateful to note that Hans Westergaard (who happened to be one of Anna's past troubles, but that was another story) was now close at his racing heels and had been conscientious enough to have paused by the sleigh's cargo to bring along something Kristoff had forsaken in his mad dash to find his missing wife.

The golden tan hewn wooden long bow and its quiver full of arrows that had been bestowed upon Kristoff to fulfill some Saami predicted destiny was clenched tightly in Hans Westergaard's hands.

But a peaceful life with Anna is the only destiny I want!

Kristoff's panicking mind shrieks in defiance at all the mysterious forces he'd never bought into, pulling at him in every direction. Hans manages to catch up enough to pass to a heart pounding Kristoff the legendary long bow, with a sharpened bone-headed arrow, drawn and readied to be loaded in anticipation of the fierce battle ahead.

Gaining some pause from Hans' level-headed composure, Kristoff slows his crazed, blind rush to look around and get his bearings.

That glowing stream of light that he'd spotted from the ferry was somewhere in this vicinity. The, muscle-bound huffing man regains his breath, along with recollections of some scenic markers he had put to mind while aboard the ferry craft.

A pair of green tiered turrets…a horizontal long building structure with an extra addition built onto it…a sand bank, running alongside the river…a stair walkway, a grove of trees…

…There he is! Thank God he's alive!

Kristoff was excited to at least discover Eugene's whereabouts, when he sees the struggling shirtless man, bound and gagged and strapped to a tree on the other side of the sands where one of the two other figures was just turning—

YANK!

Kristoff, in his heightened, danger-alerted mode, almost lashes out with his one free fist—

But instead of the normal reaction of pulling back away or ducking, said troublesome Hans Westergaard just stands there, with his eyes closed in full preparation to get the receiving end of the large, angry man's flying fist right in his resigned face.

"What the—?! I could've just decked you, stupid! Why didn't you get out of the way?!!" Kristoff's fierce whisper was more bewildered than angry by the time it completes the question.
"Because I've been deserving that one for a long time." The repentant prince answers in rightful chastisement.

"Yeah, you did." Putting down his bared dukes, Kristoff recalls just coming short of punching the lights out of this guy on the deck of another boat, on another day, when feisty Anna had chosen to do the honors in his place.

"By the way, thanks for pulling me back in time. I don't think those pirates saw me…yet. Those are the pirates we've all been hearing about, right?" From the safe vantage of the small corner alley recess space between the main church building and this back one, Kristoff states, rather than asks., He had the sneaking suspicion, even from his cursory glance, that the tall, dark-skinned man and the patch-eyed peg-leg were the two villains in question as they were inexplicably capping a bottle they were bent over.

"Yes. That's Job and Captain Houtebeen, all right." Hans surreptitiously peers around the corner of the recessed building that was shielding the pair of them from being seen by those below. "They seem to have bound and gagged and tied your friend to that tree." Hans observes in a quiet tone to his reconnaissance partner.

"He's not my friend. He's your brother. You get him loose." Kristoff gives Hans a sideways smirk. "Hey, what are those guys doing down there in the sand, anyway? And what's that weird spotlight beaming down over them? They must be up to no good. I guess it doesn't matter as long as we get Eugene over there free. But where's Anna got off to?" Mumbling questions more to himself than to his cohort, Kristoff was pulling his hair out about now. Pirates and thieves and missing orbs were all trumped by 'AIT'—'Anna in Trouble.'

"It's a large churchyard. Your wife probably simply wandered off in her curiosity and found herself lost. We'll locate her later, once we subdue these ruffians. Outmaneuvering those pirates and their armaments must be our immediate concern. The first mate—that large man called 'Job'—is formidable in head-to-head combat. And from all I've gathered, Captain Houtebeen never steps outside his ship without being in possession of an array of firearms. His trusty Francotte pinfire revolver has a deadly aim—believe me, I know."

The trained tactician in Hans touches a place over his heart where the ruthless pirate's bullet certainly would have lodged a complaint for his death, had an ingenious Rapunzel not crafted him a 'bullet-safe' iron plate fitting vest to shield his vital heart and chest organs from the gunpowder driven impact.

"We only must coordinate in triangulation between our two opponents and the prime objective of bringing my brother from his capture to safety. Your ample muscle and vast strength may be better suited to handle the larger combatant, whilst my archery skills are more tested to accost the wily pirate from a distance." Hans breathes out a plan to his hunkered down companion, awaiting Kristoff's approval, even if leadership and command was in Prince Lieutenant Westergaard's basic Naval Academy training.

But in this kingdom, I am but a foot soldier.

"Yeah, that might work…" A lot of the educated, Sovaernets Officersskole-Royal Danish Naval academic terms go over the peace-loving ice harvester's head. Though it sounded good in theory, Kristoff still was not wholly convinced that finding Anna wasn't his top priority.

He was, however, impressed at how good at field tactics and strategic focus the other man could be in a crisis situation. Weighing his next action against his heart heavy thoughts, Kristoff screwed up in consternation face gazes up to the sky for a second, in hope of some Divine
inspiration.

Once his eyes acclimate to the striking overhead sunlight, Kristoff's fist clenches when he spies that same white-throated dipper swoop downwards from the high air stream it was floating upon. Norway's national bird coos and caws in a high trill, as if the graceful golden winged creature was trying to give him a signal as it hovers over the treetops, where Cousin Eugene was tied to one of the tree's trunks.

"Caw Caw! Little girl, stop! Hide! Danger! Wind Whisperer! Wicked Pirate will see! By the tree! Caw caw! Danger!"

Kristoff holds a hand to his pounding head as he imagines he was hearing a shrill, urgent voice faintly whisper from somewhere, traveling on the wind from above to him. Although he was confused, something in the panicked description of the scene causes a keen-eyed, frantic Kristoff to peer around the corner, if just to appease his apprehensive mind that he had been daydreaming again.

But once he turns, his cynical, disoriented eyes are greeted by his worst fears. There, in his line of vision, was little, headstrong Anna, sneaking and slinking her awkward way from tree to tree. She was smiling all the while, like a ray of pure sunlight trying to hide in the darkness it illuminates, in her almost humorously clumsy attempt to get to the birch tree that the captive man was imprisoned against.

Her hair was tied up in a hasty knot, so as not to encumber her 'stealthy' moves, as furtive Anna dashes along the tree line as if neither of the pirates would notice her reckless, sloppy trailblazing —

As if.

"Da t'ief!" Job spots her in that exact moment when Kristoff immediately springs into action.

"ANNA! NO!" Kristoff's frenetic, wild eyes see a perceptively swift footed Job bounding over to where the up-braided 'heroine' was unsuccessfully trying to undo the sailor knots around a squirming Eugene's torso. But her cute face snarls in sweet comical contortions with each failure.

As usual, unobservant Anna was so focused on getting the ropes around Eugene's chest loose from around the back of the tree that she never saw the tall, dark man coming, despite Eugene's intense mouthed murmurings beneath his gag that she had 'bewda huann!' or something that sounded nothing like 'better run!'

But an inattentive Anna had already zoned out his gagged noises, even as Job's long arms were nearing her in a grasping, dangerous reach…

KAPOW!

But his large dark hands weren't permitted to lay one threatening finger on the orangey princess' head—care of her loving protective husband.

Kristoff Bjorgman shows his moxie as he angrily pummels Job with his well-matched fists. The pair of muscled men wrestle to the ground in a full-pitched slug out fight.

"There! I did it! Eugene, you're free!" Totally unaware of the world around her, a laughing, regardless of care Anna hops about, congratulating herself, triumphantly singing out when the giddy-with-excitement girl manages to untie the squirrelly knots on the rope that were securing
Flynn Rider to the tree.

And a good thing, too.

The overexcited, bright smiling Anna enthusiastically gets into her new favorite thrilling spectator sport of watching her big, burly brute boy beat the daylights out of the similarly physically well-matched man. The demonstrative, air fist pumping, giggling girl didn't see the bloodthirsty Captain Houtebeen from somewhere down below, raise his pinfire revolver up the steep embankment. Anna never saw how the pirate's well-practiced revolver was directed right at her pretty little head, with years of deadly accuracy under his filthy belt—

"ANNA! HIT THE DIRT!" But a mortally terror-stricken Kristoff's barked out warning from where he was pinned beneath a pummeling fisted Job was filled with intense worry for her more than his own dire situation.

"GET OUT OF THERE!" Kristoff cries out in deep concern, left powerless to just witness the scene in heart-stopping fear. His utmost attention was on her well-being when Job's relentless fist comes in full undefended contact with Kristoff's nearly dislodged jaw. The overt battering full force blow, accompanied by the back of his poor head being bashed into a big boulder jutting out from the rocky terrain, knocks the tall blonde out cold.

"KRISTOFF!" Anna shrieks in hysterical dismay at seeing her hunky husband go down.

"IT IS NOT NICE TO PUNCH OUT PEOPLE!" An audacious, anger-aroused Anna was so incensed to see her snuggly sweetie bear be cold-cocked by the towering hulk of the Caribbean, that the little 5'4" befreckled princess fearlessly berates the 6'8" dark shadow of a giant, shaking her confrontational fists at him as she stomps forward.

The twice her size Islander's mocking sneer as he stands up to his full height, after pounding the most formidable opponent he'd tussled with in years in Kristoff, was still not enough to get the seething gutsy girl to retreat. The large Caribbean who had knocked the strong blonde man successfully unconscious, now glowers at Kristoff's vulnerable little wife, who glares obstinately back. Anna possessed a childlike eternal optimism in her own abilities and spunk in defying the odds, even as Captain Houtebeen pulls the trigger of his trained gun …

SCHKKK! B-BANGG!

Then, there's always a 'Plan B', isn't there?

The bullet expelled from Houtebeen's cherished Belgian revolver is misdirected when the pirate's fired weapon's six inch barrel is knocked from his hand by the silver streak of an expert flying knife slinging through the air—

SCHKKTT!

A dagger to be more precise.

Prince Hans reveals himself from around the corner to have adeptly thrown the secreted blade in his boot to jolt the gun from a growling Captian Houtbeen's gnarled grip.

But the heroic dagger's dead-on target, even from the distance of his downward angled 11 meter range, comes a millisecond too late, for the evil pirate had already pulled the loaded revolver's trigger ring.
As if this was all happening in a slow motion dream sequence, Anna's widened eyes stare from Kristoff's comatose prostrate body to Hans' lurched forward form in attempted gun redirecton, then back towards the evil pirate's snickering face down the sandy drop. The whizzing bullet, though thrown a touch off course by Hans' dagger from making contact with her head, spins towards Anna nonetheless, now in line to strike her heart…

"Shake a leg, Pixie!" And it would have, had there not been a third fairytale hero on today's scene. One who never would've believed himself to be so altruistically selfless in all the lonely 26 years of his empty life before he climbed the tower of a certain little lady with the cutest button of a nose and humongous green eyes that could just swallow you up…

In one felled swoop, Eugene Fitzherbert defies every law of survival that the self-preservational roaming thief in him lived by. His toned muscular bare arms, just freed from all the roped tether encumbrance, stretch and reach out to scoop up a frozen-in-place Anna by the tiny waist as if she were nothing more than a little cupcake—

"Whoa!"

PTAFF! SMACK! SPLAT!

The incoming cartridge from the pirate's revolver does find a mark though. Flynn winces as the unlucky, yet heroic man feels, despite the moderate frostbite already radiating pain in his arm, the 11mm cartridge bullet rip straight into his right arm's ample bicep muscle and lodge between his rear triceps, causing the bare-chested man, as carefully as he could in such a circumstance, toss Anna's safely rescued lithe little body onto a soft clump of grass nearby her husband's unconscious form.

"Damn!" Flynn swears at the pain as he covers his injured arm and all its splurting out blood between the fingers of his other hand as another wild bullet loudly cracks the still of the morning sky.

CRAACKK!

Yet another gunshot shoots over his ducked head to disturb a flood of dispersing birds from their peaceful nests in the nearby trees.

"You're bleeding!" His blood on her hands—literally—Anna leaps to her feet and scurries towards Flynn when yet another projectile goes zinging between their two heads.

"Hey! Only chickens shoot unarmed innocent people from a distance!" She yells furiously, waving her offended fists in the air at her unseen sniper.

"Do you have a death wish, little lady?" A hunkered down Flynn Rider bodily pulls the feisty pants girl by her skinny legs back down to squat on the ground beside him. Clumsy Anna subsequently teeters over, until she falls on her miffed bum to the dirt path, legs and arms flipping high in the air.

P-CHING!

A third frenzied bullet's loud crash snaps the air directly above them, seeing her moving target.

"Stay close to the ground, Pixie!" Flynn orders the little girl some 11 years his junior, he having to physically push down Princess Anna's wriggling form, that was ready to jump up into the thick of it again already. The injured thief shoves her rather forcibly into a prone 'lie-low' position on the dirt.
But nothing could keep Princess Anna of Arendelle down for long when she was this riled up.

When Job moves in towards them, seeing that Flynn had been winged by his Captian's gunfire, Anna completely confuses the towering dark figure as she quite athletically leap frogs onto his wide broad shoulders to pound at his head, boxing his ears with all her pent-up vicious might.

"Aw, hell! She's as mad as a March hare!" Flynn curses the imp's insanity as he forces his wounded self up to join the raucous melee of the swaggering back and forth black man. Job was just trying to rid himself of the pest of a little ladybug annoying the big barbaric brute with her relentless fierce attacks astride his shoulders.

"Woo! Whoo! Take that! And that! And that one's for hurting my Kristly!" The bright-eyed girl rebukes and punishes almost too cheerily, for Anna relished getting the thrill out of flexing her own muscle, as Job's thrashing arms unsuccessfully try to remove the slippery dodging girl from his personage.

Highly entertained, Flynn stands back to survey the comical pair of a spunky fearless Anna riding the drunken looking pirate first mate like a bucking bronco. Job only succeeds in whacking himself in the head silly for Anna's quick evasion of his indiscriminate incoming blows.

"Whoo, Mama! I'm putting my money down on the little orange firecracker! Between you, Pixie, and your icy big sis with the long gams, they sure know how to make'em up here in the Tundra!" Flynn wolf whistles as he swerves out of the big perplexed man's unsteady way. Anna laughs almost gleefully as she repeatedly drubs Job's ears, her energetic little digits even reaching down to twist the pitiable giant's nose.

Flynn Rider wasn't too sure which one of them needed his rescuing anymore as he fully stands up to watch the show, forgetting himself with amused hands placed on hips.

"How is it you are still alive? Are you the Fossegrimm spectre, cabin boy?" Now Captain Houtebeen squints his one eye in consternation as he compares his runaway slave to the intangible Scandinavian mythical handsome young creature who plays beckoning music to lure women sublimely beneath waterfalls, unable to be accosted by human hands.

The pirate seemed to be having quite a hard time getting the remainder of his shots out, for dexterous Hans Westergaard had snatched up Kristoff's discarded archer's bow and quiver as he ran forward in a mad dash to cease the wicked pirate's gunshots from aiming at Anna as his quarry above.

T'CHI! SCHKLKT! T'CHI!

The frustrated old seadog's succession of spent cartridges are each thwarted by Lieutenant Westergaard's preferred ammunition—of arrows.

"No, sir, I can assure you. I am feeling very much alive." Hans pronounces with some battle invigorated certitude that gives the pirate villain mental perturbation.

Each time the pirate leveled his deadly weapon at either Anna or Flynn, Hans' deft archery skills stared down the revolver's barrel with such precise aim until every bullet had been sent askew.

ZZZTT! T'CHI!

"Why do you turn on ol' Houtebeen, dear Cabin Boy? He is but a harmless, old man come to pray at ze holy church, no?"
But when Houtebeen's fumbling reloading fingers are finally relieved of his precious weapon, Prince Hans, confident in the element that he was awesome sight to behold, had made his striding way down the hillside to stand above the pirate, with each precise arrow pulled from the quiver slung around his back.

Hans' hair gleams like fire in the beam of sunlight at his back, blocking the trickling spring now entirely. The groveling pirate falls backwards, losing his one-legged balance as he is blinded by the high tiered holy crosses silhouetted upon the green turrets in an aura about Hans' back.

The wily old sea captain then pitifully smiles a toothy grin up at the handsome young man.

For all intents and purposes, Captain Houtebeen had gotten what he came for already. The greedy old man knew the young 'cabin boy' had the upper hand here and decides to play it coy as he uses his cane to 'clumsily' cover up the clay bottle he had just finished filling with the legendary spring waters in the steep bank's white sands.

"Ye wouldn't strike an unarmed man when he be down, would ye, dear Cabin Boy?" Half wheedling, half taunting, Houtebeen's crooked, black-toothed smile up at Hans from his prone position on the sandy knolls was disturbing to say the least. "Ye wouldn't kill a man before yer Holy God in His hallowed places, would ye?" The soulless Houtebeen plays upon Hans' growing uncertain wide eyes that seemed heart unwilling to sentence the aged pirate to a close-range arrowhead corporal punishment.

Don't be the monster they fear you are…

Hans' own words worked even more for himself, for he knew that he too had been a monster in the past to get his way. The thought reverberates in his doubtful mind, along with every right of vengeance and comeuppance for the past two years of harsh servitude, beaten and shot down, then finally thrown overboard to his death by this evil 'sea monster' of a pirate, who had dared to lay a hand on righteous and good, Queen Elsa.

Hans Westergaard lowers the arrow aimed directly at Houtebeen's main heart ventricle from its shaft's well placed nock point. His exacting finger pinch loosens its grip to let the tensed arrow merely rest against the bow string. His racing mind then considers what to do with this subjugated blackguard.

"Prince Hans!" Just then, a shocked Queen Elsa and Princess Rapunzel, with Olaf and Pascal astride him soon at their heels, inconceivably appear to emerge from the graveyard trench tunnel Eugene had tenuously dug earlier at the pirate's command, to behold this confrontational scene.

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Minutes before…

Once the church services were over, the sedulous pair of young ladies and their sidekicks had taken the initiative to ask the helpful nuns if they had seen or heard anything suspicious of late. But at the holy sisters' negative response, the two females nonetheless doggedly continued to investigate the sectioned off lower regions of the ancient church, apparently undisturbed for hundreds of years, save for one hidden, recently cracked open doorway a scouting Pascal alerted them to.
It was evident from the amount of fresh sediment on the floor Olaf had spotted ('Snowmen and dirt do NOT go together! Brr!') that the door led to a secret catacomb lair where many tapestries and statuaries depicting the country’s patron St. Olaf had been secreted away.

Although Elsa was a tad overwhelmed by the historical and religious significance of the holy crypt, as Norway's Queen gazed about the darkened cloistered room full of old antiquities in awe, a single-minded Rapunzel, with a curious Pascal's aid, had soon discovered the ferreted out tunnel leading somewhere outside. Soon, upon entering the burrowed tunnel that the Ice Queen's powers bolstered with hard frost that glazed crumbling walls safely thereof, the brown haired princess soon made a startling discovery.

A dirty crumpled up piece of fabric lay there, crunched between the rolled open rune chiseled stone door. It was a silken violet purple embroidered square that was all too familiar to Rapunzel's widened frightened eyes. For it was a memento from her own wedding some five years past, with her kingdom of Corona's sun encrusted symbol etched upon its fine threads.

And more importantly, her Eugene's trademark rich scent was thick upon that sunburst embroidered purple handkerchief her mother had monogrammed for them as a surprise, their initials entwined together in celebration of their happy marriage. It was the one keepsake that he always made sure to stick in his pocket, ‘For good luck’ the romantic in new Prince Consort Eugene Fitzherbert had said then on the first night of their blissful honeymoon on that dream-filled houseboat.

A touched, tearful Rapunzel had no idea this little scrap of fabric meant so much to the cynical man that he'd still carry it in his pocket, all these years, all these dangers and troubles later. And she vowed anew to never doubt him again if they were to be reunited, as she scooped up the blood-stained article of cloth that was more valuable to her than any sparkling jewel or ancient golden royal scepter.

Back to the above ground present…

"Ze scullery maid, too, lives?" The subdued Captain Houtebeen's mistrustful gaze falls upon the tall stately blonde who was now wearing far more regal garb than she was when stowaway-ed aboard his ship.

Elsa's tight-bunned hair and royal airs gave her all the appearance of a noble lady. Houtebeen's one keen eye considers her closely, the wicked wheels in his head turning.

My slave of a cabin boy was told to be some unwanted disgraced royal prince when he was sold to me, was he not? So why not a dalliance with a pretty young Queen? He,he,he. I wouldn't put it past the untrustworthy rogue!

"Where is Anna? She never did come into the Cathedral." Big sister Elsa's first thought was for her beloved little sister, her anxiety growing for the step-and-fetchit younger princess' welfare.

"Don't worry. She's up there with her husband and—" But even as Hans was pointing up to the left side tree-lined path above the steep embankment's rise, Rapunzel catches sight of someone she's been praying for a long, long time to see.

"EUGENE!" She recklessly dashes up the hilly sands on wings of anticipation to be with her true love again.

"Wait!"
Something's wrong!

It's what his squinted eyes against the bright sunlight did not see that causes the strategist in Prince Hans to grow suddenly apprehensive.

"Here, Elsa." An urgent Hans hands to the surprised Queen the pirate's confiscated walnut handled Francotte revolver that Hans expertly loads in record time with the dropped cartridges Houtebeen had fumbled earlier.

"And don't be afraid to use it. The man is an entirely unprincipled reprobate. Listen to none of his nonsense…please." Steadying her cool hand with his warm one, Hans secures the gun's cold metal within her delicate thin palms, in well conjectured presumption that her royal naval father would teach his eldest daughter to be able to shoot a revolver.

"Olaf! Pascal! Keep an eye on him for me! I'll return shortly!" The Prince manfully takes the helm of command, his emotive eyes locking with Elsa's to strengthen her resolve before he takes up the steep embankment in long purposeful strides.

"So, ze boy finally leaves you in ze care of a real man. Imagine, you posing as a lowly 'scullery maid,' your Majesty. Why don't you move in a little bit closer for me to see you better, my dear. Heh, heh—" Putting 2 + 2 together, the evil pirate begins to chortle, reaching an arrogant hand for his cane with little fear of a dainty beauty such as this pretty deer in the lighthouse.

"Yes. I was the scullery maid. And I know exactly how to clean up messes." With a confident eyebrow raised, Elsa clicks the hammer of the long barreled weapon her father did indeed instruct her thoroughly on how to use. Straightening her posture to be as tall and imposing as possible, the Queen aims the revolver downwards at the cackling pirate, a serious expression of pragmatic no nonsense sensibility prescribed on her every cold as ice feature.

_I can do stone cold emotionless very well, if you push me._

Elsa lets the threatening thought bolster her toughness, as she deftly levels the gun trained to his heart.

If he had one, that is.

Captain Houtebeen's condescending mirthful look up at her begins to fall away. But the humored smile remains as the pirate captain bides his time, all whilst covertly covering the trickling spring beginning to bubble again from the sands now that he had gotten the angered Queen to move her cast shadow out of the sun's rays.

His grubby hands motion beneath his concealed wide girth to stealthily pull open the secret latch to fill one more small golden orbital relic's rounded vessel that had been hidden within the folds of his waistcoat pocket, greedily capturing the few last morsels of healing moisture within it…

Hans' long legs overtake Rapunzel's shorter steps quickly, for he recognized haste was necessary. His one glance upwards before told him that his immediate presence was imperative to ensure Princess Anna's safety, as much as he was loath to leave Queen Elsa alone with the rascal pirate.

But he knew she would choose Anna's safety first—Anna meant the world to her. And he, Hans Westergaard, as a sign of his repentance, a symbol of his contrition, an act of his…love… personally couldn't allow harm—physical or emotional—to come to either Arendelle sister ever again, if he could prevent it.

"Eugene!" Rapunzel calls out her beloved husband's name, forgetting how much she loved him
until she found something that reminded her how deep their commitment to one another had been.

And still is!

She was so thrilled to see him again, she didn't even see the scars, the black eyes, the overgrown facial stubble or the profusely bleeding arm, as he flippantly answers his wife without making eye contact whatsoever.

"Sorry, Darlin'. Can't stop for our morning smooch, as tantalizing as that sounds right now. Got my hands full at the moment." The mouth never ceases to amaze as Eugene Fitzherbert was manfully bearing the pain of his bullet-shot arm in his gallant attempts to steal and disarm the slashed knife blade that the ferocious Caribbean produced when Flynn challenged the already vexed man. He and Job had been vying for the sharp steel switchblade's control for several minutes now, all while Anna was still dangerously riding the massive man's shoulders, as if she were some kind of daring rodeo queen.

"Hey! Sideburns! Redheads do have all the luck! Argh! You must have nine lives! Hey! I'm glad you made it, Kid! And that slick grey cloak beats pirate rags anyday, you know what I'm talkin' about.Oof!" All while he and Job were dueling, Eugene teases the tall, thin, younger man aside when Hans makes his first appearance to Eugene's elated guilt-ridden soul.

"You're looking good, Kid. Goes to show, you can't keep a good redhead down." Eugene rather big brotherly scruffs Han's neat hairdo until it was a red hay bird's nest.

"And Queenie?" Eugene's blameworthy conscience just needed a day like this to surpass the dark night of yesterday.

"I brought her here with me." Hans' wistful smile and quixotic voice in referring to Arendelle's lovely ruler, was music to Eugene's hungry for good news ears.

Sharing a small implied glance with Rapunzel, whose own gaze all the while was fixed on drooling on her daring shirtless stud, Eugene sighs in solicitous relief at his double or nothing emotional gamble panning out at Hans' comforting smile.

Both partnered up, battle engaged, yet preoccupied men then inattentively and simultaneously duck Job's incoming slashed blade, as if they each possessed some extrasensory charmed ability whilst they were quite civilly conversing, the smooth duo frustrating their stymied opponent to no end.

"Hiya! Get'em, Eugene! Get'em!" The squirming high-strung Anna, who was exhilarated by a good scrap between men, eggs on Eugene alone as he braces Job's knife to bob and weave around the encircled man until the first mate was dizzy. Working together, strategizing Hans uses this brief window of Job's unsteady wooziness to make a grab for the deadly knife, as the cunning thief shrewdly recognized he and Hans jointly were still out-muscled to not to resort to utilizing some of (frying pans aside) his finest gleaming weapons at his disposal—

His teeth.

"Owww!" Job wails as Eugene's vehement chompers clamp down hard on the dark man's blood-drained palm, making the man drop his flailing knife as he backs away rapidly to throw back his head violently in a deep-throated howl.

But these believed positive reactions result in a negatively surprised Anna to lose her perched balance atop Job's convulsing shoulders, and she gets thrown off quite roughly to be smashed down to the rocky boulders lining the path, beside her still mostly passed out hubby…
"Oof! Glad I caught you." They'd both heard this song be played before, as Prince Hans, formerly of the Southern Isles, swiftly glides in just the nick of time, to safely catch the flailing, falling, female called Princess Anna of Arendelle in his svelte, yet sinewy, strong arms.

But this time, instead of Princess Anna's wide besmitten eyes smiling up at his gentlemanly rescue, a sour smirk replaces the once tender moment.

"Eww! Put me down!" The feisty gal demands with a disgusted scowl and frowned brow up at his face.

A sheepish-eyed Hans immediately complies to her wishes as he quickly sets her little body gently on the ground.

"You just help Cousin Eugene beat that guy once and for all!" The haughty faced and voiced Princess snootily orders him over her shoulder as she moves expressly away.

"Kristoff!" Anna then falls to her knees at her downed love's side. She, a bit too roughly, grabs his head up from the bloody rock it had been bashed against multiple times to helpfully rub the fresh wound on the back of his head. This ministration causes Kristoff to wince awake with renewed pain. His girl was a bull in a china shop when it came to 'handling with care.'

"Oops, Sorry." At first giving Kristoff a twisted lipped quirky smile, Anna then decides to full mouth kiss him in both apology and relief instead as his eyes fully flutter open now with a satisfied grin up at her.

"You okay?" She breathlessly asks after lifting her fierce liplock from his wowed ones, the passed out blonde on the receiving end of Princess Anna's reverse take on the fabled 'Sleeping Beauty' tale.

"I am now, Baby." An equally breathless Kristoff does indeed feel revitalized enough to have his wife help him scramble to his feet in order to re-enter the ring. He rubs his truly kissed all better jaw as he does, knowing how very lucky he was to have a great passion like Anna's as a pick-me-up trick that worked every damn time.

"Hey! What are you doing up here anyway, Hans? Who's with Elsa?" Glancing back and forth at the rest of the 'team' of all their human people around her, Anna's sisterly love and concern kicks in next as she barks the question to Hans. He seemed to always know where her sister was, most of the time, unfortunately.

"I left her standing guard over Captain Houtebeen down there." Directing his expressive eyes down the hill, Hans manages to elucidate in between he and Eugene taking turns in exchanging blows with the hurt, but yet ferocious large Caribbean who had been a prize-winning pugilist in the boxing ring before the sea called him to be a pirate.

"You. Left. Her. Alone. With. The. Pirate?!!" Scooping up Job's fallen knife, and swinging it in Hans' face viciously, Anna scornfully retorts as she then recklessly hurtles her little body over the steep embankment edge to heedlessly skitter down the sands the rest of the way at a temerarious, rash pace.

"Anna! Be careful!" Kristoff was getting used to warning his impetuous gal of the trouble she always found herself a free ticket aboard, though he had a feeling that she didn't even hear him.

He was about to give chase to her when Flynn's knocked back body crashes into his, signaling to Kristoff that it was his turn again in this punching tag team to face off the solidly massive 6'8"
brawny bruiser who towered over even him.

"Good to see you up and at the good fight again, Mr. Bjorgman." Though Hans Westergaard's slighter, pale frame was almost a comical match for the darker skinned professional fighter, he was holding his own. He utilized the defensive tactics he was expert at in swordplay, although he was minus his 'talented' sword.

Alas…

I must warn you though, ugh! this gentleman akt! does not play by the ungh! Queensberry rules."
The former Prince of the Southern Isles just manages to dive out of the line of Job's proper etiquette rule-breaking attempt to grasp his thin opponent's waist in an illegal wrestled squeeze.

"Yeah…the Queensberry Rules…" Kristoff smirks at how toffee-nosed and wordy his once enemy/now unlikely partner could still be, even in a hand-to-hand pitched fight.

For us 'lower classed' folks, a fight is just a fight. No rules apply beyond the laws of the fittest.

With that silent thought, the blonde delivers a crushing blow to Job's lower jaw cheek in return for his own still sore jawbone, causing Hans to smile. He was impressed that the tide of their fisticuffs battle with the gargantuan man may just be turning.

"Oh, Eugene! My poor sweetie!" Rapunzel had interrupted her guy's K'O'd descent as he was falling backwards. She brushes his dark brown hair, full of mud and sweat, from his two black swollen eyes.

She then scans—in horror—his multiple scratches, the dirt-smudged beard growth and black and blue bruises all over his entire bare-chested body, with the blood still dripping down his bullet pierced right arm.

The sweet young woman's eyes fill with tears for what her lover had had to endure, all on his own. Her well wept tears spill down onto his closed eyelids, the warm wetness of which causes Eugene to awaken, just as her magic tears had called him back to life, once upon a time ago.

cough cough"Why are you crying, Blondie?" Eugene whispers, reaching an exhausted left hand up as his eyes squint in pain to touch her overcome, soggy cheek.

"Does my face look that bad? Be truthful…if you must."

Nonetheless, Flynn Rider always had his vain, sardonic humor at the ready to wipe away all of his emotional girl's tears for him. She cries now with tears of joy running down her cheeks at finding him, though battered and bruised, yet still alive. The handsome rogue smiles flirtatiously up at her adoring face, in true Flynn Rider style.

"Oh, Eugene! You're so beautiful! I love you!" Rapunzel weeps and laughs all at once, as she euphorically hugs her husband's head on her lap to her heaving chest.

"Yup, still got it." Eugene remarks, still full of himself, with his trademark smirk sidling up his dirt-streaked face just for her benefit.

And he never looked more stunning to her ecstatic eyes. "Did I mention, recently, how much I love brunettes?" He runs his fingers through her stick-short hair and she hugs him even tighter.

"Ooph! Not that I'm not enjoying your ample cuddles, but just go easy on the arm." Sucking in air, Eugene almost passes out with the pain of the embedded bullet still wedged in his upper tricep.
Rapunzel was unintentionally pressing.

As Anna races down the sand embankment towards the sparkling Nidelva River, something else that glitters catches her eye and she scoops it up without even missing a dashed beat.

Exhilarated by all this action and adventure, the fun-loving Princess storms down the sand bank at full speed, until she suddenly trips on a jutted out rock. She then tumbles the rest of the way until she clumsily lands headfirst at the scene.

Shaking the strewn sand from her brow, Anna pushes her mussed bangs away to find herself looking eye level at the prone, ugly, old patch eyed pirate's sneering face.

"Eww, you're yukky." Sharp knife somehow still fixed in one hand all the dangerous while, Anna can't help the comment as her big sister's helpful arm pulls her up to her feet, with the gun in Elsa's grip still trained. Olaf helps out on the other side to steady the tripped girl.

"Ze little princess, too…" Under his breath, Captain Houtebeen's interested stare across at Anna darkens as the wheels spin in his evil mind full of dark thoughts circulating a newly devised, spur of the moment plan.

"Hey, you!" But Anna's own eyes were too observant for once. From her view at his lateral side, she glimpses something mighty interesting concealed beneath the old pirate's twisted form.

"Anna, get back from him!" Elsa warns her gutsy little sibling to stay back from the crusty old captain.

"But look what he's got there!" Bold Anna announces, wrenching her arm from Elsa's grip as she pounces back down to straddle the pirate and wrestle with his gripping hands behind his back.

The determined girl wins to triumphantly pull out from under Houtebeen's hidden grasp to proudly display…

"The orb of Saint Olaf…!" Elsa was full of amazed pleasure at her younger sister's discovery of the stolen holy relic that the Queen had partly begun this epic journey to come in search of recovering.

The joy is shortlived, though, when Captain Houtebeen proves to be less disabled in his incapacitated state than they all believed. Even an old cripple, when his lifelong quest for wholeness is threatened to be ripped away before it had even been glimpsed, could surpass himself in the moment of driven necessity.

SHIKT! SHIKT!

"Anna!" Elsa shrieks her endangered best friend's name even as her entire body begins to shiver with the cryokinetic energies surging up to pour out in retaliation as even the gun metal in her hand starts to turn frosty.

"Don't ye be moving a one of zose long slender fingers to harm me, Queen Elsie, if ye want yer pretty little sissy to keep her pretty little head attached to her pretty little neck." In this, his finest physical feat in tens of handicapped years, Houtebeen swiftly manages not only to sit up and grab Anna's shocked upper torso, but he spins the dizzy girl in close proximity, turning her around enough for his gripping hands to seize the knife from hers to turn the tables and now threaten its deadly blade to her constricted throat.

Using Hans' diminutive name for Elsa when he first met her, Houtebeen wrenches the golden orb from Anna's stiffened grasp. Elsa is only able to watch helplessly, for fear of Anna's precious life
Always a wily conniver, Captain Houtebeen had swiftly forged a revamped, evil plot as his new grand scheme—one that could involve these two young women. He sensed the young queen's delicate spirit could be broken with one word—if he revealed all he knew...And that he could use to his advantage someday soon...

"Now, zis be mine again as well. And don't ye be trying to get it back again. Bring me my cane, Yer Majesty." Houtebeen demands, as he reclaims the orb. He enjoyed ordering the fearfully shaking young woman to do his bidding, Queen or no. But he mustn't have been aware of Elsa's full powers, or he would've tread more lightly.

After a silent pause, Pascal and Olaf forlornly pass the cane to Elsa, who tosses it to the ground within arm's reach of the wicked captain. He was eyeing her slender form with greedy eyes again as he stands with his cane, back up to her level.

"So, my lowly cabin boy has tasted ze Queen's lips...Why not try ze Captain zis time, Queen Elsa of Arendelle, and I may let yer little waif of a princess go." A bedeviled Houtebeen taunts as his gnarled old hands were still gripped around a wide-eyed Anna's waist with the sharpened blade of the knife moving in ever closer to her wheezing throat. It nearly draws blood, as his hideous face leers in closer to Elsa's terrified, frozen in place one.

Every voice inside her screams out to strike with her ice powers, but Anna's frightened face was too close in the line of fire. Elsa loved her too much to take the risk of hitting her beloved sister ever again.

And that immense love was what gave her the control to hold back.

**T'chai!**

An expertly aimed arrow zings across the river front's still air. Its head buries itself to plunge into the sand at the pirate's feet.

"Hmph! Sorry attempt at a rescue, incompetent archer!" Houtebeen's derisive chuckle is soon replaced, though, when he looks down at the crumpled bulge beneath the sands where the arrow struck into a growing—

"Puddle?! Now, where'd that come from?!" Speaking to his rippled reflection in the crystal clear, blessed waters, pooling in the sand, Olaf fills in the previously foreign word to him.

Once the puddle dissipates, the snowman curiously digs beneath the shallow sands to where a large clay bottle had been utterly shattered by the dead-on bullseye of the honed bone arrowhead.

"NOOOO! My spring water! All my precious water!" Dragging Anna down with him to his knees, Houtebeen bewails the spilled moisture whose last miraculous drops seem to run away from his touch. The remainder of it seeps back into the ground as if it were never there, in a matter of seconds.

"Grrrrrr...." The viciously angry pirate's ugly face turns even more repulsive in his fury as he stands back up, his knife now readied to strike a direct blow into a struggling Anna's pure heart...

"LET. HER. GO." Wielding his long bow and arrow of proud Saami heritage, protective Kristoff Bjorgman fiercely bellows out each commanding word as he races in leaps and bounds across the Cathedral's Nid River facing grounds towards where the merciless pirate was holding Anna before
"TAKE ANOTHER STEP, FOOL, AND HOUTEBEEN WILL SWEAR TO KILL HER!" The enraged pirate screeches out in his broken language, incensed that his plans were all unraveling. Hans and Eugene were each holding an arm of the captive Job between them, with Rapunzel trailing behind.

"Free Job, or I slit her puny throat right in front of her sister!" Neither Hans nor Eugene needed to exchange a look with Kristoff to already start untying the ropes they had tethered around a finally beaten Job (once Kristoff had added his muscle) as they were escorting the big, captured man down the hill.

As a freed Job marches forward, he stops to stare at Kristoff. The two big men's eyes slit at one another until Job suddenly decides to punch Kristoff again, for fear of another of his injudicious reprisals. The dark man then grunts in the other two men's shocked faces, as he wordlessly takes off in the opposite direction, around the corner to fetch the pirates' small steam driven propeller boat tied to a post several lengths down the riverbank.

Next were the nail-biting few minutes of Captain Houtebeen's sneer silently daring anyone to make a move, lest Anna be killed.

Minutes later, an odd-shaped double paddlewheeled ferry with a bore and stroke steam propulsion system soon comes puffing around the Nidelva River's bend.

"Please, sir! Let Anna go! I will give you anything—to the half of my kingdom! If you just don't harm her!" Elsa's shaky voice diplomatically tries to plead with the crazed-eyed pirate.

"Yer kingdom? Yes, Houtebeen will claim all yer kingdom has to offer me, in exchange for zis *meisje, when I return, Queen Elsa of Arendelle! Perhaps I will even deem to keep you as my queen, beautiful lady…and you will bow before me as King, you will see!" Houtebeen touches one hand beneath Elsa's trembling chin with a lusty, longing look in his greedy, maddened eyes.

He revels in Hans' quite audible growl from where he was some meters away. The irked young man's fisted hands were just itching to—

"GET AWAY FROM MY SISTER!"

STOMP!

Feisty Anna doesn't take this being a victim game seriously enough, though. Her tiny boot comes smashing down over the peg-leg's one working foot. Her protective streak for her sister outweighed any sense of self-preservation, anyday.

"Yelp! Ye are asking for it, ye little *terreur!" Houtebeen now brandishes the steel blade before Anna's widening eyes as he slowly runs its flat coldness against her cheek in menacing intimidation.

Anna gulps as fortunately just then, Job appears from the boat craft, at his redhead Captain's side. He lifts the whole package of pirate and gutsy young girl, to carry them onboard the small steamship he had just pulled alongside the riverbank.

"And don't ye try to follow me, or yer little princess will be dodelijk—dead!" Houtebeen, still holding the knife to her throat, shouts out one last threat as the steamship quickly departs.
"NOOOO! ANNA!" Elsa screams, feeling utterly powerless again, just as she did that terrible day long ago as she rushes to the edge of the river. Her feet long to run upon the water in foolhardy pursuit of the steam engine, but that evil pirate's final ominous word on what would befall her sweet, little sister with his knife to her throat should they give chase, terrified her.

She could still see, through her fierce tears, Anna's struggling, kicking and screaming little form be passed to an impenetrably strong-armed Job as the Peg-leg captain takes the helm of his new craft. The vessel grows smaller and smaller as it moves further and further away down the River Nid, via the Gaulosen Fjord, and towards the open northern seas…

The horrifying sight of having to allow the cruel pirate to escape with her kidnapped little sister, freezes a devastated Elsa's heart inside.

The Queen of this land falls to her knees in the historic riverbank's shallows. The swirling waters immersed up to her waist were nothing compared to the forlorn despair and extreme anxiety in losing her beloved sibling and not be able to do a blessed thing about it, for fear of jeopardizing Anna's welfare further..

"Anna…" Shaken to her core, Elsa feels her world begin to shatter like ice crystals spiraling out of control, again…

Within seconds, Hans dashes to the shore, swiftly removing his Arendelle cloak along the way. Vaguely sensing someone near in her delirium, Elsa feels the grey cloak almost magically wrap around her, his body warmth and strangely inviting scent still viable upon its folds.

Distraught, impuissant and panicked, Elsa's hyperventilating frost exuding body that was involuntarily freezing herself from the waist down in the no longer warm summer waters, was just able to discern a pair of warm arms gather her up from the high tide at the river's edge where she had sunk to her knees at the frigid Nidelva's banks.

The Queen turns to bury her rimy petrified face into Hans' welcoming chest, her ice powers losing all control in her inconsolable despair as her innate cryokinetics begin to freeze everything within a two meter radius.

And that included the man who neither flinches nor sidesteps a falter to hold the ungovernably unrepressed emotional Ice Queen close in his warm arms. His pounding heartbeat was strong and rhythmically steady in her ears even if the cold bitter frost meant the end of his life.

Hans Westergaard vows silently here and now in this great moment of this earthly angel's terror and grief, he would endure anything and everything for the vulnerable woman clasped in his arms as he pets her convulsing shoulders to be still.

"I swear to you before God Almighty that we will get Princess Anna back alive, Queen Elsa. On my honor, truly, I will not rest until we bring her back to your side again, even unto giving my worthless life up to Him in exchange." Hans pledges on whispered blue-tinged lips as he breathes hot breaths into her sweet smelling iridescent hair, tenderly embracing Elsa's icy trembling cold body fearlessly close with all the warmth he had to offer left.

Pressed tightly against his undaunted chest's heat, Elsa, through traumatized tears, faintly recalls in the back of her mind how each time this man spoke to her, in that breathtaking exquisite voice, even in her growing power's most undisciplined restless instances, every time the tranquil sea of his placid green eyes engulfed her ice stricken frightened blue ones with their warm expression of contrasting vulnerable strength, the lost little girl inside of Queen Elsa of Arendelle found a peace to hold back the forbidding storm of her ice powers that only Prince Hans of the Southern Isles
brought to her.

Visions of they two in the past replay within just few ephemeral seconds: of the North Mountain Ice Palace her hands alone created, where his plaintive offered words of wisdom saved her from her petrified with fright maddened self; then his pleading eyes that were begging to extend straight to her startled insecure heart in Arendelle's lower dungeon cell; to the frozen ice covered gelid of the fjord where he alone was able to find and reach her with a voice that called for the madness of her unintentional 'eternal winter' to stop.

And then the endless haunting dreams filled with him for nearly every night in the past two years, were all surrounded by the soft sights and gentle sounds of his expressive eyes and remarkable voice that, she was just beginning to realize, touched her heart, calmed her mind, reached her soul in ways no one else's could.

Even now, living her worst nightmare, the platinum blonde's uncertain soul finds a strange solace again in his reassuring gaze. Elsa's consciousness believed in the words of the only other man, besides her dear papa, who could ever hold her tight.

And the turbulent frenzy of ice stemming from her, abruptly ceases, as her frightened panicked eyes, heeding his presence once again, normalize looking up into his tender gaze.

Hans' generous warmth encapsulates her weary heart with the building hot tears that finally fall, as the frosted glaze on the river's physical surface too ebbs away under each of her tear droplets' melting touches.

"Go ahead and cry. Just let it go..." He murmurs so gently in her hair as the lean bodied man lifts Elsa's lissome and graceful form from the chilled waters engulfed around them both. She was wearing his cloak tucked around her quivering body, so Hans, in the abstract, can't help but marvel at how Elsa fit so perfectly in his arms as he carries the young woman sobbing hot tears on his neck back to the river's edge. There, an embracing Rapunzel and Eugene were sadly looking on, with a funny stick-finger twiddled Olaf and desolate deep blue Pascal watching at their feet.

Just then, a sputtering up blood Kristoff comes to from his latest pounding, as he staggers over to the river's edge to meet the solemn faced group.

"Where's Anna?" His first and foremost thought was always for his girl as he rubs his groggy eyes to consciousness and holds the side of his aching head where Job had pummeled him squarely that was throbbing intensely.

But from the downcast looks on Eugene, Rapunzel, Pascal, and even Olaf's countenances, plus the added disquieting scene of Elsa's uncontrollable weeping in Hans' arms, an apprehensive Kristoff assesses what had occurred when he had been knocked out.

After scanning from forlorn face to forlorn face, through disbelieving eyes, he realizes that his adored dearest, most cherished and brightest sunflower in the pasture had been plucked from his care, his protection that he promised her for a lifetime that was just at its beginning together…

Not end, never an end for the two of us—

"ANNA!" Kristoff releases a primal scream that echoes across the river as the soft-spoken man freely breaks into a manic run. He splashes into the river until he was soaked up to his neck. But the quick-paced steamboat was long out of his reach.

"What good did this damn thing do?! I've failed you, Anna...DAMNIT!" Crying relentless tears
through clenched teeth as he throws his useless 'legendary' bow down hard. Kristoff swears wildly then slams the surface of the water with his angry fists.

There, his golden wedding band that his sweet girl had just put there not a week ago, glimmers upon the sun-glanced gleaming water's crests as he again pounds the waves in a fuming rage at himself especially. The splashed up waters streaming down his cheeks disguised his unabated tears…

And the waves of the historic Nidelva River, beyond the holy Cathedral, suddenly rush in then change their tidal course to bring the discarded curved golden tan wooden archer's tool to float back to its despondent owner standing in the river's midst, where Kristoff's yearning eyes were searching the horizon, with prayerful hope for his love's return …

*Please God, bring my bright sunflower back to me…*

Chapter End Notes

*meisje = 'little girl' in Dutch
*terreur = 'firebrand/terror' in Dutch
The brilliant sun that had been glimmering on the waters from its lofty place up in the sky abruptly takes a bow behind some dark, foreboding clouds that had mysteriously gathered over the Nidaros Cathedral.

Extending a hand that soon balls into a useless fist, and feeling utterly wretched that the result of his salvation came at the price of that sweet little firecracker of a pixie, Eugene Fitzherbert hugs his uncontrollably weeping wife all the tighter.

He looks up through his swollen eyes, fighting tears that probably would fall for the first time in his adult life, to where Hans Westergaard was similarly embracing Elsa.

Hans was gazing down at her with utmost anxiety in his sorrowful green eyes as he holds the distraught, heartbroken queen up in his protective arms, as if she were but a weightless snowflake.

But the weight of the entire world seemed to have fallen upon the slumped shoulders of the devastated golden blonde who was yet standing some dozen feet from where the others were on the shore. Kristoff Bjorgman was ensconced in the river rushing all about him, with not a thought to self.

How could there be? Every single second that was still pounding in his ears was for her. For his Anna who had been stolen from him.

"Anna…I didn't watch you close enough, I'm sorry…! I have to bring you back home…" Only the winds could hear the whispered murmuring on his trembling lips between his tears as Kristoff sinks to his knees beneath the river's currents.

What seemed like the distant roar of rolling thunder makes Eugene look up, disoriented, to the threatening sky. With a heavy heart, the guilt-ridden thief had been about to go to Kristoff to stop the young fool from drowning himself in the waters, but a permeating sound coming from the throbbing ground behind them caught his attention instead.

This 'thunder' was emanating from the hooves of a cloven-toed hero, for Sven had broken free of where he had been tied to the post (for appearance's sake for any hesitant churchgoers.)

Upon hearing his best friend's heart wrenched cries, the empathic reindeer swiftly galloped past a surprised Hans, still with Elsa, and a shocked Eugene and Rapunzel—just to reach Kristoff as fast as he could.

Sven, with forlorn eyes, nudges his broken-spirited pal with a comforting nuzzle. But the stunned Kristoff didn't respond to his furry friend's prodding. With a big, doleful gaze and a sorrowful begging grunt at the look of complete, lost despair that was inscribed all over the big man's speechless face, Sven takes the initiative to lower his neck and head into the water to scoop up and roll on his back, like second nature, the despondent blonde from the river that Kristoff was drowning his sorrows in.
After instinctively looking around for Anna, his beloved second passenger who was nowhere in sight, the grey-brown reindeer's eyes seem to zero in on the now growing tiny in the distance steamboat departed far down the River Nid's bends. Without a single word passing, Sven takes a deep breath into his flared nostrils, and closes his round eyes that were steeling with determination. His furry brown ears prick up, as if listening to some unknown voice on the wind while he carries Kristoff, the reindeer trudging to the riverbank.

The durable rangifer crooks his neck to ensure that his unaware-of-the-world-around-him rider was firmly astride, then Sven's four sturdy legs take off like a shot past the two wide-eyed couples at such a rampaging sudden speed that the vacuum of high-velocity blows a standing nearby Olaf into several parts, that a side-stepping Pascal avoids being avalanched by. The snow mounds, stick branches and carrot all scatter upon the bank in the reindeer's speedy wake with a numbed Kristoff automatically clutching onto his fur, trusting his childhood friend to help him retrieve his stolen true love once again.

"We must give chase." Recognizing the reindeer's full gallop speed of nearly 80 kilometers per hour versus their horses', even driven hard, at only 45-50 kpm, the logistically minded Hans urgently calls the order in that superior, princely voice as he immediately spins on his heels to race back towards their parked sleighs near the church front.

He was still carrying his clingy queen to his chest all the while.

"Get it together, snowball." Feeling responsible for this entire, unlucky mess and its resulting tumult, Eugene springs to action. With pumping adrenaline, he ignores the throbbing pain in his right arm and wholeheartedly launches into the 'team spirit.' This former loner gathers up the remainder of Olaf's wriggling, escaping appendages—along with his quickly rushed and plunked back together incorrectly body on top of head—and tucks the rest under his one good arm.

He then pats his shoulder for Pascal to jump aboard while, with his other bloodied, bullet ridden and frostbitten arm, he holds out his hand to Rapunzel, who grasps the wearied, scraped and cut limb with a look of gratitude for his strength to return to her side, though both had hoped the privilege of being together again, wouldn't have had to come at so dear a cost…

"What do you STUPID pirates think you're doing?! Kidnapping a princess of a European Royal House is a major illegal offense! It's punishable by…uhmmmm…hanging! Yeah, hanging! I can just see you two losers dangling by your sorry necks from the yardarm back in Arendelle! You'll be begging my good sister for leniency for your wicked crimes or a pardon of amnesty from justice—or to give you parole from your rightful penalty of death in commo—commut—Oh, beg her to grant you mercy, anyway! As if! You'll still swing! So there!" Once Princess Anna had managed to wiggle her freely loose lips from the snug gag around her spirited mouth, the feisty girl lets it spill out—all this past hour's pent up venom with self-righteous indignation.

Even if she couldn't quite remember how to say or spell some of the big, book words that were just on the tip of her vehement tongue!

"I t'ought I told ye to gag ze talkative wench, Job. She gives yer Captain a monstrous headache somezing powerful. Zough she be a pretty little missy…” Lecherous Captain Houtebeen, with his
roving one eye, slowly drags his pegleg across the wooden deck of the 'borrowed' steamship craft he had called in some underhanded favors to parlay his greedy hands upon.

Hearing her loud and annoying voice all the way from where he was on the foredeck to the bridge wheelhouse where Job had tied the squirming girl to the center compass binnacle, the bent and twisted old man reaches one his gnarled hands to touch the bound Anna's angry pink cheek.

But the peppery Arendelle sister was no slouch when it came to the self-defense against a man's unwanted attentions that her parents had taught her.

*Yes, they did!*

**CHOMP!**

Anna comes within millimeters of viciously biting off the unpalatable pirate's wandering digits, but the crusty old man yanks them away, just in time, so as not to sustain yet another handicapped body part.

"You just stay away from me, you ugly old man!" In much more anger than fearful retaliation, Anna yells unwisely loud in Houtebeen's now ringing ears. The bitter, bad-tempered aged pirate raises his arm to backhand the insulting young guttersnipe, but wise Job's gentle and patient palm comes to rest on Houtebeen's fiery shoulder, causing him to stop just short of striking the closed-eye and fully-prepared-to-be-hit young woman.

Job then signals to him that something was amiss with the ship, which begins to slow, sputtering for coal, diverting their attention.

Anna peeks open one eye after a few anxious seconds, when the harsh expected blow never comes to her expectant face.

"Huh?" She glances around the enclosed wheelhouse to see the pair of pirates had simply chosen to abandon her. Job had returned to attending to the engines below deck, beneath the main mast.

As for the pirate Captain, he had managed to collect his composure enough to silently stand at the navigation controls near the bridge's windowed viewscreen with his back to her.

"Hah! Scared ya, didn't I?!" The yet restrained Anna boldly proclaims to herself with a broad, narcissistic smile that only begins to fade when Captain Houtebeen's white-streaked red bearded chin pointed at the wheel steering the craft, curls up with a smirk at something gleaming gold clutched in his hand.

"Oookay…I'm sorry about calling you names before. Kristoff keeps telling me I've gotta work on 'keeping my inner calm'. So how about turning this boat around and dropping me back off at that Cathedral? Or any near port will do. Don't worry, I'll find my own way home, if that's more convenient."

'You catch more flies with honey.' *Mama used to say.*

Trying to now sweet talk her way out of her nervousness, Anna starts rattling off. The innocent little girl in her still half believed in the innate goodness of others, if you just said the 'magic word' with a pleasant, winning smile.

"Please…?" But the politeness 'magic' doesn't seem to have any effect whatsoever on this churlish old rotter. "And if you just give me back our kingdom's Orb of Saint Olaf's that you've got there and let me go, I promise we won't prosecute you or charge you with any crime. Hey! There might
even be a finder's fee reward for you if you return it and me within twenty-four hours or
something. And we'll just forget anything ever happened. How's that sound?" Anna displays her
friendliest, hopeful-est, toothy-est smile from where she was strapped and secured to the brass,
wooden binnacle.
"A reward for zis little golden beauty, ye say?" Houtebeen continues to lovingly pet the golden Orb
he was admiring in his hand, as if it was his most cherished possession. It sparkles in the late
afternoon sunlight, penetrating the due west glass viewscreen. "No, meisje, I have waited me
whole life for her. She is mine…and ye too will remain me little pawn. So, I'm afraid Job and I will
have to risk yer unnerving sentence of death by hanging—as unpleasant as ye make it sound,
Princess—mercy or no." Houtebeen's previous anger flare was appeased by his level-headed first
mate's greater wisdom to follow their new plan. Instead he ridicules Anna's pitiful attempts at
intimidation.
"A pawn? Like in chess?" Anna quizzically wonders at the odd use of the term that she knew from
days of youth playing the ancient South Asian intellectual game with her sweet, unassuming Mama,
who had been a brilliant strategist at the chessboard who could always out jump her little girl's
pawns and knights, protecting her king easily before guileless young Anna could bat an eye in
checkmate to the Queen.
Oh, Mama! I just wore your wedding dress, but I wish I could be half as clever as you to get out of
this! You always knew the right words to say...
Anna remembers most of all her kind mother's ability to sing her Papa's worried brow away each
time he came down from Elsa's locked room in great anxiety for his eldest child's woes. She
recalled the nights her mother would sit her distressed husband before the roaring fireplace and
serenade away his disquieted shaking concerns with her lilting soft strains, in loveliest song.
Now I understand your worries over Elsa's solitary condition—but you don't have to worry
anymore! You should see how strong she is now!
"Yes, yes, very good, Princess. Houtebeen likes zat. Ye be quiet and he will be ze one for ze
ultimate 'chess checkmate' zis time. Har hah har…"
The evil pirate's chortles of laughter were unsettling to say the least. But Anna would never give in
to defeat—even as the old captain receives Job's signal to set all the steering machinery to full
steam again, now that the Caribbean man had reloaded the coal chutes for utmost steam pressure
again.
The screw propeller near the tailshaft roars to life as the small steamship surges the waves on
course again for its unknown destination.
How strong we both can be…
Anna's eyes try to scrutinize something of the compass dials she had been strapped to. Though she
never did pay much attention to her father's wide collection of his lifelong naval tour's nautical
souvenirs, his compass on the library shelf always did intrigue the little girl who yearned to travel
beyond the castle's walls.
Whether it was pointing N, S, E, or W or any of the half-increments in between, small, lonely and
sheltered Anna of Arendelle dreamed of traveling to each far off destination someday. The bright
eyed youngster would fill her empty day with imaginary travel spent lion-taming on Africa's high
plains to the Deep South, climbing China's Great Wall to the Far East, or exploring by railroad
America's frontier of the Wild West. Each exotic location was excitingly depicted in the new


collection of Encyclopaedia Brittanica that Mama had imported, especially for her intelligent girls.

Even if they couldn't visit them, Queen Idun's girls would at least be educated to see the world through the periscope of these informative books, full of important up-to-date data and thrilling real life stories of actual heroes and heroines making history—not just living through it.

Back to present day harsh reality, straining her eyes according to the compass aboard this steamship she was an unwilling passenger on, Princess Anna assesses that she would be traveling —barring a few westerly ticks—mainly towards magnetic North. It was the one direction, for all its cold barrenness, not much interesting animal nor plant life, nor modern invention, that had least fascinated the girl who had lived in Norway's already fairly high in the Artic Circle northern spot on the spherical globe.

But I'll keep you warm here with me in my heart. It makes it easier when life gets hard like this…

Oh Kristoff! I know you will be so worried sick because you love me so much! And I love you so much that I'm worried sick about you worrying yourself sick over me…

Please watch over him while I'm gone, Elsa...And I love you too...

Sven's thundering hooves cross the Trondheim lowlandsregion's gentle valleys and rounded hills into the more rugged mountain terrain north of Skogn, Hylia and Straumen without stopping for rest in some 10 hours now since they began this continuous run.

But Sven understood his best friend's aching heart so thoroughly that the compassionate reindeer gave his absolute special all to race across the plains at full throttle.

Though, climbing upon the Scandinavian Mountain ranges that naturally dominated the country's eastern interior in this blind trek North, even sturdy Sven was beginning to feel the intense muscle strain in his pounding legs.

It had been ceaseless kilometers since the pair had left Trondheim and Kristoff had not yet uttered a single spoken word to him. Only a hand would signal the reindeer transport forward along this mad dash North, for everything in the landscape was telling Sven to.

But no verbal speech ever need be transmitted between the close pair as Sven instinctively followed the adrenaline driven course a silent Kristoff and the whispering whipping wind through his unruly hair seemed to be conspiring together to chart.

Still, the Midnight Sun flavor of a Norwegian mid-July made it pretty hard for a tired-eyed Sven to gauge the actual time of day, other than that of the count of the raging, swiftly crossed kilometers on Sven's mental odometer.

The reindeer's cloven hooves did not let up from his ultra rapid 75 km gallop, though Sven, every now and then, would steal a glance back at the quiet man clinging to the fur on the creature's back, riding him. That is, until they come upon a long fjorden cutting vertically across this craggly stretch of land.

Sensitive and sweet Kristoff had been holding back a cloudburst of tears for a great deal of the trip,
kicking himself mentally the entirety of the night that never would grow darker yet.

'To love, honor, and protect.' That's what I said I'll do. But I didn't. I just didn't...

I didn't protect you, Anna. They were all right about me. I am such an idiot!

The heartbroken young blonde squeezes hard in punishment his lifelong companion's furry shoulders that he was hanging onto until both felt about to pop. But Sven's empathy recognized Kristoff's agony for Anna's loss. It hurt the reindeer deeply as well, for he loved the sprightly girl almost as much as his buddy did. Their mutual affection for this precious imp was one of the only things either male owned in this world, beyond one another's friendship.

So with teary eyes, both males rush headlong forward, until Sven wakes up enough to come to an abrupt stop near the edge of the Namosfjorden's bedrock shoal.

"Don't stop, Sven!" In a desperate yet commanding voice, Kristoff finally breaks his silent, introverted rebuke as the cautious reticent pack animal carefully pauses at the glittering fjorden's shore.

"HOMMN!"

Sven's deep-throated bellow questions his normally level-headed responsible partner's unwise order to try to sidestep over the freshwater estuary blocking their path. After all, this body of water's shallow end near the shoals sill varied from the unpredictable fjorden's main sill which could possess a depth of merely 2 meters deep to, oh, say, a 400 meter drop at any given point.

Sven personally, after all these long years traveling together, knew that Kristoff usually saw the unassuming waters' perhaps treacherous dangers. But could Kristoff see it now through his clouded tear stained eyes?

Perhaps the throbbing pain stabbing a Kristoff's head as well as symptoms of a broken heart made the sane young man lose nearly all his sensibilities and reason. The only thing he was certain of was the overwhelming need to keep traveling North to find her, as sure as if he were reading a compass' dial directing him so.

Kristoff's pointed booted feet kick into Sven's shocked sides as if he were no more than a pack animal merely to ride and haul loads than a very dear friend.

"HOMMN!"

A disgruntled Sven lets out another deep deterring call, shaking his affronted head as he does so to warn off Kristoff's uncharacteristic stubborn high-handedness. Sven's behooved legs back away from the rushing churning waters that Kristoff was urging him yet to recklessly cross.

"Come on, Sven! We can make it! Crossing this little fjorden here will shave hours off our time!" Kristoff loudly raises his voice in complaint of his reindeer's recalcitrance with angry frustration for the first time since they were together.

"Anna needs me to save her from those pirates, Sven! Please, Sven. Please help me. She's in terrible danger and needs me to rescue her." Kristoff was pleading by now. Kristoff was openly weeping amidst his heartfelt begged pleas as he leans his throbbing head down close to Sven's soft neck, burying his face in the reindeer's furry neck nap as he did when he was a scrawny little kid needing a warm hug when he was trying so hard to fit in as a big man Ice Harvester.

Remembering back on those times, Kristoff never felt lonely, despite growing up with no kin, no
family, because faithful Sven had always been that one constant companion at his side to talk to, work with, play with, eat with, sleep with, to hug and hold onto when things got too rough.

The wind suddenly picks up around the pair of them.

"Anna needs US."

And for the first time, though his adult realist mind always tried to convince that believing little boy in him that his 'conversations' with Sven were but figments of his fertile imagination, Kristoff can plainly hear the vacillating deep timbered words spoken directly to his now receptive brain finally in tune with nature through the nostalgic memories of their past together.

A voice that he had always heard, yet never acknowledged, that, as the tall blonde man glances around at the vast nothingness surrounding the two lone figures, could only belong, up here in the desolate section of country to—

"Sven? That was you, wasn't it? Maybe I'm too exhausted, Or got hit on the head too hard one time too many this morning and it's got me hearing things, or—" Kristoff, ever the logical, down-to-earth skeptic, attempts to reason this inexplicable through, as the whistling winds around him swirl, and the tears stinging behind his eyes are abated, his cloudy vision cleared.

"It's always been me, since the beginning, Buddy. You just didn't want to understand me when I talked that way, sometimes."

The grey-brown reindeer with the baritone wobbly voice that Kristoff's subconscious at least was mimicking, now was definitely smiling up at his old pal who was hearing the world through new ears more and more since his destiny had been revealed to him.

With a smiled chuckle, despite his great troubles and sorrows, Kristoff swallows the dry lump in his throat with sheer wonderment.

"All these years, I knew I was never alone." The rugged man whispers gratefully as he presses his head down to his sentient beast's affectionate muzzle and they both close their eyes in a warm snuggle, innocent kids alone in the world together still.

"Now, let's go save Anna!"

Kristoff and Sven, now in nodded full agreement, back up before taking a running charge forward in complete unison. As reindeer and man fearlessly take a flying leap over the narrowest twenty foot section of one of the landscape's thinnest fjords, Kristoff is reminded of that first crazy leap of faith when he tossed Anna onto Sven's back over the gorge on their first adventure together being chased by wolves.

But this time, as Kristoff's clearing mind vows, he would be the one chasing that old Sea Wolf now.

To the ends of the earth, I'll hunt him down, until I get my Baby back safe and sound…

"Wow! Reindeers really DO fly. Who knew? Glad we caught up in time to witness your 'reindeer games,' Big Fella. You Norwegians sure know how to put on a show."

Kristoff and Sven's heads both swivel back to the other side of fjord's steep bank where a battered and broken, yet noisy, Cousin Eugene was standing up in the passenger's seat beside his capable wife who was in the driver's side, of the Official Ice Harvester's sleigh that its master had left behind at the Cathedral.
Rapunzel, who was pretty good with horses, even the bad ones, had put her talented hand to the helm of the speedy craft, pulled by Guddy.

Sorry you missed this fun jaunt, Maximus…Ha ha

Hans had had to split up his 'horse team' since Sven had gone after Kristoff. He and Elsa shared the driver's bench of the Vis-à-vis sleigh with Iriserende and shortly arrived not far behind.

"Kristoff! Please listen! We must talk to you!" A shaky voiced Queen Elsa had gathered herself together over the past few hours of the frantic trip. She takes a deep breath after having used all the control her distraught heart could muster on the road, focusing on creating ice between the two sleighs, to make up for the horses' lesser speeds to run faster and catch up to Sven.

She shouts across the small fjorden's rushing currents to Kristoff, her wide blue eyes darting to Hans beside her, for his support.

"Please, Mr. Bjorgman, it is essential! We must speak!" Hans' tenor strains project across the moving waters but Kristoff turns away, not interested to have the 'teamwork' pep talk. He was masculine enough to want to be left alone to solve his own struggles and track down his beloved wife.

"But, Kristoff! Please wait!"

"No. She's my responsibility—not yours anymore, Elsa. And not anyone else's concern, either." He gives Hans a challenging glare. "I'm the one supposed to take care of her! I'm her husband and Anna's my wife. I'm going to find her. I can't let her down again!" Kristoff hotly screams out across the chasm. The Norwegian young man was old-fashioned to hold onto the set conservative inveterate tradition of man protecting his mate—at all cost to himself, even to the point of going it alone.

"Anna may be your wife, but she's still my little sister." Anna was all the family she had left in the world, and a choking Elsa was on the verge of mental breakdown again at the thought of her sweet little sister at that wicked pirate's mercy. She recoiled in despairing remembrance that she had been the one powerless to stop him while Anna had been at his knifepoint.

Fortunately for both agitated parties concerned, observant Hans seemed to have a sixth sense for when this emotionally deprived Queen needed some outside stability as he rests a warm palm over her already frosted over shaking left fist.

"Elsa. Use this fear inside to your advantage to get us across this fjorden to Kristoff." Prince Hans softly, yet succinctly, commands the shivering young woman.

"What?! How can I…?" The scared look crossing her perturbed glowing eyes, with her ice powers already riding on the edge of lawlessness, prompts Hans only all the more.

"Here. Like this." He breathes in her shocked ear as the red-haired Prince boldly extends one arm over her right shoulder in order to be able to have both his fearless hands lift beneath her two sleeves' purple forearms to extend her ice ability brimming digits in the direction of the narrow freshwater fjord below.

Elsa's wild eyes spin to meet his becalming unwavering ones as she vividly recalls being the wayward cause of a frozen fjord closer to home, what now seemed a fractious, undisciplined lifetime ago.
But Anna needed her now, more than ever, to be in full control of all her faculties. And this time Elsa would overcome each of her emotional frailties to rise to the occasion for her baby sister.

ZZZZSSSTTTTT!

The contained ice magic freely expelled from Elsa's controlled hands, held up in their aim by Prince Hans, coats the roaring summer waters with its opalescent sparkle until the entire Namsosfjorden freezes stock-still in an early induced frost.

"Whew! Whew! Where's your bell and wand, Christkindschen Angel?" Using the name of the young feminine gift giving angel who traditionally was purported to visit good children bearing presents throughout Prussia's Christendom, orphan boy dreamer Eugene Fitzherbert still had his irreverent wit in multitude, intermingled with the pain and guilt on his heavy conscience as he lets out a low whistle to this Ice Queen's crystallized marvels.

"Although, I'm sorry to say, I haven't been much of a good boy this year." He sighs, displaying his conciliatory arms.

"Eugene!" Nagging wife Rapunzel slaps her husband's right upper arm in reprobation, not realizing it was the exasperating teasing man's bullet-ridden one until it was too late and a squealed moment of unadulterated pain escaped his lips.

"OWW—OWWY!" His yelped scream echoes across the frozen iridescent fjorden.

"Oh, sorry, Honey." The sheepish lip-bitten brunette smiles up at him in apology as she drives the sleigh onto the ice, following Hans' lead with the Vis-à-vis.

"No prob, Blondie." The afflicted man bites his femininely connected high-pitched whimpering lip as his deft opposite hand reaches over the back seat to rip off Olaf's icy head to use as cold compress for his smarting discomforted gunshot wound to his pounding arm that his gentle wife had just whacked.

"How's the weather up here, Flynn-er-Eugene?"

"Of course. Just my luck to pick the talking part." Just coming short of tossing the snowman's animated noddle to vindictively snow-in Pascal who had been sitting pretty between man and wife in the front sleigh seat. The swarthy man decides he would rather go through the trouble of exchanging Olaf's disattached head for his lower snowmound rather than put up with the snowperson's inane chatter.

"But, is this end safe?" Holding Olaf's butt end at arm's length (until his throbbing appendage truly required some downtime with the ice) and displaying to Rapunzel the unflappable Olaf's posterior wrong side up just to make her smile, Eugene only receives his wife's straight unamused lip. The normally jovial man was trying to reclaim some of his old humor, but he was afraid to admit, he was uncharacteristically falling short of hitting the mark.

Guilt always had a way of doing that.

"Poor Kristoff. He looks so devastated, like he really truly loves her to bits. I hope we can find Anna soon." She whispers to him as they cross the recently formed iced fjord to traverse to where the dejected burly blonde young man was slumped against his sad-eyed reindeer.

"Good thing Hans is so awfully smart to know Elsa could do this to get us across. He's very brave to always be there to endure her icy touch." Rapunzel's voluminous green eyes look over to where
the Vis-à-vis was crossing the frozen fjord, adjacent to their open sleigh. Hans gave her a small smiling nod of acknowledgement in return, which only cemented her husband's own green-eyed mistrust.

"Yeah, 'awfully. '" Eugene rolls his eyes at the way women threw compliments at every guy with a pretty boy face. "That dandy fop is full of surprises." Giving his drooling wife a crooked brow of suspicion, Eugene murmurs beneath his breath in the passenger's seat as he gives the other covered sleigh driver a one fingered salute (We won't specify which exact one). As the Vis-à-vis passes ahead of them, Rapunzel's eyes in Eugene's purview, seem to trace the handsome figure in the driver's side all the while with an unhealthy pride.

Hmmm. While the cat was away? I wonder…

Flynn Rider lets out another small yelp in his painful attempt to sling careless arrogant arms over his cynical head.

"So, you're here now. What did you have to tell me that's so important? Hurry it up, I've got to get moving to find my wife." The usually relaxed and even-toned Kristoff Bjorgman rudely states in an irritable voice, just itching to get back on the open road. The responsible driver in him knew that after today's long stint, his overworked reindeer he was currently watering could use a break for the night, though the disorienting light made it appear to still be late afternoon.

For the further North they went towards its Arctic Circle location, during the time of this mid-July midnight sun, it seemed continually daytime with the sun disc constantly yet above the horizon for all but five hours a day here in the mid-north country.

"Kristoff." Elsa purposely walks towards the kneeling down man after Hans extends to the elegant Queen a gentlemanly helping hand down from their sleigh. "Thank you for waiting." She says with emotion building in her apprehensive voice when the tall blonde doesn't even glance up to meet her wary eyes. Elsa then looks to the confident man standing beside her, who takes this uncertain hesitant pause as her cue for him to speak.

"Mr. Bjorgman." Hans swiftly utilizes his long legs to take him to the side of the fjorden's bank where Kristoff, despite his best efforts, upon finally meeting Elsa's quivering eyes up close, can't help his distressed balled fists from shaking in helpless fury at this horrible situation of losing his dearest girl too.

"—Kristoff." Hans crosses many distances to lay a brave hand on the taller man's bent over shoulder.

"WHAT?!" Shaking off Hans' friendly hand, the mild-mannered man nearly growls up at his former rival who had wronged his Anna once upon a time.

Not dissuaded, the Danish Prince gives him a look of stoic resolve.

"It would be unforgivable of me to deceive any of you good people at such a difficult moment, and I wouldn't have mentioned it to Elsa—er—the Queen, if I didn't think the smallest hope was better than none, had I been in your understandably unenviable place—" Hans forges on nonetheless in his address to the fiercely angered mountain man. "—But from bits and pieces I had gathered on board the Pearl Lady, in the previous past few months of my service there, I believe I may have a rough idea of where Captain Houtebeen could be heading with your wife."

But in the moment Hans finishes talking, Kristoff jumps to his feet, a wild crazed look springing to his eyes as grasping hands grip the redhead by his shirtfront.
"You know where they've taken Anna?! Where?! TELL ME NOW!" Kristoff turns ferocious in a split second as he harshly grabs Hans shoulders to shake the knowledge out of the thin man violently.

"I only can conjecture an approximate location, merely overheard from a dropped muffled word here and there whilst I was serving their midday repast. The Captain and Job, his First Mate, always tried to keep their navigational rendezvous point close to the vest, so I never did, regretfully, discover the precise area demarcation on their Mercator projection chart. Though from the distance I glimpsed the map once, your instinct, I believe, is quite correct that the target is undoubtedly in this North Sea hemisphere—" With compassionate emotive eyes, Hans answers honestly of everything he knows to this point that might illuminate the pirates' destination course. Hans was truly saddened that he had only a well-pondered slew of 'maybes' to offer the desperate husband, as Kristoff's hopeful eyes rise and the fall at the former naval man's semi-uncertain declaration, until—

"Latitude North by 67 degrees 44 minutes 52 seconds. Longitude East by 12 degrees 45 minutes 08 seconds."

Kristoff, Sven, Rapunzel, Pascal and Olaf's jaws all drop upon Flynn Rider's deadpan serious monotone recitation of these numerous numerical and measurements of some kind foreign, as if he were the mythical elfish Nisser befuddling them with his pranks.

But not to Elsa. Creasing her brow in confused anxiety, the studious girl was her Naval Father's daughter enough to immediately recognize—

"The exact lateral coordinates of a small uninhabited island in the Lofoten archipelago located in the far Northwest of your country, situated between the municipalities of Vaeroy and Moskenes. And if I recall my Academy studies correctly, that particular sector of the North Norwegian Sea contains—"Intellectually studious Lieutenant Hans Westergaard was a virtual encyclopaedic fount of all things seaworthy, until his verbose explanation is cut off from his definitive insights by another lifelong naval marine enthusiast who studied the ocean well in days of youth.

"—the Moskenstrauma." A thoroughly dazed Queen Elsa completes the well-educated man's sentence, fear evident on her face as she suddenly clutches his arm.

"Whoa. You've got to be kidding me! Those coordinates I picked up in that pirate's cabin that I've been carrying around in my crazy photographic memory of a head were heading for the 'Maelstrom'? The ship swallowing, boat capsizing, man-eating bottomless whirlpool vortex, black hole graveyard feared by pirates and Navy alike?" A gulping wide-eyed Eugene interjects incredulously.

"If that's where they're taking Anna—then, you're DAMN RIGHT that's where we're going!" 21 year old Kristoff angrily barks out as he towers his full 6 foot 5" strapping height over the scoffing thief, who had knowledge of this legendary marine phenomena. Perhaps not from the love of the sea as Hans or Elsa, but rather from his quick calculating coin-clinking con-man's love of sunken treasure to be found upon the High Seas in days gone by.

"It's where I'm going, anyway. Come on, Sven." Physically elbowing past the former criminal who got them all into this mess, a frustrated Kristoff grabs up with a grunt a few supply bags and ties them to Sven's colorful straps. The tall restless blonde sighs as he brushes off the rest of the team without so much as making eye contact as he mounts his tired from racing all day, yet still steadfastly dogged partner of a reindeer with the newly mapped out goal in mind.

At least he came up with that. Kristoff's final stray thought for the good-for-nothing scavenger was
mostly kind as he prepares to sprint off with Sven again.

"Hey, Kristoff. I'm sorry. I know it'll never make up for my mistakes—plentiful they may be." Eugene approaches the reindeer's rider with a truly remorseful look on his chiseled features.

"Whatever it takes to get that precious little sunshine sprite back, you can count me in all the way." The swarthy man of action makes a quick-footed detour, despite the stabbing pain of his open wounds and intense muscle strain from all that digging this morning—

Was that just this morning? Wow, time flies when you're having fun...

Flynn Rider defies getting trampled under the rangifer's solid hooves, to stand directly in front of a dumbfounded surprised Sven, stopping their momentum completely.

"Please, Kristoff. Anna would want us to do this together. You know she never wanted anyone to be alone." Elsa, using all of her mental prowess to control her own cold sorrows and frozen fear for her missing sister's sake, takes a place at Flynn's side to also stand in front of Anna's husband on his reindeer.

After a tense minute, Elsa breaks the ice by petting behind Sven's grateful fuzzy ears with loving affection. Making him flinch, Elsa then lightly touches Eugene's frostbitten extensors on his left forearm with a tentative absolution for his obviously repentant soul full of past wrongs that inadvertently caused this calamity, this grand adventure that was now filled with heartache and pain, in the first place.

"Because she loves us all so much in that big huge heart of hers, Anna would want us to stay together, like a proper family should in times of troubled crisis." Elsa's beautiful blue eyes glisten with the tears of thinking of her very best friend in her sister's sweet disposition to connect with Kristoff. The stoic man's attempts to remain steady and resolved all this while crumbles, as his eyes begin to quiver again with the unquenchable tears again in the truth behind the blue sky of Anna's big sister's startling blue eyes.

"You're right. We have to bring her back to her family." Thinking expressly of his bright-eyed girl and her friendly smile that could light up the room—no the night sky itself—Kristoff's untrammelled stubbornness dissolves as he clambers from Sven's back to give Elsa a big brotherly bear hug.

"Anna will be waiting there for us, you'll see. God will lead us to her again, I'm sure He will." Whispered on Kristoff's sobbing neck, the once cold as ice Queen indulges in her hard-won emotions of warmth with her stanch devout belief and loving tender compassion.

The tears were dripping down both their faces, as the Queen and the Ice Harvester find common familial ground in the mutual adoration for the spunky young girl with the indomitable spirit that brought their hearts together.

"Well done, sir." Hans asides to Eugene after the darker man returns to the sleighs, leading Sven along with him.

"Sure, Good-lookin'. I've been good at patching up family spats since I was a little kid. Not that I had much of a family to spat with in the first place. But that's just semantics." The double black-eyed thief quietly chortles to himself at his own inside joke, totally unaware at just how 'inside' the joke was on him, until he notices the uniquely familiar stolen glances passing between the snazzy younger man he was conversing with in the falling dusk and his own beautiful-to-behold-in-any-lighting-wife.
"I consider myself an expert on families now, due to the fact I have a SUPER BIG family of little snowgie brothers. What are semantics?" A curious Olaf wanders by in his inimitable discomposed responses up at the humans who had a hard time getting the whole family thing down pat.

Eugene shakes his head at the annoying snowball, dismissively ignoring him.

"Look, I know I’ve been a little off the beaten track, with all the plotting pirates and gross gravedigging that I've been up to of late. And I’m aware that I certainly do require a bath, and a shave pretty soon if I want to live with myself, nevermind other people, however—" Eugene pauses in his tirade to rub his overgrown beard in choice of his next low-spoken words.

"—is there something going on here I should—or probably should not—depending on your point of view—know about you and Sideburns here, Blondie? Or should I call you 'Brownie' now, since you seem to want a change from horrible husbands."

Eugene's two black eyes, grown further darker with the furtive thought, vacillate in open-minded curiosity between his chocolate haired Rapunzel and red-headed Hans who had been giving one another high signs since the suspicious husband had met up with them again. The latter had been attending to the tired reindeer Flynn had brought to them, once he retrieved a carrot to feed the nutrition starved Sven after his long nonstop all day journey to get here.

"Oh, yes. How perceptive you are, Mr. Fitzherbert. There is something of keen interest that your wife and I have been discussing—"The innocent eyed Prince displays a disarming smile amidst his posh language, that only strengthens Eugene's vague allegations with his choice of too polite terms when—

"Prince Hans? Is there someplace you could direct our party to where we could take camp nearby, please?" Exerting her royal rule, Queen Elsa, with Kristoff's head leaning on her shoulder in comforted support, calls over to the always attentive to her every whim Dane who indeed drops all—including confusing conversation with the troubled married couple—to scurry at the Queen's beck and call to her side where Elsa was steadying the exhausted body and soul, of the large man who had obviously been using the delicate lady's welcoming shoulder to cry on.

"You got some stiff competition for that one there, Darlin'" A skeptical Eugene murmurs to his quizzical wife beneath his breath, his worldly mind considering how Hans had jumped at the leggy blonde's mere whim. But Rapunzel was so happy to have him back, she didn't quite get her smoothtalker's envious insinuations of herself and the dashing young prince. Both watch Hans spring to action, tethering Sven to Guddy in a swift sailor's knot to the Ice Harvester sleigh as he and Elsa usher the dazed young mountain man into the back seat bench.

Hans then returns to apprise Eugene of their immediate itinerary.

"What do you think, sir? There appears to be a thicket of tree cover around the edge of that last bend around this fjorden. We can head there, since it's still freshwater and the animals will be provided for to rest, once we've scouted around the area. This is wolf territory, though the late night sun has kept the grey wolves that travel in packs at bay, thus far. Although I am by no means an expert in Norwegian topography, from what I remember in my book-learning, the sun may be setting soon in these parts. So we must keep torches lit all night to ward the ravenous creatures off." Hans digs inside the Vis-à-vis sleigh's cargo hold to bring out a pair of torches, one of which he lights to rest in the carriage's holder as he was speaking. He then pats a nervously giggling Rapunzel on the back of her hands over the reins she takes up as sleigh driver.

"Wow, And I thought I could talk the hind legs off a donkey." Eugene breathes in a jealous sneer, poking fun at Hans' lengthy paragraph of instruction. The older man was never good at taking them
anyway.

"Yup, I think you have all the finer points covered, Handsome. And I wholeheartedly agree it's a **good idea** to keep **hungry wolves** away from our women." The indignant thief states snidely with one eyebrow raising at each purposeful term directed at the younger man as the green-eyed monster in him twists a sarcastic lip at this overt display right before his eyes.

"Yes, keep an eye out for the speckled grey and white wolves. They hunt in packs of six or eight, so please try to have your sleigh remain close to mine. That too will discourage the creatures." Hans responds, unaware of Eugene's suspicion.

Hans gives the wide-eyed scared looking girl a deferential smile as he turns to leave. "I don't mean to worry you, Princess. But an ounce of prevention—"

"—is worth a pound of **ICE CREAM CAKE**!" Olaf adds his sweet-toothed flavor to the conversation as he hops up into the sleigh's back seat, his childlike innocence never daunted by anything life had to throw at him.

"Right. Let's get this nutty popsicle stand on the road already. Ouch." Eugene sourly rolls his eyes, his palpitating arm pounding with hurt as he sucks in air. "This is a pain in the ass."

Hans eyes shoot up at his rough language, especially in front of his lady wife. But there had to be allowances in vulgar speech for extreme pain circumstances, he supposed. "Don't worry, Sir, there'll be a respite soon and we'll see to that, too."

"I bet you will." Eugene always had to have the last snide word as Rapunzel merely smiles at his strange behavior when she signals for Guddy to get ready to move as Hans leaves their sleigh to go to the other he would be at the helm of.

"Anna… I'm coming, Baby. I'm coming."

In the back of the Vis-à-vis that Hans signals Iriserende to pull into a cantor towards their decided campsite, Kristoff Bjorgman whispers to the wind incoherently as he finally physically collapses. All the emotionally tumultuous pent-up anxiety and restless 48 hour plus cycle and the harsh beating at the large wrestler's hands he had taken, were finally taking their toll. The normally rugged young man's pure adrenaline driven rush in racing nonstop, his thrashed body and thwomped bashed head worrying himself sick all the while was completely spent, until he was weak as a child, just as Anna across the miles knew her love would be taking this hard.

Brushing the golden hair plastered to Kristoff's sweaty feverish head back with a soothing cool touch, Elsa glances up to Hans in the driver's seat with a fretful look of uncertainty. She was grateful that his steady hand's stability was at her frightened side as they all journeyed forward together as unlikely partners into this terrifying unknown.

The sun that had been keeping them company all day finally begins to wane as the weary travelers move beside the northwestern side of the Namsosfjorden. Though the far-off eerie whirlpools surrounding the far North's mysterious Mosken Island loom on the dusky late night horizon, the one fervent dream of reuniting with their beloved little Princess Anna swirls hope against hope in each aching heart…
A Shot in the Arm

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

We do not own "Frozen" nor any of its characters.

Act II

Chapter 25

Into the thicket, Guddi's Ice Harvester sleigh along with a complacent Sven, goes along without incident, with Iriserende's torch-lit Vis-à-vis not far behind. As Hans had warned, there were indeed wolves come a-prowling nearly as soon as the sun conceded its reign, causing the skittish Friesian mare to fearfully glance this way and that with her icy blue eyes.

But Rapunzel's comforting humming in song as she too had learned from Mr. Westergaard, calms the frightened white horse, as the flames of the torches keep the wolves at bay while the group journeys along.

"Haven't heard you sing in a while, Blondie. It's kinda nice." In a tender voice reserved just for her alone, Eugene decides to be the 'better man' and breaks the awkward silence with a tentative smile and sideways glance at his wife as a frail darkness descends over the land.

"I guess I haven't had much to sing about lately." The carriage sleigh moves along and Rapunzel answers truthfully, in mumble, but biting her lip in the next second, wishing she hadn't said it after all when Eugene's offered smile turns upside down instantly in his own regrets.

But he turns it back into a rueful grin.

"I know, my fault again." With a forced smirk at the sorry man he'd turned out to be, Eugene looks down and away, feeling pretty small, knowing he deserved every word of it.

"No, Eugene! It's not you…I just meant…this…I…you…we've been so distant, that I haven't been able to tell you about—" Rapunzel's built up, practiced courage to say the next important words is sapped away by Olaf's loud mouth suddenly coming to life from where his head was resting against Flynn Rider's injured arm.

"Hey! That's a great idea, Flynn-er-Eugene! Oh, oh, oh! Let's have…a sing-along! That always cheers everybody up! Ready? I'll start!" The oblivious snowman's body bounces up in clapped glee in the back seat as his giddy head innocently breaks into mid-song.

"If someone wants to hold me back, I'd like to see them try! I'm on the birthday plan attack! I'm giving you the sun, the moon and sky!"

Olaf's loud crooning grates likes ice cubes in a breaking glass in Eugene's way-too-close-for-comfort right ear. The snowman's animated body in the backseat demonstratively dances along in an unsettling headless horseman, Sleepy Hollow, kind of way.

"Come on! Sing along, guys!" Olaf urges to Pascal's rolling eyes at the magic ice creature's freakish break dance in the back bench beside him.
Iriserende seemed to be the only one in this sleigh to 'appreciate' Olaf's happy singing. She lets out a whinnied laugh at how a camouflaged in the darkness, big 350 kilogram brown bear leaning against as nearby tree takes one earful of Olaf's ear-splitting rendition of Anna's birthday song before the massive creature scampers away in disdain.

"We're making today a happy day, for you!"

"We're making today a happy day and no feeling blue!"

The silly snowman was too naïve to realize that this may not have been tactfully the best time to sing this particularly uplifting ditty, created in celebration of the missing girl in danger. He pauses when he realizes that he was singing the chorus all on his own.

"Psst! Psst! Here's where you interject 'I love you, Baby' and shake your mop of cool hair around like a music hall revue star for effect, Flynn-er-Eugene." Olaf's whispered crooked mouth comes out the side of his face, thinking Kristoff's impromptu declaration of love for Anna was how the song was designed to be sung. He gives the annoyed Eugene, who was holding his slugged, painful arm, a heads up, so to speak.

"No, no, no. I don't sing." Eugene stubbornly retorts, but he couldn't help but envision the 'fond-ish' memories flooding back of the Snuggly Duckling incident, and the ensuing adventure alongside the girl with the magic hair and even more mystical eyes…

Rapunzel must've been reliving those moments as well, as her green orbs leave the road ahead to connect their wide landscape of illumination with his.

Oh, how Eugene Fitzherbert longed to say those three special little words to his one special little woman, when a sudden voice abruptly cuts into the tender scene of husband and wife about to make up their argument.

His, of course. You've got some ace timing, pal…

Eugene interprets his wife's flustered, reddened cheeks as meaning something more in her relationship concerning Prince Hans Westergaard, setting his jealousy aflame again. His pounding arm being in extreme pain didn't help his attitude one bit, either.

"Whoa…Iriserende…" Hans had already parked his vehicle beneath the cove of a pair of tall birch trees. His limber body easily leaps from the driver's seat to halt the incoming Vis-à-Vis' inattentive female driver.

"Ohh, Hans! I'm sorry…I wasn't…paying attention." Rapunzel apologizes for her bad driving skills with a blush down at him.

"Not at all. This appears to be a choice spot to sojourn for its clear vantage point of the fjorden." Hans calls quietly up to the pair, as he lovingly strokes Iriserende's pleased muzzle. The young mare nuzzles against the side of his red head, licking at his gentle touch with a horsey kiss.

That devil has a spell on every female here! Hmph!

"We didn't wish to distract Mr. Bjorgman, so I didn't call out. He finally dropped off to a fretful sleep—poor man." Hans says softly as he begins to automatically lead the willing Friesian to her place beside Guddy and Sven on the already situated Ice Harvester's sleigh. There, Queen Elsa was kindly covering a thin blanket over the sleigh's master in the backseat before exchanging a look with Hans.
"Since Mr. Bjorgman is currently unavailable, and someone must stay with the ladies, shall you or I scout the area for predators before we set up camp?" Hans most respectfully offers the older man the preference.

"I think the 'ladies' don't require constant supervision by us 'big, strong' men. I'm sure Kristoff can be roused if some scary wolves or bears or lions show up, don't you? Shall we start 'scouting' then, Sideburns?" Combatively, Flynn taunts Hans' words, awarding a dubious glare to Rapunzel as he carelessly leaps from the sleigh to take a place beside the wide-eyed redhead.

"Ouch…that smarts…" He whispers to himself of the jumped impact's jarring effect shooting up his injured arm.

"Eugene…?" Rapunzel lurches across the sled's bench to try to reach out to his hurt.

But Flynn rather callously brushes her off with a standoffish "I'm fine."

This deflates her expectant look down at him completely.

"My Queen?" Hans leaves the decision to Elsa, bowing to her superiority of rank, as well as her intelligent beauty, when she joins the conversing trio after attending to Kristoff with a dose of sleeping powders to ensure his much needed rest.

"Yes, please do. Cousin Rapunzel and I will be fine seeing to the horses and Sven. We'll even prepare an evening meal for you both when you return." Elsa responds with a capable determination that Hans finds entirely…

Charming.

"You two just be careful out there. Wolves and bears and foxes tend to be hungry at sunset, too." The girl raised in a secluded tower still was a bit jumpy when it came to exploring the wild outdoors, especially at night. Large vicious game was not exactly native to the Corona Kingdom's populated town and village region that she had become accustomed to living in. The covered forests she enjoyed visiting there were rich in wildlife more akin to small scurrying creatures around the meadows and waterfalls of the Prussian countryside than carnivorous predators.

"Don't worry, Honey, I think I can handle a wild fox or two." Eugene baits in a ridiculing tone. "I'm not as debilitated a milk sop as you imagine. Although good ol' Schmidt would appreciate it, too, if you lost me out here in the wilds of Norway, wouldn't he?" Flynn tosses that last barb, including Corona's Captain of the Royal Guard (aka Maximus' pet human) in the list of people who probably most likely would like to do away with their princess' poor choice of husband in trade for a more ritzy upgrade—title, sideburns and all.

Totally confused, Hans immediately races after Eugene, giving Rapunzel a sympathetic shrug as he runs.

"Oh, Eugene…why do you say such heartless things…?" Rapunzel whimpers in between the droplets of tears that begin to cascade down her face like a sudden storm burst. She grips her upset, queasy stomach even more so now, not being able to withstand such emotional anguish.

"Mr. Fitzherbert! Please, sir! Slow down!" Hans calls forward as he gives chase after the driven, older man's silent, sullen trek on quick legs through the thicketed forest.

"Why? So you can overtake me with all your suave charm and impressive smarts? Making me look like a worthless fool in front of my wife?" Once the pair of men were deep enough into the forested area not to be heard from the campsite, a red-in-the-face against the lamplight Flynn lashes out,
banging a defenseless tree trunk with his fist in futile anger.

The excruciating pain shooting up his bum arm from the move was nothing compared to the feverish chaos devouring his questioning heart.

"Sir, that has never been my intention. And it may not be any of my business, but I must say that your wife has been incredibly brave and courageous to take on this monumental journey in all anxiety for your well-being, especially in her present condition." Hans knew that he was no expert on relationships of any kind, so he could not honestly judge this man and his wife's situation competently, but a woman's tears had a powerful effect on even an inexperieinced-in-matters-of-love young man's heart.

"What 'condition'? What the hell are you talking about?" Stopping in his wandering tirade with an unbalanced stagger, Eugene's brown eyes slit at the slighter man's inference.

"Oh, dear. I suppose that blank look means that Princess Rapunzel hasn't…told you…yet. Do forgive my…presumptive mutterings." Hans guiltily wishes he could retract his statements, unaccustomed to being tactless, especially in such a delicate, private matter.

"But Princess Rapunzel's told you, hasn't she?" A suspicious, near delirious with pain Flynn Rider was both more than a little hurt and more than a little envious of the dashing young man more her age who seemed to be a closer confidant to his little woman.

"No…not in so many words…" Hans admits, thoughtfully as he resumes their supposed scouting mission, knowing the others would worry if the two of them didn't return to camp soon.

"Then how the hell do you know her 'condition,' you little ba-?" His head hot with anger as he brushes his loose bangs of hair back, Eugene swears in confusion and frustration—neither a good combination of emotion's agitated passions.

"One can tell." Hans answers guardedly as he satisfies the perimeter. His eyes scan the darkness to the edge of the tree line by his held up lamplight.

"Oh, can 'one'?" The red-faced, jealous husband retorts saucily as he swiftly retraces his steps instinctively to lead back to the camp. He stomps into the campfire area and ends by staggering forward, nearly crashing into Elsa, who was tending to the fire. The queen stands quickly, steadying the man's 'drunken' gait.

His concerned wife, who had been crying as she chopped up turnips and onions, jumps to her feet from where she was sitting on a log, drying her tears with the back of her turnip-y hand.

"Rapunzel, what's wrong with you?" He grasps her shoulders hard, confounded and upset as he chokes the spat out words. "And why did you feel the need to confide in him before even telling me? Are you sick, Blondie?" Eugene's fevered mind was rife with equal parts worry and fear now more than anger or jealousy.

But this loner of a man with the sentiment deprived youth, still had a hard time connecting to the honesty of his true emotions.

"Well…no, not sick…exactly. Well…sometimes I am…but Mother says that's to be expected." Rapunzel mumbles in her cute way, looking away from her husband's eyes maddened with anxiety with a concealed half-smile of her own.

"What?! Arianna knows about this jerk, too?! What's 'to be expected'?" The driven insane man
demands, beginning to shake her shoulders, even though every sudden move caused the inflamed clot found on his arm to begin to break open again.

"Just being ill…and quite often! I try to fight it off, especially now with all this going on. But I can't help it sometimes! I wish I could be stronger…" Rapunzel bites her lip, though a bewildered Eugene didn't think that she looked too devastated by the fact that he found out she was cheating on him, while Pascal proudly nods in understanding on her shoulder.

"No, you've been absolutely amazing." Hans pipes up as he stokes the fire, in more ways than one, that Elsa had already started up with some kindling brush he had gathered in the wood to make the flame even hotter. Elsa wisely and quietly serves tea and stirs the turnip leek stew she and Rapunzel and Anna had purchased the ingredients for in that mercantile just a few days ago.

Oh, Anna…

"Stay out of this! You're not involved in this argument, pal." Flynn snaps at the other man dismissively.

"Yes, Eugene! Yes, he is—!" Rapunzel, sharing a look with Hans, begins to smile, enigmatically pleased, totally sending Eugene for a roller-coaster ride jealous tailspin again.

"I'm afraid to ask..." Eugene steels himself for what he supposed was the sordid truth he'd have to swallow like a man to keep the woman he loved so dearly. In this terrible moment, he'd already decided to forgive her anything—even an amorous dalliance with this skinny rake.

"…because he's your brother." Still naïve in some simple ways, Rapunzel never did comprehend that her husband was of the singular opinion that his now revealed 'little brother' and his wife were having an affair.

"What…?!" A shocked Eugene Fitzherbert's dropped jaw couldn't have fallen any further, nor could he have imagined in his wildest dreams that that was the explanation for all this strange, secretive behavior between his wife and this puffed up Prince.

Flynn's eyes widen to dart between the two smiling faces looking somewhat eagerly at him over the crackling campfire.

"…And ever since we met, just like a brother, he's been there to help me—so much, when I needed his strength to survive this without you." Rapunzel turns from Eugene's astonished eyes to portion Hans a grateful smile.

"…What…?!" Just trying to wrap his head around this extraordinary supposition, some weird bits and pieces of uncanny familiarity and rivalry both characteristically akin to brotherly siblings, did jive together in a blurred bond of their past encounters.

Eugene stares at the young prince questioningly, letting it all sink in slowly.

"Because…" Rapunzel continues on, biting her quivering lower lip again adorably.

"Because…I'm going to have…a baby." She finishes the well-rehearsed sentence rapidly. She was actually physically beginning to shiver and tremble all over with the anticipation of how her husband would respond to this life-altering news that he was partly responsible for.

Yep, actually, all responsible for! Mother thinks you're a dreamboat, too! Although, Father thinks it took you long enough because he wants to see grandkids already—they're both so happy!
Rapunzel's jumbled joyful familial thoughts were even mumbling incoherently to herself.

"Yeah…all right…a baby…That explains everything..." In a high-pitched, girlish voice, Eugene's gaping open mouth finally closes as his eyes widen, drinking her in. Every other emotive feature on his frazzled, expressive face looked like he just got quick slapped and sucker punched.

"Congratulations are in order, I believe…Storbror." Prince Hans cordially extends his hand in respect to his now acknowledged—at least by him, Big Brother. Though King Herbert Westergaard's illegitimate son, Eugene Fitzherbert, might not be so popular back home in Denmark's Southern Isles with his father and other brothers, Hans was only too happy to add Eugene to his already dozen collection of big brothers. His mother had requested of all her boys try to do so. On her deathbed, she begged each to find the poor, lost child—to treat him just as equally as if he were raised as he should have been with them in their massive 66 room, 200 window, outside-looking in Egeskov Castle, some twenty-five years ago. And it is uncanny that this final son, who never had the advantage of even meeting that sweetheart of a red curly headed Scottish mother, would be the one to fulfill her dying wish.

"Cousin Rapunzel! God knew we needed good news such as this! Felicitations to both of you." Elsa gives her regal compliments. She was also well pleased that this royal Prince of the Southern Isles wasn't too proud to welcome an illegitimate former thief into his family ranks, as Hans rises yet another notch in the Arendelle Queen's estimation.

"Oh, Blondie…And here I thought, all this time, you'd grown tired of keeping a good-for-nothing like me around! Just turns out we had our signals crossed in misunderstanding one another. And now you're stuck with me. Guess there's no refunds on us anymore." Eugene marvels at how bad things could be turned around in the flash of a reclaimed moment. He rubs his bearded stubble-grown-out face in wonder. "Wow…me, a daddy. Not bad for a two-bit thief who owned nothing before but his good looks and deft fingers…and this Roman nose. Gee, I hope our kid gets my nose. A-and nothing else of me—all the rest is you."
The elated young wife, well pleased at how he was acting now, pitches forward to grant her thankfully smiling overwhelmed double fold hubby with a whopping kiss on the lips.

To which Prince Consort Eugene Fitzherbert sincerely joins in the ecstatic excitement of the moment.

*Maybe a Westergaard…? Oh that's a kicker! Married title, plus a bit of my own royal back story now… Wow…I just knew I always wanted a castle!*

The reeling man puts all the love he had for her in this make-up kiss that Rapunzel had been longing for—warm and real and bright, and world-shifting. His little lady was going to bestow upon him an irreplaceable, priceless treasure that this loner of an orphan boy never dared dream could happen to an undeserving, insignificant lout as he had grown up to be.

Giving him a child of his own—as well as now a growing family coming at him from every direction, it seemed crystal clear to him right now that Eugene Fitzherbert is where he's always been meant to be.

Vividly recalling their own passionate osculation on their thrilling first encounter, Hans and Elsa's bashful eyes both gaze upon Eugene and Rapunzel's rather spicy, long and luxuriant liplock, then meet one another's over the heat of the blazing fire each were separately attending to.
At the impropriety of such public display of private functions, some other manner of heat causes both reticent spectators to blush even more violently at her kissing cousins who seemed to be resolving all their past lonesome months' of cold shoulders and heartache with now divulged secrets, unveiled announcements, and passionate kisses.

And this hot mouth-to-mouth was just the start of the 'forgive and forget' side of Rapunzel and Eugene's marital reconciliation.

"Oh, Blondie…or Brownie…or whoever the heck you are today—I love you." Running his fingers through her short cropped cocoa hair, the giddy, lightheaded man also forgets his serious injury when the extreme pain lets up all during this moment of heartfelt revelation. That is, until Eugene enthusiastically, with reassured love renewed, lifts a giggling Rapunzel straight off the ground to spin the small girl up in the air. Since that fateful day he met her, Rapunzel had become his whole world's revolving sunshine, who was now about to add another sparkling ray of her light to clear the dark fog that had settled on his wandering soul again.

"Argh…!" His arm gives out totally, as a sweaty, red-faced Eugene grunts in pain loudly. He was just about able to land Rapunzel, swinging through the air, back on the ground—with just a bit of his 'little brother's' attentive help to carry her the rest of the way down.

Long past his stamina's breaking point, stubborn Flynn finally collapses to his knees.

"Eugene! Eugene! He's bleeding again! When did it start?! Why didn't I notice?! Oh my gosh! He's bleeding!" She looks down in frantic panic at the crimson moisture coating her hands, and running down his forearms that she was holding onto. She dizzily drops down to his level, lovingly petting his heavily creased, shuddering brow over his obviously pain-anguished face.

Rapunzel throws herself bodily over him as Hans comes immediately to his side. He kneels in her place and none too gently pries the brown-haired woman from her febrile husband to evaluate the condition of his wounds.

"What's wrong?!" Rapunzel cries out as Elsa places a comforting arm around the girl's trembling shoulders, taking her, while Hans inspects the ballistic trauma beneath the soaked, bloody bandages that had been applied earlier.

"I was afraid of this. The clot has given way—that bullet wound must've become infected." Hans announces, a grave look overtaking his handsome features.

"Noooooo!" The concerned wife cries in horror of what that terrible word, here in 1841, usually entailed when it came to a severe, open trauma wound.

Elsa was doing her best to hold Rapunzel back.

"We must stop the hemorrhaging before he loses too much more blood. I'll have to find a way to sterilize the wound to prevent further systemic toxicity." Trained for leadership in the face of adversity, the Royal Naval Academy officer takes charge of the situation, learned as he was in military first aid techniques.

He lifts Eugene's right arm so that the entrance wound was elevated above the man's heart, utilizing gravity to reduce the flow of blood.

"Olaf!" Born to be a crisis manager, Hans barks the snowman's name over his shoulder, knowing the little guy was just wandering about somewhere nearby, as he always was.

"Yes, Sir!" The eager ice creature swiftly scoots up to his commanding 'admiral' with a twig
fingered salute.

"Take Princess Rapunzel to Sven and the horses and stay with her there, please." Hans motions his head towards the girl in shock and the tethered horses near the tree line.

"Come on, Cousin Rapunzel! Let's go see how Sven, and Guddy, and Iriserende are doing. Don't you love her name—Iriserende? Just rolls off the tongue like a song..." Olaf reaches up to grab the brunette's hand in his branch but—

"NO! I'm staying! I have to help Eugene, too!" Frantically glancing between Hans and Eugene, Rapunzel argues in protest of being ordered away from the husband she just retrieved, as she tries to shake away her hand from Olaf's tight grip.

She only succeeds in detaching his 'arm' from his body in an eerie comparison to what may have to happen to the wounded man, should the infection become gangrenous.

"Princess Rapunzel, you're in no condition to stomach this. There'll be a great amount of blood loss. And I only require one nurse for this operation. Queen Elsa...?" Hans' eyes look to a startled Elsa, who soon recovers to answer calmly.

"Of course. I'll be only too glad to help Eugene in any way I can. Please don't worry, Rapunzel. Prince Hans knows what to do." Elsa reassures the frightened looking young woman.

Hans, amidst his worrying mind's apprehensive anticipation of what was to come, hears the queen's supportive, bolstering words on his behalf. And for once, she was the one to bring a certain calm to his own racing heart.

"Please go with Olaf and rest, Princess. I have had extensive naval medical training. Your husband will be fine." Hans extends one more glance to Rapunzel as he lifts the larger, unresponsive man onto the blanket that the women had laid out to serve the evening meal upon earlier.

Rapunzel, who indeed was feeling rather ill at the sight of the blood squirting openly from Eugene's arm, bows to Hans' discretion and plants a kiss on her love's troubled brow before going off with Olaf.

"Pascal?" Hans knew, as a good leader always did, to delegate to expedite urgent tasks, so he turns to the chameleon who leaps from Rapunzel's shoulder to assist.

"We must move in all haste if there's any chance to save this arm. I've seen wounds like this on my naval tour and the victims didn't fare well unless they received quick medical procedure. Please bring me that small flask from beneath the Ice Harvester sleigh's front seat. Elsa, there should be a medical kit in the Vis-à-vis' left side passenger door, hidden under the corded velvet. Push the button in the center to release the cover...please." Hans emerges from where he was rooting around the food basket, coming up with tins of salt and some spices before he purposefully stokes the fire, adding some fresh kindling to ensure a higher heat point.

He flattens out, with the heel of his boot, a bed of spent ashes in the burning fire. Then, near the thicket path, chooses two dry, flat stones and places them directly on the ash pile in the fire—with just enough space apart to support the edges of the new metal pan they'd secured at the general store, with an inch to spare for proper air flow.

Producing the sharpened dagger from his boot cuff, Hans, with a grim look on his face, places the blade upon one of the flat stones in the roaring to life fire.
He then rushes back in a swift gait to the freshwater fjorden to wash and clean his hands thoroughly in the swaying waters up to his rolled sleeves. He had taken up his sleeves as far as he could, past his elbows, scrubbing himself with clean gravel from the fjorden's bank until his forearms and hands were pink and raw.

All the while he had been purifying his hands, his devout mind had been offering supplications of prayer to the God who not only gave him this chance to fulfill his dying mother's wish of finding this lost brother—to love and embrace as family—but also, as Hans fervently hoped and prayed, to grant him the ability of knowledge gleaned from years of textbook learning, to save his new brother's life.

Despite his haste, Hans pauses to make this important petition for God's Hand to do a good work through his meager ones this night.

When Elsa returns with the wooden medical kit from the sleigh to the makeshift field surgery theatre, she sees a hotly emblazoned fire and interesting stone pile formation with a dagger upon its crackling, heated center. She does wonder where Prince Hans currently was.

Eugene was just beginning to stir and she rushes to the injured man, wiping his brow as gently as possible. The poor creature looked so terribly ill, with pain evident on his face as he was lying on the blanket on the ground in the dark, silhouetted by a nearby lamp.

Eugene smiles gratefully, sensing a tender hand near him, even through his delirium. Elsa strokes his flushed hot cheek with a frosty cool touch.

"...Water..." Eugene just manages to choke out as Elsa grows alarmed at how intense his fever had become.

"Yes, I'll fetch you some." Elsa whispers to the man whose arm was tied upward to a branch, though she had a feeling that Eugene, slipping in and out of consciousness, didn't even hear her anymore.

Her fearful eyes glance around for the water pail, only to find it empty. Elsa puts her queenly hands to the task of going to fill it at the nearby fjorden's edge with only the moon's emerging beams to light her path on this ebony night.

But the sight that greets her eyes, straining in the darkness there, uplifts her own tense state of mind. For Prince Hans, with his back to her, was kneeling at the edge of the fjorden with his head bent and hands folded, lips moving silently in a fervent prayer.

The rushing sound of the waters in the stillness would've disguised her quiet arrival in the dark night, but observant Hans was always aware of this particular young lady's presence—even without 'eyes in the back of his head'.

"How clever of you to ascertain to fill the pail—we'll need as much water as we can obtain." His melodic tenor beckons to her, and Elsa was able to overcome her stiff shyness to join him at the water's edge. He takes her pail to fill it to capacity as he turns to the delicate woman, gingerly crouched down beside him.

"May I be honest with you, Queen Elsa?"

"Always, sir, please do." She answers succinctly, with her eyes glowing at him in the moonlight.

"I don't wish to unsettle you, but I would greatly value your advice—" He begins, looking directly at her.
"From what the map says, we are at least fifty kilometers from the next well inhabited area, where a hospital that could handle a procedure such as this would be available. But from the look of how much blood he's already lost, I doubt my brother will be able to make it to the next outpost's medical facility. If we don't stop this bleeding and evacuate the wound to the degree that must have brought on this infection, I'm afraid...he could lose his life.

"Oh, dear...!" Elsa breathes, though trying to remain calm and objective in order to answer the prince's serious question, not yet posed to her.

"I've seen men in my time in the Navy with such a feverish infection who didn't survive the night in this state." Hans says with a grim look darkening his gorgeous features by the lamplight they were sharing in the settled dusk.

"Frankly, I'm terrified."

Elsa's enlarged eyes recognize how much humility there was for a grown man's ego to admit his failings and fears. She continues to listen in rapt attentive silence to his heartfelt confession.

"Because, although, I've given extensive study and reading the latest periodical literature on modern sterilization and triage techniques, and have seen some rather bloody, gory operations without anesthetic onboard ship firsthand, I personally have never had any actual experience as a surgeon." He looks up at her in all honesty.

"So, it comes down to basically two choices. We either attempt to cut out the infection and clean out the wound of any growing bacteria in a process called 'cauterization' to mitigate any further damage by rapidly burning off any existing pathogenic infection and minimizing rancid growth. During this process, we also have to prevent any exsanguination—extreme blood loss, caused by accidental probing that, if left untended, could be fatal. But this procedure will certainly result in irrevocable muscle injury of localized nerve damage...and there is a high chance of further infection if not well attended to and...the success rate is very low, often resulting in...death." Hans prattles on nervously, putting before Elsa the book learned practices spinning around his educated cranium.

"And the other option?" Elsa prompts when the unhappy thought of Cousin Eugene's life hanging in the balance brings a deep frown to the naval officer's face.

"Amputation of the arm, so there can be no infection left that could spread gangrene to the rest of his body...It has the greater success rate, though a more drastic procedure, with obvious permanent unpalatable consequences." Hans swallows the terrible truth down as he stands with the filled water pail and starts to walk back to the camp towards where Eugene lay, awaiting their verdict.

Following stiffly, Elsa too by now was frowning at the unpleasant imagery of that vital young man being debilitated for life.

"It pains me to have to say it, but, though she is an extraordinary woman in many rights, I do not consider your cousin Rapunzel, in her delicate state, to be competent enough in presence of mind to make this dreadfully decision."

Elsa traces the gaze of his eyes to where he was glancing as they walk over her shoulder to where Rapunzel was lying atop Sven, hugging Olaf to her like a fluffy snow pillow and uncontrollably weeping on him in worry for her love.

"So I will leave the choice up to you, Queen Elsa. I bow to your sagacity. Please tell me what to do." Hans' eyes were so pleading for her help and sincere with mind-wrenched indecision that
Elsa's heart goes out to him.

Once they arrive, both kneel to settle on the blanket beside Eugene's feverish, tossing and turning body, though the arm sling upwards that Hans had put him in earlier was still firmly in place, gravity staving off the blood flow.

"I believe in your abilities to save his arm. I believe in you." The blonde Ice Queen reaches a cool hand out to smooth the rutted wrinkles deeply creasing across the naval prince's forehead. Hans' wary eyes close for a few seconds to lean his pounding head against the strength of her soothing palm before reopening with a new sense of purpose.

"Thank you for that…Elsa." He familiarly whispers in gratitude, bringing a smile to Elsa's lips as his long thin jaw sets in determination for what he must do—with her genuine belief in him to back him up.

"Please open that first aid case and hand me, one by one, the metal instruments."

Elsa passes him each medical tweezer, small pliers, forceps, clamp, bent scissors and scalpel as Hans' hands securely hold each of them over the open flame’s hottest point. He then lays them upon the dagger that had already been well sterilized.

He leans down to feel Eugene's rapidly growing pulse and checks his erratic breathing and feverish temperature.

"Queen Elsa, please, if I may ask you to use your vast ice powers to merely numb the wound site, the operation should go considerably smoother for Prince Eugene. And don't worry about my hands in there. I thrive in the cold." Hans' assured smile rallies Elsa's concerned eyes to the idea of keeping a constant extra cool iced temperature to Eugene’s upper arm without risking further frostbite damage.

"It's a 50/50 chance to operate and potentially zero to one leaning that my brother won't survive to the next medical stop. So I do concur with your decision, and very much appreciate any aid you could render me." Slicing off the remainder of the bandage with a scalpel blade to reveal the full extent of the infected bullet wound, Hans begins to irrigate the bloody, pussy entry area with a leather pouch he had been boiling to sterilize both it and the water.

He pokes the pouch's side with one of the sterilized scalpels, creating a small hole to which he aims the thin stream of water to hit the infected area each time he squeezed the full pouch back. The boiling water knocks out much of the dirt and debris on the surface of the wound, but Hans knew from experience there would be more foreign debris driven further into the wound by the bullet.

"It is fortunate he wasn't wearing any clothing over his arm at the time he was shot. Each fragmented fabric particle would have had to be removed as well, for the body would have rejected any material in it as an infected agent." Hans may have been speaking aloud, but Elsa knew he was more referring himself to the difficult task at hand than striking up conversation with her as he peers into the raw wound.

She nods nevertheless at his intelligent words as he hands her the depleted leather pouch.

"I'm going to have to ask you to keep firm pressure here, on his brachial artery, so there won't be a sudden rush of blood while I'm probing."

Remembering himself, Hans offers a small, motivating smile to which Elsa nods in return. She allows him to place both her hands and press them down over the prone man's shoulder and armpit
area to keep the blood flow minimalized.

"Do you think you can keep this up, as well as retain Eugene numb with your ice?" He asks softly. Elsa nods, feeling here, in this trying situation in concern for another, under Hans' commanding presence, far more in control of her powers than anywhere else before.

Hans then gets up to reach the boiling water pot. He nearly scalds his hands in the hot, hot water as he retrieves a small pair of bent scissors and starts to carefully snip out the dead tissue that was turning purplish black around the edges of the wound all whilst Elsa was keeping tight pressure on the artery—her hands placed strategically precise, closer to the heart than to the wound.

"You're doing a fine job." Though his own nerves were frayed, Hans still has the compassion to encourage the trembling Queen kneeling above the men on the blanket as he pauses to steady his own tensed fingers with the scalpel now between them before cautiously slicing into the discolored clotted together infected tissues. Concise hands carefully use the sharp medical knife to make a wider incision into the cold numbed epidermal layers to open up the expanding bullet's entry for examination and further decontamination.

By the difficult to see swaying lamplight at his side, Hans' keen eye strains to slowly pick out from the wound he was digging through the stubborn bits of infection causing dirt particles and other foreign matters with the medical tweezers. He next bravely uses his cleansed fingers to gently pry apart the super cooled flesh of the wound so he can get the tweezer pliers into the hidden crevices to remove all intolerable foreign materials.

With the steaming, boiling waters again, Hans irrigates the now cleansed lesion in Flynn's ample muscular arm. All the infectious rot was either cut or boiled away, made easier to see and navigate by Elsa's numbing freeze.

"His breathing is becoming less erratic—and his fever is down a bit." Elsa offers after studying the fluctuating rise and fall of respiration on the dark, bearded face close below for a few moments.

"That's good. Thank God there wasn't a dissection of the main artery vein. I've seen many good men lose the battle to a slipped knife." Hans gives praise for his steadiness of hand not to nick the all-important brachial, so close to where his intricate tweezers were performing their task in intense industry.

"Is the bullet very deep?" Elsa asks, shakily, her ice prowess tested as it escapes puffs from her lips as she speaks, though she never fails to keep up her mission duty set before her by Prince Hans for Cousin Eugene.

"Yes. I believe it is ill-advised to attempt to remove the projectile at this time, without proper anesthetics or instruments. It would take a surgeon far more competent than I to extract that and leave some hope for the recovery of his tricep muscle that it's been lodged firmly within. Have no fear—men live for many years with a bullet still in their flesh as long as it's not infected in the healing process." Hans lifts the removable tray from the wooden case of surgical instruments that Elsa had brought from the Vis-à-vis to reveal a small compartment beneath the horrifying looking capital saw, whose teeth were just itching for an amputation.

From the fitted shallow slits to hold all the instruments in place, Hans takes out two items—one rounded metal large mattress needle and a length of suture material, which he hands to Elsa to hold after a quick sterilization of the needle by flame.

He returns to the fire and, removing the remainder of the surgical tools back to their wood case slots, swiftly extracts his dagger, which had been lying flat against the stones, engulfed in the
"He may involuntarily react violently, so please stand back." Hans orders Elsa while wielding the flaming hot dagger in his hands.

"Forgive me, Storbror…" Hans, in one fluid motion, lays the flat of the dagger's blade tip to the wounded arm that was just starting to bleed, now that Elsa and he had let go of their stoppage of the vein, as well as the Ice Queen's focused cold numbing effect on his injured upper appendage.

"AHHHHHHHHHOWWWWWWWWWWW! DAMN!" Eugene comes to with a loudly deafening wailed curse as Hans pulls the red hot blade away from the writhing man quickly so as not to cause further injury.

Olaf and Sven are unable to keep hold of Rapunzel as she immediately leaps from the reindeer's back, like a young gazelle to her lover's cry. She falls to her knees at his awakening side, tears streaming from her eyes.

"Why the hell are you branding me, you clap-Dickens redhead!? I'm not a side of beef!" It didn't take long for Flynn Rider to find his profanity laden tongue as he sits straight up, knocking an off-balanced Rapunzel away as he does so unexpectedly fast, getting on his feet in a matter of seconds.

"I am glad to see you awake and in such fine spirits, Brother." Hans smiles from ear to ear, glad that the near comatose man had enough energy to rise and stand on his own so quickly after such a surgery—albeit waving fists at his 'doctor.'

"You wanna see spirit, Brother?!!" Eugene, mocking the title, angrily takes a swing at Hans, who doesn't even bother to duck. He already took into account the man's uncoordinated right arm's woozy infirmity, as his right fist flies blindly through the air.

"Eugene! Stop it! Hans just saved your life!" Rapunzel hugs her hubby's other good arm, pointing him to look at the fruits of Hans' surgical labors upon his other. "Your wound was infected."

"Huh?" Though the arm was still painful, Eugene remarkably felt that the burning, feverish throb it was giving him all the latter half of the day was abated as he looks down at his scorched skin. The blood beneath had coagulated to stop flowing to dangerous low levels.

"I would like to finish suturing your wound so as not to allow the forming clot to be dislodged again, so this time, we can control the bleeding and risk of infection that led to your collapse." Hans proudly requests, as Elsa dabs his sweaty brow of her own volition, causing the hardworking redhead to take notice.

He threads, in the lamplight, the large rounded needle with the natural suture material that Elsa gives him and he smiles appreciatively at his lovely eyed field 'nurse.'

As for Elsa, she saw this 'doctor' as more than competent, beyond courageous and above all, positively heroic in her eyes.

"You're gonna sew me up with that?!!" Gulp/ Eugene swallows hard. The self-presevationalist in him normally preferred no body invasion whatsoever—and certainly not to be stitched together like an old rag doll.

"Since I cauterized the wound just a few minutes ago, the rapidly heated nerves still shouldn't feel too much pain, if any. Though I am sorry we have little by way of topical anesthetics, beyond..." Hans mulls over his words after quietly conversing with Elsa and Rapunzel, in instruction of how...
to crush and mix together for a healing anti-inflammatory salve some of the spices they had luckily picked up at the general store for cooking, kilometers back.

They pestle together the black pepper, turmeric, rosemary, ginger, cloves and honey, until the girls could make a paste with it.

Hans quietly offers Eugene the flask of Akvavit—Norwegian vodka—that Kristoff had secreted under his bench chair—for medicinal purposes, of course.

All men do it...

"Fine! Go ahead and make a doily out of me, you dandy fo—I mean, little bro. Whew-whee, there's a load of hooey to swallow! You are gonna have to deliver some good backstory, big time, to make me believe that a girly chit like you and a manly man like me have any common lineage—OUCH! I thought you said that wasn't gonna hurt!" Eugene squeals out in a high voice, making his audience wonder which one was more the 'manly man.'

The pair of girls, with Olaf who had come to join them playing 'smash the cloves', begin to smile at the life and death crisis of Prince Consort Eugene of…Corona, that Prince Hans of the Southern Isles masterfully averted with a nimble fingered quick wit, decisive application of learned knowledge—all put together with a clever, dauntless fortitude that panned out successfully.

But Hans was giving more than a share of the credit to the unseen Hand of God, who blessed him with all those abilities—and a young woman who believed in him, too, in the face of fragile odds.

"If you were listening carefully, big...bro...My actual words did have the minute stipulation of that small description with the comparative degree 'much.'" Though a foppish gentleman by appearance and fancy language, Hans had proved to be a rugged man, by all means, who had a tougher stomach than most when it came to skin excoriation, blood loss, and flesh incision.

He was relieved to be trading barbs again with the older man, who, though rough around the edges, was inexplicably charming.

Hans peers upwards under his breath slyly with his intentionally slighting, laughing words, as he rather deftly begins to stitch the sutures into Eugene's skin for final closure of the wound, in the expertly interrupted method ideally accomplished by eversion of stitch depth and width roughly kept equal.

"You and all your high falutin' terms, showoff." Eugene was amused now. "I think I am gonna be needing that drink." His nerves were not as steady as the younger prince seemed to possess to see himself stitched up. He bites off the corked stay of the flask, downing a much needed thick gulp of the fortifying alcohol, though Hans had intended its original usage to be poured over the wound. However, his uncertainty as to its unknown purity rejected that thought.

Although, from Eugene's quick reaction to the fairly high, eighty proof Akvavit vodka, that Kristoff had stashed away—for medicinal purposes, mind you-must have been pretty pure and potent.

Eugene flagrantly puts it away while his little brother continuously sews up his no longer feverish older brother with a bemused smile.

"...I had a dream...I had a dream...Now I know my wife is having our baby…!"

Both Olaf and a giggling Rapunzel start to hum along with Flynn Rider's drunken song. They soon abandon Elsa to finish the paste that Hans had asked for all alone, as the two dance a happy round
with a giddy color-changing Pascal and a toe-tapping Sven in celebration of Eugene's recovery.

But the reindeer soon recalls his best friend's heartache as the big, furry brown-grey creature quietly backs away from the group to return to the sleigh to nuzzle his welcomed nose against Kristoff who was murmuring though a sleeping powder induced repose.

But he was being 'entertained', if the word could cruelly be applied, by the nightmare of his bright-eyed girl's hand slipping away from his fiercest grip into dark swirling murky waters. His world plunges into a pitch black darkness as he hears Anna's distressed screams go 'round and 'round the whirlpool sucking her into the deep abyss until they fade into a dark, dull spiraling maelstrom nothingness, leaving him all alone, shivering with a tormented fear he never felt before in the bitter cold…

Chapter End Notes

Storbror = Big Brother (Danish)
"...So, nice weather we've been having here, on the ...umm...Norwegian Sea. Hasn't it been... umm...Mr. Job...sir?" Anna stumbles over her tentative wordings, not wanting to rock the boat with her dark skinned captor, but the silence around here was just too darn boring!

"Is it all right if I call you that? Since I'm not really sure if 'Job' is your first name or last name, or even if it's just a nickname or something! If it is your first name, I think your Mom chose a really good one for you. I mean, what's better than having a name that everybody knows, but have absolutely no idea how to pronounce properly unless they're really into the Old Testament, like my sister Elsa is. Whew! Can she rattle off Bible quotes like a preacher, or what?! Hey, am I talking too much? If I am, you can just say, 'Come up for air, Anna' or 'Time out, Anna', or—"

"Enough!...Anna." Though begrudgingly growing accustomed to the small mite's effusive speak, once she had gotten bold enough to let go of their earlier tussle and find her tongue, the tall dark man quietly erupts from where he was steering at the navigation controls. Job had been attempting to focus on the plotted course of the small steamship as it cuts a path across the deep night sea, but the talkative little princess wouldn't shut her mouth long enough for him to entertain a coherent thought since she woke up ten minutes ago.

"That works, too." Anna comments, blinking away the sleepers from her eyes in the darkened bridge wheelhouse. She must've fallen asleep a while back on this monotonous ride after the stressed young girl had pretended to sleep, but had vigilantly stayed awake for tense silent hours while 'mean old Captain Ugly' was the one prowling at the steamboat's controls.

Somehow, though the Caribbean was bigger and brawnier and far less comical in appearance than his erstwhile short and stout red headed captain, Anna wasn't as wary of him. In fact, Princess Anna wasn't frightened of Job at all, despite his fearful—at first glance—threatening appearance.

Soon after he relieved Captain Houtebeen of the helmsman bridge duty, observant Job was kind enough to sit the tired girl, fastened to the built-in center binnacle housing of the ship's magnetic compass, atop its wooden waist-high stand to give her spindly wobbling legs a seat to rest.

"Kristoff never says I talk too much anymore, even though I know I do tend to jabber on sometimes. Okay, most times." Anna pauses with the happy thought of her handsome patient hunk in her head.

"He thinks it's because I grew up so alone, with practically no playmates that I kept it bottled up inside for so long that I just have to let it all out now that I'm not." Anna cutely puckers her lips at the philosophical theory that went a bit over her head. But she believed her rationalizing Kristoff was an expert at everything.

"I could just be prattling on about how beautiful the fresh cut green grass smells, or what on earth
are those busy bees doing in their hives to make honey so sweet, or why God takes all the trouble
to make each and every snowflake different and unique if they're all only going to melt before they
hit the ground. And he'll—that is, Kristoff—will just answer: 'I love the sound of your voice.' But
does that mean he really wasn't listening to my questions?' Finding thoughts of her best boy
grounded her from going stir crazy, Anna asks in the darkness with an almost indignant quizzical
voice.

"My Kristly must be going crazy right about now." Anna ends her rant sadly, as she hangs her
useless head with closed weary eyes in the pitch darkness with the noisy whirring engine as the
only sound reverberating in her head.

She bangs it against the side of the one of the colorful iron correcting navigator's spheres on either
end of the binnacle in total frustration of not being able to wring her tied up hands for the dreadful
predicament she got herself in as a source of her love's worry.

"Muma named me Christian name 'Job' 'cause she say she wanted me to be 'patient in adversity'
when I growed up. Hmph, I sure seen me share of adversity, Muma." Job's deep baritone from
ahead at the steering column breaks the silence after some long uninterrupted moments go by.

Anna raises her depressed head that was lying against the mounted compass' gimbals used to keep
the delicate instrument level while the ship pitched and rolled. Her dulled eyes grow bright again at
this, the longest personal sentence Job had disclosed in years, in response to her earlier query that
she didn't even think he was listening to either.

"Oh, wow. That's nice to know your Mama was a woman of faith, too, just like my Mama. My
Mama named me 'Anna' because…Gee, I never got a chance to ask her why. But there are a lot of
things I never had the chance to ask her that I wish I could now——"

This was the closest Anna had come to tears in a long time, but the boisterous girl snaps out of her
melancholy mood soon enough. She peers out the side window of the enclosed wheelhouse where
a small, yet significant light from a distant isle's lighthouse shore was blinking back at her.

"Are we stopping there? Where are we? What's the name of this por——" Peeking at the readings on
the compass and sand timer estimating the speed stored in the binnacle between her legs, Anna
inquires in curiosity as she watches Job's massive hands pull the engine dial to 'half-speed' to turn
to 'slow' as he eases the insular steam powered boat towards the quickly approaching shore.

"Hush, girl. Da Capt'n be comin'. Better if you be sleepin' sound-like when he be gettin' here.
Maybe he not notice you. Savvy?" Job's low warning comes just in time, for Captain Houtebeen's
familiar peg-leg's clip-clop clip-clop disturbingly signals his arrival back on the upper deck from
his cabin below.

"We be requiring refuelin,' Job?" Houtebeen's question may have been directed at the other man,
but his attentions were on the little lady who appeared to be soundly a-slumbering from the way
she was loudly snoring, her mouth quite unattractively hanging open in a drool on her slumped
central pedestal at eye level.

"Yeah, Capt'n. Leka Island be our fueling stop." Almost purposefully stressing the port of call
named 'Leka', the dutiful first mate answers his superior as he capably sails the steamship into the
island's dark dock.

"Ye keep it down, ye scurvy bilge rat! Our leettle firecracker be sleeping so peaceful and nice-
like…" But Anna's over-played convincing wheezed snore would have to have drawn anyone's
attention.
And the greedy-eyed pirate, chuckling with a sweet dripping voice, drags his wooden leg over to where Anna was desperately trying to keep up the pretense of deep slumber balanced precariously upon the flat of the center binnacle, even though the strong scent of the foul-stenched old sea-devil drawing closer to her could almost make her feel like chucking-up.

*Yuck! Rotten seaweed and old mothballs!* Her cute little nose wrinkles in disgust.

*Kristoff's rich scent is so much more rugged...and earthy...* Anna's attempt to stay cool under pressure by keeping her true love close in mind is dashed the moment the dirty old monster reaches a wandering hand to lift her long green skirt—

And the delicately refined, ladylike little panicking Princess utilizes the only weapon she had at her disposal in surprise retaliation—

**POOT!**

Princess Anna of Arendelle may not have been elated, but her underfed, nervous, topsy-turvy tummy certainly could be gassy on command…

"Acht! Disgusting child!" The repulsed sea captain recoils several feet back from his peek show, thoroughly uninterested now in this unexpectedly rude and repellent royal daughter blowing her southern trumpet at him.

"Sorry, Sir. I was just about to take the girl to relieve herself on da shore while we refuel." A quick thinking Job swiftly moves in to hastily untie and lift from her perch the unromantic, yet effective young woman over his shoulder to avoid the hot-tempered Houtebeen's wrath until the pirate cooled down (and got some fresh sea air back out on the open deck.)

"Take the stinkin' Vloekwaard meid away from my ship! Where were ye raised?! In a barn?! Damned Vrouwtjesh—!" Houtebeen's fowlest curses in many offensive languages echo across this deserted section of Leka's southern port late in the night as Job hefts himself and a winded Anna over the boat's handrail to wade to the shore he had docked them at.

"Dat be a close call for you, little Princess. Though, Job not be so sure da Cap'n be in a kind mood to ye da rest of da voyage now. I try to keep ye clear of him best I can, Missy Anna." But the dark man's warning was holding back laughter at his captain's expense that he'd not entertained for years as he puts the culpable girl down onto the rocky seashore.

For there was something about her indomitable lively spirit that brought about a strange fondness for this unpredictable precious child to take hold of this brusque brute of a big man.

"What? It's perfectly natural. Besides, I don't think I like his 'kind mood' anyways!" Not embarrassed one bit by the drastic (albeit gross) tactics taken in self-defense, a nettled Anna huffily retorts. But as Job gives her hand signals to tone down her ferocity of volume, Anna wisely relents.

"That dirty old coot deserved it!" The high-strung girl concedes to a whisper with a quick pasted smile up at Houtebeen, who was on deck flashing a lantern to glare at her over the ship's forward capstan like an angry one-eyed hawk with ruffled feathers on the deck.

"He still be da Cap'n, Missy, so ye watch ye're step." Job's almost-smile fades back to business.

"Dere be no help here on dis isle for miles, so don't even look for anyone to rescue ye, gyal. If ye promise to be good and don't be runnin' from Job, he let ye wash and relieve yerself in private by dat hidden cove over dere, den ye return to da ship here." The gargantuan of a Caribbean former
pro-wrestler points Anna towards a darkened inlet indented on the island's craggly shore as he gives her back a sharp forward thrust along with one more cautionary threat.

"Dis be da singular road to town and I be watchin' it real close-like. Remember, my Muma said I be a patient man, but only to a point. Ye got it?"

"Okay." Like a berated 8 year old, Anna stomps off into the cove entrance in a sour mood herself, though she was truly grateful for the man's intercession before.

And yet…

Some minutes into the refueling of coal into the firebox via the supply valves, Job washes his coal dusty hands off of all the emptied ashpit's spent filth. He then looks around, fully expecting the orangy haired waif to have returned by now.

Just at the cusp of letting a small amount of trust's light sneak into his dark jaded world, Job's black eyes squint towards the one and only road leading to the civilization of fishing villages on the rural island of Leka's sparse society. He was fairly certain all during his work retrieving coal and cleaning the below deck's hatch, that his keen eyes would have spotted the conspicuous princess if she broke her word and attempted an escape.

Just about to lose every last shred of hope in his wayward soul and give chase to the missing girl, out of the corner of his eye, another penetrating light begins to break over the Land of the Midnight Sun after its short repose. In the fresh sunlight, Job catches a glimpse of the slight figure of a small girl who had somehow snuck under his 'radar' in a mad dash to the farthest edge of a rising cliff peak near the hilly shore.

Her melodic voice, defying all sane bounds of reality, was enthusiastically shrill and plaintively screaming upon the harsh whipping winds all about her small body as she calls out the name of her dear friend, her manly hero, her true love as if he could hear her if only she yelled it loud and long and soulfully enough—

"KRISTOFF!!"

"KRISTOFF!!"

"KRISTOFF!!"

As the early morning sun rises fully, her big yet small voice lost to the swirling winds and the crashing waves upon the tussled shore, her expended voice all but depleted, Princess Anna sinks to her knees. Although, a single tear would never fall from her eye, for this girl of trusting optimism believed with every inch of her big bold heart that her beloved 'Reindeer King' (as Olaf so dubbed him) will come for her. She was as absolutely certain that her Kristoff will not rest until he saves her from this wicked pirate's clutches and take her in his strong arms again to hold onto her tight again as she was sure the sun will rise high in the sky to light the world with His warmth—

And never—EVER—set on the luckiest love this world has ever seen between Kristoff and Anna Bjorgman's forever bond.

Ever the optimist, her windpipes exhausted, Anna closes her eyes with the prayer that her deepest faith and absolute trust in their love would bring the two of them together again. Somewhere, someway, somehow, Anna's destined happiness with Kristoff couldn't be so cruelly snatched away as they had only just begun to live…
Her sore throat was raspy and constricted from all that screaming and her gale force tossed hair was a mess. As if in an out of body experience, her mind still reaching to her love on the winds, Anna feels Job's massive grip bodily pick her up and carry her back to the thralls of a yet unknown purpose to her captivity…

Anna's voice crying in the wilderness was not lost to all the winds that the Spirit Whisperer could hear. Somewhere in his induced slumber subconscious the tossed and turned young man indeed heard his wife's call through that bottomless chasm of the heart where reality and dreams converge on a plane seen only through the eyes of a trusting, profound love. And it was breaking Kristoff's heart to still be so far away and powerless to save his Anna, as the nightmares persist…

Sometime, in the deep of the night, after that harrowing life and death in the balance operation of a desperate new medical procedure had just taken place, the exhausted party rests.

The survived patient and his reconciled wife had soon fallen asleep together. Rapunzel cradled Eugene's injured arm most assiduously with tender touches as the beyond pained, tipsy with drink man had readily dozed off under her gentle care on the comfortably ample blankets and pillowed sheeting assembled for the injured hero.

But the real hero of the night took some convincing before he would lay down his proven brilliant in a crisis head for rest. Although an eager "We're wide awake!" Olaf and Pascal offered their 'vigilant' watch over the camp for the few hours' long nap, they and Elsa had a hard time insisting the hesitant to relegate his duties, yet extremely spent, body and mind, young 'doctor' to take a well deserved break…

Two hours ago…

"Prince Hans, please listen to reason. Your nerves are too worn after that heroic surgery you undertook for Prince Eugene to not take a justified rest." Elsa had greeted Hans after he returned from a tour of the grounds with this anxious ultimatum. The caught off-guard young man had paused, not quite knowing how to contradict without sounding too disrespectful of the Queen.

"And may I say? You were amazing back there." The platinum blonde then smiled up at Hans proudly, befuddling the blushing fellow even further as how to respond to her compliment.

"Nothing more than a brother should do for a brother, after all." Hans finally reemerged from the seascape of her beautiful admiring blue eyes to find his voice again.

A dazzled Elsa had gazed upon him, even more impressed no end by his generosity of familial expression.

"Please, Prince Hans. All the lamps and torches have been lit, your patient checked upon, and you've just re-scouted the immediate area for any threatening prowling creatures. So now, you yourself must sleep for a few hours before we begin our journey again in the morning." Nurse Elsa, back in her cool leader mode, had insisted of her Prince as she had gone to the Vis-à-vis to retrieve one more set of blankets and the small pillow she herself had been using in the carriage to lay out a bed for him on a choice soft knoll of grass near the roaring fire.
"Queen Elsa, your kindness in troubling yourself over me is sincerely appreciated. However, someone responsible must remain awake to keep close watch of the camp—"

The heavy lidded man had glanced over first to the sleigh where Kristoff was tossing and turning, then to where the passed out drunk recuperating Eugene was snoring peacefully beside his smiling wife snuggled close in his grasp like a child would his security teddy bear.

Hans had then given Olaf, who was, at the time, tickling Guddy's horsey tummy with a cattail stalk, a sideways glance before at last looking at the down to earth chameleon, who had been shaking his green head in total agreement with the Naval officer's assessment.

But the Ice Queen's most persistent demanding eyes had given the selfless Danish Lieutenant orders otherwise.

"Olaf, Pascal and myself can be responsible to hold down the fort for a little time, I'm sure." She stated almost haughtily, brushing her luxuriant loose blonde locks back to her forehead.

"Yes, of course, Queen Elsa. I must apologize, if my…ill expressed words led you to believe… That isn't what I meant at all to say." The cute way the great orator Prince Hans of the Southern Isles stumbles over his words brings a smile back to Elsa's lips.

"You must rest so you can be fully alert to face the road ahead tomorrow. We three will keep vigilant watch the remainder of the night. It will be sunrise soon enough, up here in this region of my country." With a controlled wave of her hand, Elsa had motioned to where her ice magic formed a long club for a now ready to serve snowman to wield as he begun pacing the South end of the camp in back and forth guard duty. As for the North edge of their 'barracks', Pascal had taken on patrol in green battlement camouflage to expertly blend in with his surroundings.

"See? Piece of ice cream cake." The flirting with danger way she had blown on her enchanted long nailed fingers after showing off a display of her ice powers to be unleashed on any rabid lawless intruders, turned Hans on more than gave him good reason to turn in, as the Queen of Ice sent a quick frozen dagger volley at some poor unsuspecting tree on the east end of the camp she'd be in charge of watching, opposite the fjorden.

"But perhaps I, too, should—" He gave one last stab at a protest, but Elsa's cool finger silencing his warm lips was all the persuading Hans Westergaard needed.

"You will sleep. That is an order." Queen Elsa seemed to enjoy exerting her new power over the delirious eyed young man now under her command.

Elsa had even deemed then to indulge in her own weariness of stiff non-tactile conviction as she actually had pressed both her hands to Hans' rebellious chest to squarely push the by now stunned and compliant man down to the soft bed of blankets and personal pillow she had laid out for him.

She even had gentle laid a soft cover over him. At first unwilling, but then pleased, his thin prone body being pampered by this gorgeous Queen's intimate touch and sweet caring, Hans finally submitted to Elsa's whim.

"I am but your humble servant…my Queen…" Whispered in a soft tenor on his parted lips, having not slept for days on end now with all the danger and trouble presented, Hans then soon dropped off to a comfortable repose under Elsa's humming her Mama's favorite church hymn she often sung her oldest girl and Papa both to lull to sleep after a long day of training.

"…Let the water and the blood
From Thy wounded side which flowed

Be of sin the double cure

Save from wrath and make me pure."

After a while amidst her soulful humming, as her Mama did for her weary Papa, Elsa's tender hand had begun to smooth the mussed red hair strands back from his noble brow. She then, without thought, started to soothingly stroke his soft bristled, mahogany red sideburns for the first time. They were a tad unkempt in all the past days' excitement, but warm and inviting like the poignant lines of the ageless melody she murmured low about the selfless Savior whose pierced holy body would forever be extended to shield the rest of the world's pain, for He even gave His life in exchange for the promise of their Eternity…

"Nothing in my hand I bring
Simply to Thy Cross I cling..."

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in thee."

Silently considering the strange upside down mercurial circumstances as she lightly caresses his handsome face, Elsa of Arendelle had marveled then and there at the capricious turn of events in their uniquely unforeseen relationship…Somehow, Prince Hans, you have become my rock here on earth, whom I can always depend on. Though, I still don't understand why.

"Yes, you can sleep now. We'll be fine." In a small voice, Elsa had reassured aloud encouragingly more to herself than the already slumbering prince in the still summer night's darkness.

But there were uncertain, frightened tears forming behind her eyes when her thoughts then drifted to Anna's safety in the quiet of being alone. Please, Lord, I ask for nothing but to watch over my darling until we meet again…

And all Elsa could do from breaking down was cling to Hans' steady warmth and the words of the touching holy song echoing in her heart…

'Not the labors of my hands,
Can fulfill thy law's demands.
Could my zeal no respite know?
Could my tears forever flow?
All for sin could not atone
Thou must save and Thou alone
Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee...'
The sun slowly escalates its way up into the sky at nearly 4 in the morning, some two hours later.

Vigilantly keeping her alert eyes peeled for as long as she possibly could, the slender blonde woman had sunk into a restful sitting position. Just intending to rest her stressed eyes, Elsa leans her thin cool back to Prince Hans’ warm body where he lay on the blanketed ground. And the Queen of Arendelle falls as contently asleep in his presence as he was in hers.

But the stability of Hans’ warmth, nor the midnight sun rising over the peaceful, still treetops were enough to keep the sudden chill from pervading Elsa's heart as she shivers awake from the few minutes of dozing, a cold intangible fear gripping her soul.

Anna!? Her beloved sister’s name was at the forefront of her mind as frigid blue eyes snap open, the Ice Queen carefully slips away from beneath the long fingered hand that had mysteriously fallen into the crook of her elbow in their little guiltily intimate nestled cove.

A bit anxious for the bluish tint of said hand that was alighted upon her bare skin, Elsa pauses to afford Prince Hans' cute face, his long lashes lowered still in closed slumber, a momentary glance to assure herself he was neither injured by her pervasive ice nor disturbed from his much deserved sleep.

Satisfied that his palm was now returning to its normal tanned apricot shading, Elsa's light feet trip over to Sven's sleigh to check on Kristoff—

Only to find neither reindeer nor man inside the empty sleigh present.

Kristoff! Coupled with the confounding apprehension she had awakened with still gripping her icy insides, Elsa's racing mind begins to panic. Frosted ice particles hang in the air of her puffed breaths as she runs blindly to the far end of the camp where Olaf was merrily humming to himself as he marches back and forth as guardsman.

"Olaf! Kristoff and Sven are gone! Why weren't you watching him?! You were supposed to be on guard!" Her voice barely above an audible whimper in flustered trepidation as she passes the blame along, though feeling peerlessly responsible for those few stolen minutes of rest, an alarmed Elsa derides Olaf for his inattentiveness.

"Yeah. I was, but—" Olaf begins to mount a defense, but her shrill whisper cuts him off.

"He could be kilometers away by now! Oh, Olaf! We can't let him go off by himself! "

"Yeah, I know, but—" His big innocent eyes blink blankly up at her distress, but the nerve-wracked young female continues to verbally rampage over the slow snowman.

"We have to save Anna together! She wouldn't want me to let him go off by himself!" Elsa's cold breath exudes from her exasperated mouth until the heavily saturated air collapses the accumulated thin ice sheet onto Olaf's carrot nose.

Crossing his eyes at the slick coating, the snowman wiggles his frosted orange veg on his face until it finally erupts in an irritated high pitched sneeze.

Elsa's lustrous blue eyes dart around the camp that the sun was just bringing to the light where she spies Cousin Rapunzel and her husband stirring on their blanket, Pascal just leaving his duty post at the other end of their encampment to join the frisky couple, and Hans still where she left him in frightened alarm.
But no sign of the tall blonde Ice Harvester, nor his faithful rangifer, for that matter, as quick eyes scan nearer the fjorden to the west where the pair of horses were yet tethered.

"Wow, you really are worried about sticking together, aren't you?" Speaking sanely and quietly cool and collected as compared to her frazzled state, Olaf looks up at Elsa in that condescending way again.

"Don't you fret, Elsie. I know where our favorite pungent reindeer king was headed with Sven." Olaf answers in a similarly conspired whispered tone, waggling a knowing finger to the side of his patronizing carrot nose.

"Where did he go, Olaf?! What direction?!" Elsa demands information from the sluggish snowman, kneeling down to shake his shoulders until his head nearly wobbles off.

"Let's see...Kristoff went..." Olaf takes his own sweet time in finding his compass direction as he spins about on waddled feets in such a slow and plodding way that an impatient Ice Queen could nearly pull her hair out. The trying snowman swings his branch arm around the circumference of the camp until it finally comes to an abrupt pointing stop mere meters from where they were having their discussion.

"In there! That Kristoff and Sven tried to sneak by me into that thicket. They even pretended they didn't hear me when I said 'Good Morning, Kristoff and Sven!' And I know they heard me, silly guys, up to tricks." Olaf shortles in his clicking tongued method under his laughing breath.

"But be careful, Elsa! I think he went in there to play with his—"

But as graceful as a deer in flight, Elsa was already off and running before the snow friend could finish his long-winded warning.

Into the darkened heavy overgrowth of thicket the Queen of the land of the midnight sun dashes in a headlong manner under the tall cover of trees...

T'chi! T'chi! T-chi!

As Sven quickly rushes forward through the meandering forest of trees, one by one the arrowheads embed themselves into the hurriedly crafted, somewhat circular thick target of an axed down trunk of a tree affixed to the reindeer's colorful strapped side.

Bullseye! Bullseye! Bullseye!

Vented anger plus dead-on focus aim hits the center of the spherical ring of the flattened wooden piece until each of the pointed projectiles were practically millimeters apart on the rounded board already dotted with arrowhead markings.

Elsa watches Sven pause and cock his furry head to direct a look at the relentless archer whose raised longbow doesn't falter from its perfectly held limb position.

"No, it's not good enough yet, Sven! Don't just go in a straight line this time. Dodge and weave like I'm chasing you. I need to master plugging moving targets!"

The platinum blonde woman, maintaining her seclusion in the shadows, notes how the empathic reindeer seemed to acquiesce a nod back to the gruff voiced, shirtless man sporting only the leather bracer along with his cache of quiver, bow and arrows.

The four-legged creature then makes an encircled erratic rush through the thicket, in and out of
bushes and trees all amongst the flying arrows whistling through the air everywhere about him. Most hit their target with a stunning precision as Kristoff lets loose his drawn bow string over and over with near flawless results. Watching in awe, Elsa had no idea of the extent to the proficient skill of which the young man she thought she knew fairly well over these past 2 years now possessed in this foreign field.

*T'chi! T'chi! T-chi!*

As another volley is masterfully set to fly with deadly accuracy at an almost frenzied speed, the man's rough voice begins to rumble lowly.

"It is my fault, Sven! Anna needed me to save her and I let her down!"

*T'chi! T'chi! T-chi!*

"Yes, I could have! I should've followed her down that hill instead of sticking around to help those two losers!"

*T'chi! T'chi!*

"No, Sven, you're wrong! She'd be here right now if I wasn't so soft and sorry a husband. And I love her too much not to get tougher and harder, be a better man than I was back there, if I've got any chance to rescue her."

A confused Elsa didn't quite understand how, but it was obvious that her tormented brother-in-law and his reindeer were able to have some sort of silent sentient communication. But she did know her dear sister well enough to speak on Anna's behalf here.

"Anna wouldn't want you to change!" Elsa's soprano voice breaks into the one-sided conversation, taking a totally in the zone Kristoff so off guard as he was loading his arrow's draw length into its bow string's nocking point that the startled man lets the shot fly loose a second or two prematurely…

~~*T'chi!*~~

"Sven! Watch out!" But the overtired reindeer who had been taking a break to munch on his particularly favorite meal of forest lichens that he had spotted and sniffed out beneath some hidden foliage, didn't see the arrow coming until it was too late. His mournful eyes grow wide and frightened as he looks up at his best friend's warning call with a gulp.

*Zzzttt!*

The Ice Queen finds composure in her own fear, recalling the lesson a certain red-headed man had begun her study of, not so long ago.

She zaps the mid-motion, sharpened bone projectile with a powerful ice surge blast, freezing the arrow in midair, until the perfectly balanced shaft weight and off kilter vane fletching causes the arrow's spine to plummet to the ground, mere inches below Sven's terrified wobbling muzzle.

"Oh, Sven, that was close, buddy. I'm sorry…I'm such a lunkhead to put you in danger, too." Wind Whisperer or no, the tall, blonde man runs forward, proving that his 'sensitive and sweet' side wasn't yet ready to be relinquished into tough and hardened, truly, in his tender, loving hug of his forever friend's relieved face.
Sven licks Kristoff's in return to quell all fears and self-recrimination.

"My sister told me, the last time we were in chapel together, that she is so proud that 'God made Kristoff just as he is—utterly good and absolutely true'. These are the perfect qualities of the ideal man she fell in love with. And I trust you just as you are, to save her, Kristoff. I believe in you, too." Elsa completes her compassionate thought, putting a hand to each of the young orphaned males' (man and reindeer) cheeks, which were still squeezed together adorably.

"She really said that? You're right…I will. Thanks, Elsa." Kristoff's cracking voice at the first statement showed his youth; while the second, more adult attitude, showed his resolve, as with one arm around Sven's neck, the 6 foot 5 inch tall man picks up his dropped quiver and longbow, slinging them over his broad shoulder as if he were an old pro at the craft that usually took years to hone to such a high level.

"Now then! That's enough practice for you two. Let's get back to camp and I'll cook us up a quick breakfast before we get on the road." The now, hands-on, capable cook in Queen Elsa smiles her most convincing smile, though, when they pause to look in one another's determined eyes, the two people closest to Princess Anna of Arendelle both still sensed, deep down, there would be no true rest for either of their broken hearts until their precious girl was back in the arms of her family again.

But the bright sun that was finally fully up in the sky was once more showing God's shining face of hope to the brave world again as they stride out into the clearing beyond the trees when they exit the thicket's shading.

In the light of day, Elsa offers a sympathetic smile up to the big man whom she trusted implicitly in all matters concerning Anna, for she knew Kristoff had her sister's best intentions first in his caring mind. He pats her pale cheek as he passes her upturned face when Elsa pauses to soak up the solar rays streaming through the blue sky, just as Anna taught her to do, to clear the cold icy cobwebs from her littered mind.

"When I woke up and didn't see either you or Sven there, I panicked, afraid you left ahead of us on your own again." The slender queen admits her fears, letting them 'get air' as her buoyant little sister always prescribed to the young woman who would rather shrink back behind her closed doors some tough days than speak openly. But the revitalizing sun reminds Elsa of Anna's special brand of therapy as the two blondes walk back to the camp, side by side.

"I made a promise, Elsa. And a promise I make, is a promise I keep." There was deeper meaning behind the brawny man's words as Kristoff tugs his shirt and vest back on that he'd removed for intense archery practice earlier.

It was the vest his new wife had had made for him as a birthday present, the one she had significantly pinned her own favorite sunflower brooch, that Elsa had given her, when Anna was dressing him back up the morning after their first night of sweet love-making back in his childhood home in the Valley of the Trolls.

Kristoff lightly touches the effeminately youthful piece of bright yellow sculpted metal jewelry with a sentimental smile. It glimmers back up at him with the streaming sunlight that would remain in the sky for the remainder of the hours of today.

*Just like my Anna—glowing and bright and clear-eyed and undeniably radiant. No matter what it takes, I will stand by you, I will live for you, I will keep my wedding vows to you, Baby…Please, God, take my voice to her on the winds. Tell her, I'm coming.*
As he moves purposefully towards the horses with Sven to get them ready, Kristoff Bjorgman, too, closes his eyes solemnly. His ruggedly handsome features bathe in the fresh sunlight with the soft spoken prayerful message of his undying love to carry upon the summer breeze...

"Anna, I love you. I'm coming to save you, Baby..."

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**Speaking of lovemaking...**

"Ouch!"

"Am I pushing too hard? Did I hurt you? We haven't done this in a while. I guess I'm a little out of practice."

"Nah. What's an extra nick or two when my barber's got such a cute little—OWWY! You're a dangerous woman with that razor, Blondie." While most other men who had downed that amount of 80 proof Akvavit spirits would be still soused and suffering from the ill effects of drink, Flynn Rider only had a slight hangover. His head may have been a tad woozy, but the lifelong thief could pride himself on at least being able to hold his drink.

In reality, with his flippant attitude and roguish style, one could hardly tell the difference anyway whether the irreverent man was ever completely sober or flat out drunk.

Eugene Fitzherbert gazes over the sharp cutting blade held at his slightly blood-let throat under his chiseled chin jaw to give his wife a rueful smile and one-eyed wince.

"So sorry! But your bouncing Adam's apple was moving up and down so much it threw me off and —" A sheepish Rapunzel makes excuses for her slip of the sharp knife that she was giving her one arm incapacitated hubby his first proper clean shave in...well, let's just say in a very, very long time.

After the pair had awoken to the revealing light of day, Rapunzel's suspicions that her lover, top to bottom, was absolutely filthy were abundantly made clear, once she had checked his operated on arm was no longer 'infected'—a terrifying little word in the 1850s—that Prince Hans had chased away.

Thank God!

The previous week's worth of being punched and beaten to a pulp in dingy cells aboard pirate ships, grave-digging, rolling around in the dirt in scuffles, being shot to the ground by some peg-legged madman all added up to one grimy, mucky, dirty Flynn Rider.

And after she had painstakingly taken great pains to keep his wounded, freshly sutured arm and its applied herbal ointment under the bandages she'd wrapped, perpendicular to the water, Rapunzel had sedulously stripped down her husband to bathe him—and herself in the splashing process—in the fjorden's cleansing fresh waters.

Next, the spunky brunette had secured an extremely sharp razor from Hans (who had been awakened by all the couple's splashing waterside noisy antics and was already seeing to his own
morning whisker removal by the fjorden's banks to show a presentable face to the nation, especially its lovely Queen.) Prince Hans was innocently unaware that his now primped and trimmed sideburns were a subject of Queen Elsa's molesting in his sleep in the night.

Rapunzel had gone to work in relegating Eugene's famed facial hair—way too long and dirt encrusted to be deemed sexy—with the borrowed blade, Pascal and a bar of soap at the ready.

"Just be a bit more meticulous on the face. I find I've grown attached to it." A witty Eugene says to his artful wife with feigned pursed lips as he was enjoying her tender ministrations over his entire yearning body in the fjorden's waters, despite the blood loss here and there.

As for Rapunzel, she was discovering how deliciously vain and sarcastically humored her lover was. And she imagines, right now in this moment, that's what she'd missed most these past lonely months that they'd barely been giving one another acknowledging glances.

"So have I." The multiple kisses shared throughout the night may have made her a second-hand drunk on love, as the still head-over-heels young woman coquettishly broadcasts while she pets her husband's yet hirsute lathered cheek. She still was sure he was the most devastatingly gorgeous man to walk the earth, shiners and all, despite the excess plumage grown along his tanned manly jawbone.

"Glad to hear it, Blondie." His throaty words drip raw desire from his crooked mouth up at her, which then delivers on her wanting lips as desperately passionate a morning greeting as she had ever known. The months of cool separation and near death experience seemed to have given this regretful man a renewed vigor to prove his love, especially now that his conscientious wife had most convincingly ensured his cleanliness to be free to push a giggling Rapunzel down to the fjorden's bank beneath him…

"Have you finished with my shaving razor yet, sister Rapunzel? May I call you 'sister', Princess? I do hope it wasn't too sharp for your tastes, Brother. I prefer to keep it exceedingly sharpened for a close cut. Good morning. How is the arm? We do want to give it ample time to heal before any overexertion that could...penetrate last night's sutures."

After giving himself and the clothing (that would have to dry on him in the all day sunlight, unhealthy practice, alas), a quick dip in the fjorden on the opposite bank divided by a concealed hanging tree, Prince Hans had kept his eyes averted long enough to be discreetly observant of the flirtatious dealings between the married couple at the water's edge where he was gathering dry wood to start a fire as well in the camp.

"Damn interfering skinny twit." A rolling double black-eyed frustrated Eugene remarks of the red haired, dripping wet younger man who Pascal passes the razor blade to, for one last presentable-to-the-Queen detail—

With a skilled slash, Hans swiftly relinquishes the thin ponytail he had been sporting for almost these past two years in one swift motion, then just as offhandedly finishes pulling a shirt on over his bony yet muscular frame after returning to the water's edge to clear up the rest of his clothing and tools of ablution.

With wide eyes upon her new brother in law's awe inspiring panache and distinct take on good-looking vanity, Rapunzel guiltily, yet carefully, pushes her own breathtakingly sumptuous husband back to roll from atop her onto the bank.

"Eugene! After all Prince Hans has done for us. Your brother's only watching out for your health." She shushingly reprimands her grumbling love's ill temper towards his concerned younger sibling.
"He's only being a royal pain in the ass." Crass Flynn Rider cheekily smirks up from the sand bank he was laid out upon. With a smarmy grin, the competitive man is at least able to be proud to show off his self judged more manly physique from their alleged shared paternal gene pool before his adoring gal's interested eyes.

That is, until Rapunzel wipes the smug look off his soapy face when she again produces the gleaming shaving tool Pascal hands back to her with a hissing chortle at the thief's discomfort. There was a mischievous look in her green eyes as the brown haired girl industriously goes back to her enticing job of playing barber-ette to her muscle-bound dark hairy-chested love.

"Oo-kay...I'm at your mercy, Darlin'" Giving in to the pleasured torture, Eugene closes his eyes and indulges Rapunzel to get some thrills out of her little loving wifely task of shaving his stunningly gorgeous face again.

"Oh, Prince Hans! You're up too early! I wanted you to rest for at least a few hours." Directing Olaf, who had been holding the hand of the young Queen as they strolled across the field, to aid Kristoff in tending to the horses and Sven, Elsa walks up to where a damp Prince Hans was already busy cooking at the campfire. As she approaches closer, a bedazzled Elsa can't help her perfectionist hand from unconsciously completing the picture by tucking a still wet stray lock of his hair back, causing a surprised Hans to blush as red as his wet hair, minus his pirate-y ponytail, caught fire in the sun again. Though growing admittedly more enamored of his neat and tidy appearance, Elsa gasps at her own boldness, as her cheeks and his have a bashfully shy blushing contest.

"Forgive my dampness, I just bathed. A-hem" A by now crimson-faced Hans, embarrassed at his brazen declaration of a subject taboo in the Victorian era, clears his throat, but seeing her in the morning sunlight quite baffled him at times. Elsa too was mystified at how she was unable to take her eyes from drinking in Hans Westergaard's attractive moistened visage in the new morning glow.

"I am quite accustomed to only taking short sleeping cycles and wished to confer with all of you an idea I have been turning over in my head for our next course of action. I do recognize that time is still of the essence." Hans looks up from the pan full of wedged potatoes sautéed in various herbs (that had not been pestled by the women into Eugene's antibacterial arm ointment that the versatile Prince of the Southern Isles conjured up) the expert galley chef had tossed together to braise as the fire was starting up.

"But I do thank you for your concern, Queen Elsa—and please pardon my uncouth rudeness in speaking out of turn. Good morning." Hans smiles, suddenly remembering his manners, with all the due niceties befitting a royal Prince to a fine Lady. "And thank you again for benevolently volunteering for last night's watch duty. For your sacrifice, I can assure you I am quite well rested, all due to your thoughtful efforts."

Elsa timidly smiles back guiltily, finally able to wrench her gaze from his eye-catching, picturesque countenance, ashamed she was still vividly recalling the cherished warmth of his body heat pressed against hers in the cool still night. She was startled to find that she actually liked the feeling she once never thought to ever consider in the disinterested past.

Hans and Elsa's similarly conscious-stricken eyes meet over the now roaring fire once again, his inquisitive innocent eyes locked in her lost ones melting another layer of ice shielding this retiring Queen's heart.

"If I could ask you to set the breakfast table—er—picnic blanket—I will present my humble logistical suggestion to everyone over the meal. And then we can be forthwith on the next leg of
our journey, now that our destination is imminently in sight.” Hans reveals to Elsa in that lofty, high-minded, yet urgently sincere voice she was both impressed and titillated by the responsible leadership qualities the young naval officer imbued through it.

Chasing that disarranging thought away, elegant Elsa of Arendelle sees fit to kneel to the ground, unrumpling the blanket near the campfire as she does. She then digs into the basket Hans must've set out for her to dispatch the dinnerware, which she attentively sets out accordingly. Though a heavy heart hung over the solitary plate she leaves safely tucked inside the basket's wickered folds, the one with the golden crocus of their kingdom of Arendelle's crest along the fancy rim.

The newly inscribed initials of K&A were scripted in the center of the fine wedding porcelain dinnerware Elsa gifted that her missing little sister was so proud to own.

Her own specially crafted china with the names of 'Kristoff & Anna' forever entwined in gold…

Chapter End Notes

Muma – Caribbean for Mother
Vloekwaard meid – Dutch for 'damnable wench'
gyal– Caribbean for 'young girl'
"Amen."

Over breakfast of the well-received roasted herbal wedges of potatoes seasoned by culinary artist Prince Hans Westergaard, the skilled chef/expert strategist brought to the floor a new plan.

"May I suggest, the most expedient way to give chase to a seabound small steamcraft would be via a similarly accelerated vessel of a higher pedigree?" Hans casually had begun to introduce his well thought out idea.

"I had a sinking feeling we hadn't seen the last of pirate ships with Captain Kidd here in charge." Sarcasm revived two-fold, Flynn Rider comments, still a little sore at his 'kid brother' for earlier unwarranted interference in matters of making love to his wife.

Besides, Eugene was decidedly not a 'morning person' if there wasn't a grand heist to get the adrenaline flowing at this ungodly hour, especially not after he had been deducted of his trademark stubble by dawn's early light, though his close-shorn barber was so adorable. She had made it worth his while though, washing and bathing him as if he were a newborn babe in the fjorden.

Right now however, Rapunzel shoves a potato wedge into her husband's clean-shaven, yet naughty mouth, with a warning pair of flashing green eyes.

"You are wrong on two fronts there, Storbro. First of all, the era of violent privateering and open piracy is blessedly at its time of closure, with only this final unpalatable remnant of an enervated aged mariner as an unusual aberration on the now civilized Naval populated high seas." Hans corrects his 'big brother' in his proudest voice of a sea-faring Naval officer after the well-mannered young man finishes swallowing some of the tasteful potato fare that Elsa had served to the late-to-the-table-chef personally with a smile.

The Ice Queen had tried to keep the covered food as hot as possible for him.

"Wait. Is there a lecture that comes free of charge with your second point, too, 'little Bro'?" Eugene says with a droll pair of rolled eyes across the breakfast blanket he was lounging lazily upon to his (I still need proof) younger sibling.

"Oh. Did that come across as...I hardly meant to be...Forgive me, please." Hans stumbles over an embarrassed apology, his face reddening at the ungentlemanly accusation of being a common blowhard.

"I'm joking! Sheesh! You're way too uptight, Sideburns, with all those high-faluting fancy terms and big ideas! Just try to act like a normal twenty-something virile young kid, and live a little once in a while." Eugene prompts rather expressively with flourished hand motions. (Ouch.)
"Yes, a-hem." Hans finds he did not like being called out on matters concerning his…virility…especially in front of a young lady whom he was growing uncommonly fascinated by the enchantment of her mesmerizing blue eyes.

So much so, the still remorseful penitent was finding it hard to meet those beautiful glowing orbs by the light of day and honestly be able to look back without chastening himself for his fanciful impulse to even entertain this overwhelming proclivity of his illicit attraction for pure and virtuous, beneficent and charitable Queen Elsa of Arendelle.

Anyway…Focus on the subject at hand, man!

The deeply crimson-faced 25-year-old, yet inexperienced with these new surging emotions redirects his wandering mind as he stands to get a new perspective when Eugene speaks again.

"Okay! Okay! Lay on me the 'second thing'!" The blustery berated by wife man gives into greater demand to ask for court to be held.

"Well…yes. The second issue was—I am not 'in charge of anything.' Here or anywhere, sir. It is entirely up to Her Royal Majesty, Queen Elsa, to make every final decision. After all, it is her country, and the welfare of her sister at stake here. While we can offer our best attempts at level-headed support as a team for this worthy cause, I personally have nothing to give but the totality of my meager, yet unconditional insight and whatever application there is for the utility of my hands in the Queen's service and under her intelligent judgment, I bow completely to in every matter."

"Wow. He really speaks well, doesn't he?" More accustomed to the ironic sarcasm of her own irreverent boy as she nudges with an elbow her tall blonde cousin, seated beside her on the blanket, Rapunzel was rather moved by Hans' open expression of humility before Norway's sovereign. Hans meets Elsa's now wide eyes with a reverent respectful bow of his red head and sinewy torso both to the Queen as he symbolically squeezes her two hands in his warm ones and easily lifts the willing girl to her feet up with him.

"Yep, yep! And he cooks really good, too." Olaf answers the brunette, as his big single toothed mouth was happily munching away from the potato plate he was finishing off.

"Hey, why isn't she answering? Do you think she doesn't know how to answer?" The naïve snowman whispers 'discreetly' behind his perforated sticks for hands to Rapunzel when Elsa's bewitched eyes upwards search for a proper response to the munificent man standing face to face directly before her.

"Yes, he does speak…extremely well." Shaking herself awake, Elsa finally murmurs in response to Rapunzel and Olaf's question. "But I want you, Prince Hans—I want all of you—" Elsa pauses with the addendum to include everyone into her statement when Kristoff reappears after seeing to the transportation was fed, watered, and hitched up ready to get back on the road.

"—to know that I greatly appreciate whatever helpful input and advice you have to offer in this terrible affair. It is a blessing and a comfort to me to know that each of you have my little sister, Princess Anna's, best interests in mind and that I am not alone in this heart-heavy struggle. Without Anna here to ground me, I would be going crazy, if not for all your warmth and support to help me find her in this crisis. Thank you." The Ice Queen gives each upturned face around the breakfast blanket a grateful nod and smile, until she finally rests her gaze upon the Danish Prince, whose eager eyes could not tear his mesmerized glance away from Elsa's exquisite ones that seemed to be communicating directly with his soul.
"Please consider my small contribution the very least I am able to recompense to yourself and Princess Anna, Queen Elsa." Hans says to her as he gentlemanly kneels at Elsa's surprised feet. He takes her hand and presses it to his closed-eyed lips for a softly brushed kiss to the back of her delicate palm.

"Wow." Rapunzel repeats in awe of the sheer romance as her more down-to-earth, at times anyway, husband rolls his eyes to the heavens.

Remaining silent all this while, Kristoff warily glances up and down between the two, wondering if the once villainous Prince had truly altered his ways.

*Or is this the same song and dance routine of a masterful fraud again?*

The tall blonde realist only could hope that Elsa would possess the calm composure to know the difference this time 'round. He had his own set of troubles too much to be dealing with this wandering-eyed heartbreaker of a Don Juan again.

"Okay!" Eugene claps his hands together, at last ready to leave his comfy headrest-ful position on his wife's spoiling lap to stir himself and leap up like a teenager again as he tugs his petite pretty up with him from the blanket. "So what's the name of the port we're heading to in search for a ship to hire?"

"Salsbrucket is the next closest seaport some 60 kilometers north of here in Nord-Trondelag country." The well-traveled of the land Ice Harvester tersely imparts this vital information in answer to Eugene's flippant question. But Kristoff's slitted eyes were more upon the redhead who was just getting to his feet again to be greeted by the larger man's cynical gaze.

"Yes, Port Salsbrucket on the Kvistenfjorden that melds an outlet into the Norwegian Sea would be most ideal. There must be, I dare hope, a ship in that port we can board passage on to take us swiftly to the Lofoten archipelago faster than we could possibly span on land." With a thought-provoking vow, Hans replies. The former Naval officer from his years of youthful training on the ocean, was more at home on the sea than the skeptical mountain man who had been born and raised on the land, by the land and for the land.

But if that wide ocean was separating him from his Anna, Kristoff Bjorgman would readily take on all of its unforgiving vastness, and then some.

Elsa looks to Kristoff who gives the slender Queen a slight nod.

"Then it is agreed. Thank you all for your input and your sensible idea, Prince Hans. We will obtain a vessel in the Port of Salsbrucket, in order to find Anna and bring her home. Please, let us be on our way." Politely, yet firmly, Elsa makes the final decision and the group rapidly move to clear up the campsite and then load into the two sleigh vehicles that Kristoff already had hitched up to the horses and Sven, who were rearing to get moving on the road again.

With Kristoff at the head of Sven's sleigh carrying Elsa and Olaf in the lead, and Hans at the helm of the Vis-à-vis with Rapunzel, Eugene and Pascal taking up the rear, the rescue party travels forward and North over lands dominated by pointed white-capped mountaintops and numerous fjords in the valleys of their ominous shadows.

In the summertime beauty of the lush green mountain landscape, crystal clear bubbling waterfalls spring naturally from the sides of the mountains they pass. The breathtaking romance of which is not lost on Rapunzel who give silent thanksgiving in praise to the God who created these glorious mountain ranges and also the brilliant new little brother Eugene never knew until he had to save
her husband's life and return the wayward man back to her alive and whole.

As she peers up through the forward peephole at the solitary man keeping his own lonely council offset by the beautiful mountains surrounding, Rapunzel wonders what the kind, handsome young man could have possibly ever done so irrevocably wicked in his relationship with Elsa that he was always severely guilty and repentant about. Anna was involved in the sordid tale somehow too, but it was Elsa that empathic Rapunzel could plainly see that Hans was still in love with from all he's said and done accumulating in this look of utter longing on his face.

And Elsa, though she was denying her obvious tender emotions as best she could, was still deeply in love with the man. So why couldn't they try to rekindle that flame now, when they need one another's emotional support so desperately?

Rapunzel felt she was close enough to either lovelorn subject of her scrutiny to put a hand to the proverbial paddle here in the ever twisting and turning flowing river called 'romance'…

"Hans looks so lonely. Why don't you go up front and talk to him?" In a soft whisper, Rapunzel does what wives do best in such situations—she nudges awake her lowered eyed, lulled-by-the-back-and-forth-motion-of-the-horses-into-a-nap drowsy hubby in the aching side.

But Eugene Fitzherbert had absolutely next to no interest in gazing at the idyllic mountains' beauteous heights.

> You see lofty grandeur to inspire, Blondie? I see a big hill 'o dirt to cross. And boy, have I had my full share of dirt digging to last a lifetime! Eugene snorts awake with an incredulous raise of one of his eyes, but Rapunzel wasn't backing down.

"What about?!" He then sighs a grumble, giving in to the inevitability and sitting up straighter in his slouched seat.

"Elsa, silly! Maybe he'll explain why they've broke up like this, now that he has a big brother to confide in. I tried before to get him to open up, but…it must be kinda hard for a guy to tell another girl. But since you're his brother…" Rapunzel whispers close to his ear, though Eugene also never found much curiosity in other people's unlucky romances.

"Oh, yeah. My new little brother…Now, that I could be fascinated to discover the reason this fanciful prince wants to include me in his heraldic family tree." A sardonic Flynn Rider was far too world-weary in his 31 years of life under his fending for himself belt to accept offhand such an improbable bonanza of prominent wealthy familial ties.

Not that he wanted for it anymore, the former thief already counted himself lucky for striking it rich in his Rapunzel in every way imaginable…

With a pecked kiss on his lady-love's cutely puckered lips, the feeling revitalized (despite the slug still embedded in his upper arm) self-proclaimed agile 'master thief' steals his way through the front opening as deftly as possible, until the broad shouldered man just manages to lumber out onto the crowded driver's front bench.

"Hi there, Sideburns." Eugene begins his teased greeting with a smarmy smirk once he gets himself and his achy arm settled on the right side of his carriage seat.

"Oh, hello, Storbror. How is the arm?" Hans' viridescent green eyes unhappily tear themselves away from their entrancement of witnessing Queen Elsa let out and re-braid her mussed hair in the backseat of the sleigh in front of them after Olaf had clumsily gotten his branches stuck in her
blonde tresses. The giddy snowman had been extolling the sucrose sweet Jordalsnuten mountain rising in the far eastern horizon for its "Sugarlump" nickname due to the snow-white 'powdered sugar' look atop its high altitude peak that he had been hounding poor driven to distraction Kristoff about for kilometers.

"Fine and peachy, Doc." Eugene shows off by manfully flexing his muscle, then biting the edgy pain back with a one-eyed smirk.

"So… Storbror? That means 'Brother', right?" Eugene asks quite congenially striking up the conversation at his eavesdropping wife's prompting pinch as he glances back at Rapunzel, who was swinging her hands up and down in her own brand of sign language.

Pascal gives Eugene a droll look at the virtues of being hen-pecked from where the chameleon was seated on the man's shoulder at ear level.

Sigh. What we men do for love…

"Yes, 'Older Brother'." Hans answers succinctly the exact Danish translation as he maneuvers the unmatched pair of horses around a particularly treacherous stretch of rocky land between the parallel center country fjords, as Kristoff was leading Sven carefully the same way. Olaf had been sent flying through the air off the edge of the cliff but quick thinking Elsa yanked him back in just in the nick of time with a lassoed ice rope back to the safety of the sleigh before both men's astonished eyes.

"Even worse than apron strings. Your choice of poison is different than mine, Handsome…” Eugene mutters under his breath at the life-controlling wonder who was woman, as Rapunzel huffs at the inlaid insult to her gender as a whole.

"Anyways..." Uncomfortably shifting, Eugene gets back on track after his own bit of fluff pinches his saucy tush rather hard in punishment.

"Never had a brother before. Heck, this runaway orphan boy never had a family of any kind before the little missus shared hers with me. Great folks, Arianna and 'ole Fritz. A little clock cuckoo, but fine people to take in a no-good lout like me for a son." Eugene skates on thin ice for a while there, but he ends it with a fond humored smile thinking about his home for the past pretty amazing five years made with Rapunzel's sweet, yet bossy Mom and fun nut of a kooky Dad.

"They sound wonderful. You are a fortunate man to have found such a rare jewel as Princess Rapunzel, Storbror." Hans says with a sincere almost envious smile.

"Yeah. Don't I know it? Great gal in a pinch too." Eugene's sincere comment turns cheeky as his posterior was still smarting, though the gooey-eyed lamb gazing up at him adoringly in the back seat hardly looked capable of such rough-necking.

Until Rapunzel suddenly remembers what she sent her husband up there for to discover in the first place and motions for a threatening Pascal to give him a jab in the ear as a prodded warning of the tongue lash yet to come.

"What about you and your icy diamond? That should be a walk in the park with no fear of parental preference leaning one way or the other anymore. God rest their souls." The worldly thief just goes with the norm it was familial disapproval that must've busted up the pair's young romance in the past.

"King Agdar was indeed a Godly man and also one of the most respected Naval officers of his
time. I only wish I was able to meet he and his wife, the Queen, before their dreadful accident at sea. Although, I do doubt, as 13th in line to my Father's throne, I would have been their top candidate to woo their eldest daughter, even if I was fortunate enough to make their acquaintance."

Hans elucidates with a touch of sadness in his voice.

"So you never even met the folks...Hmmm...Hey! Did you just say '13th in line'?! That can't mean there's twelve more 'Storbrors' back home, does it?! Whoa! Our Dad's been a busy fella. Wait! Thirteen...Are there any aged between you and me, Sideburns?" Eugene suddenly asks with a suspicious glint rising to his jaded eye.

"No, I am quite a few years junior to my other siblings. And in consideration that the time my Father's mistress was rumored to be with child came about at the time my Mother was said to be ill and bedridden, you and I would be the closest in age. Or so was transcribed in the letter I recently found amongst my Mother's papers, imploring her sons to seek you out. I, too, never met my mother, for she died in childbirth having me, her 13th unlucky boy." Hans relates his sad tale to Eugene seated beside him with a melancholy smile.

"Well look on the bright side, Kid. At least you're legit. That's gotta be better off than me. I'm actually the 13th unlucky bastard of your Pops! So we're kinda even there in the jinxed realm—me moreso, I figure, and my sweet Princess who knows all about this hasn't disowned me yet. In fact, she's as pleased as punch to be having my baby. So what do you got to lose, you pure Blueblood?"

"It's not just that...How I wish it were just that..." Hans trails off, staring forlornly ahead with longing at Elsa who was innocently smiling through her anxious grief with Olaf's ever-entertaining help.

Eugene looks at the man's sad puppy-dog eyes upon her pining away with an unquenchable yearning, and he feels a foreign brotherly tug to try to aid his younger brother—Whoa! Still gotta get used to the sound of that!

"Hey, the past is in the past. Just tell her how you feel now—I've found it saves an awful lot of trouble in the end. And believe me, trouble's been my middle name most of my life." Eugene Fitzherbert may not have been an expert in the matters of love, but he's had his share of an unreal fairytale romance he didn't deserve enough to know when a poor blighter had it bad for a Lady Fair.

And they don't come much fairer than that leggy Queenie. I guess we must be brothers, since we've both got a discerning eye for the finest of flowers of the feminine bouquet variety...

"But it'll be the end of you, once she gets you roped and hitched to the post with those lovely long locks." He murmurs sarcastically under his breath, his own 'Lady Fair' knowing him well enough to sense his ironic smile as she jabs his stunning obliques with a snuck up hand through the Vis-à-vis' front opening.

But Hans, so absorbed in his own regretful thoughts, didn't hear the latter discouraging bit as his handsome mouth fixes into a sad smile.

"If only I could..." Hans emerald eyes shine as they trace every lovely line of the delicate young woman now seated primly coiffed in the back seat of the sleigh ahead. Elsa was just as beautiful and elegant and regal as if she were upon her royal throne, Hans fantasizing this, as the doleful smile never leaves his lips.

"So why don'cha? It's not as hard as it seems—trust me—I know. Been there. Done that." Eugene's expressive voice varies from quizzical to challenging to wise in the matter of a few seconds. He
ends it with a placid, uninjured right arm that reaches back over and around his head for the hand of the girl he knew would be there almost instantly to squeeze it back with all her warmth of love.

"Because she is my Dulcinea." Hans' clear tenor speaks freely to the open air, though classically unfamiliar Eugene had absolutely no clue as to what or which or who the younger man was referring to.

"Huh?" The former thief asks, dumbfounded, as Pascal's long tail curls into a question mark on his shoulder, equally perplexed.

"Forgive me. It is a literary expression." Hans apologizes at being unintentionally too enigmatic and superior sounding to his audience. Eugene may have been scratching his jaw in total ignorance, Rapunzel knew her 'Don Quixote' sufficiently to recognize the well read young man's reference.

"—For a woman one is utterly devoted to and completely, hopelessly in love with. But that sentiment is to remain forever unrequited." Hans finishes his best expression of his first attraction, turned to deep feeling of respect, to now something even more...all with the depressing air of a defeated man.

"Come on, lil' Bror! You're selling yourself short! Sure, you're a bit foppish, but I don't see why you think in such extreme terms! Women are beautiful creatures, but they have been widely reported as being fickle enough to change their minds over a period of time. It looks to me like she's all for forgiving you now. I say, run with it while the getting's good! It's pretty obvious to anyone with eyeballs in their sockets that that little lady is head over heels—" In his quick talking, hundred words a minute way, Eugene starts to give his brotherly advice to the facts as he sees them, when Hans abruptly lifts a halting hand to stop him.

"Please. I do not wish to delve into the sordid details of my erroneous past concerning Queen Elsa and Princess Anna. But suffice it to say, for what I did…" At first fierce, Hans' uncharacteristically tense voice quiets into a small quiver. He shakes his head, as if to shake off the foul memory of his unforgivable deeds.

"For all I did wrong...It is impossible." Hans hangs his dismayed head, his every feature despondent and dejected as he folds up into himself mentally.

Eugene didn't need to be an empathy to know the discussion was closed on this matter—even for a brother, as the younger is heard to whisper just beneath the winds rushing over the fast moving sleigh:

"She could NEVER be mine...I ruined any chance of that long ago..."

"Okay, Kid. I'll...leave you alone now." Eugene relents that Hans wasn't ready to explain the inner workings of his broken heart.

"But one last jewel of wisdom from your new older brother, AKA former convicted to the death penalty criminal thief, AKA still confessing sinner who's done a bit of soul-searching in his dark days too:" Eugene preludes as he gets up to climb back into the rear compartment.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast." Eugene quotes the one line that stuck in his head from Alexander Pope's stirring 18th century poem 'An Essay on Man,' based on the Biblical epistles of St. John, that he happened across one day leafing through that book of poetry he'd been given by his wife's mother last Christmas.

You read it! Rapunzel smiles, with tears welling in her eyes for her Eugene appreciating her and her
mother's efforts to subtly bring the message of God's Love into the orphan boy's starved for Faith's Anchor previous existence.

Rapunzel lands a smooch on his pleasantly surprised lips when he clambers back into the passenger car, Eugene just lapping all the extra attention up. He didn't have a clue what he did right, but he wasn't going to argue about it. How could he? His tongue was too busy at the moment.

Although equally enjoying her love's lavish kisses, Rapunzel was still confused by Hans' indecipherable statements as to the reasons why he and Elsa called it quits, for she had only seen this young man's striving to be righteous, fair and trustworthy side versus the dark, unseemly, grasping realm of avarice he blamed himself wholly for.

For all men have the capacity to sink to those rapacious levels if left unchecked by Biblical morals of principled goodness, just as the essay proved to vindicate the holy ways of God to fallen man.

And Hans Westergaard would certainly count himself among the fallen at that time of his darkest hour 2 years ago, where he lashed out against all that he knew was right in desperation to be Arendelle's champion when all his plans went wrong.

The evil plan of which was shaped by fear and doubt into the cruel plot to connive, deceive and claw his insipid way to a throne that would never righteously belong to him.

*It must be impossible...For she was the innocent angel of pure light who needed to escape the cold monster I had become...*

*Dear God, is there any hope left to spring Eternal for someone as undeserving as me?*

*Created half to rise, and half to fall; Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;*  
-‘An Essay on Man’ – Epistle III

Perhaps the mortal man in self loathe did not realize the Hope he too was seeking had been waiting for him with open Arms all the while, patiently, as the poem his brother had referred him to before, plays in his well memorized head in turns.

Hans breathes in the fresh summer breeze and feels the glow of sunlight's warmth on his face as he mindlessly drives Iriserende and Guddy behind Kristoff's sleigh with Sven.

There, a certain young woman still glitters like a sparkling snowflake twirling down from Heaven to bedazzle his eyes with an inner radiance that was as untouchable as pure white snow cascading over his entire gloomy grey world...

*Meanwhile opinion gilds with varying rays Those painted clouds that beautify our days;*

*See! and confess, one comfort still must rise, 'Tis this, though man's a fool, yet God is wise.*  
-‘An Essay on Man’ – Epistle II
The kilometers roll by quickly for the two rested horse and reindeer teams. By the time it was noon, the sleighs had already traversed from Namsos' valleys to the areas of Skogmo and Vasbotna, along the Vetterhusbotn River.

At the Sktoyvstadvatnat Lake running along the base of the similarly named fjellet, the two vehicles board a simple wooden slab ferry. It was designed for large livestock and cart passengers of all types and sizes for the twenty meter crossing in this rural neck of the largely unpopulated woods of the Trondelag county, where stunning mountain vistas and beautiful waterfall scenes were plentiful.

A few more kilometers of travel beyond the lake, and the group soon enter the municipality of Naeroy's port village of Salsbrucket. The quaint water town was situated at the end of the Oplofjord when it meets the mouth of the river Opployelva.

But it was what was stationed in the western side of the village in the Langnes Harbor that captures all the travelers' attentions.

There, in all her bowsprit, topsail and tall yard-arm glory, stood a 2-masted fore and aft triangular main-sailed Bermuda rigged schooner.

"There she blows!" Eugene lets out a loud bellow from the sleigh over the open port with cupped hands to enhance the sound in a mocking old sea-dog voice, to which Rapunzel gives his naughty mouth a stifling clamp over, as if her fully grown husband was no better than a mischievous child.

"Just as you projected, Prince Hans." Queen Elsa calmly states as the pair of sleighs pull into the dock wharf where a pier's raised walkway leads adjacent to where the mid-sized schooner was anchored offshore in the coastal natural port.

"Accompanied by a hopeful prayer, Your Majesty." Hans, quite formally again, responds with his head held shamefully down from making eye contact with her after the ride's introspective conversation with his brother.

Although, the gentleman in him can't help but still rush to help the Queen alight from the Ice Harvester sleigh where Kristoff was tethering first Sven, then Hans' Vis-à-vis to a weathered post on the wharf after the redheaded man had abandoned it to Eugene's questionable care of equines.

Rolling his eyes to the heavens after a quick assessment of the layout, Kristoff then swiftly clomps across the wharf's wooden plank deck until it leads him to the designated harbormaster's small office building.

The 'Harbormaster' was the county's Naval official representative, responsible for enforcing the regulations of this particular harbor of Salsbrucket. He also was in charge of ensuring the safety of navigation and security of the harbor and correct operation of the port facilities, all of which required a steady reliable hand in leadership.

"You stay here on the sleigh with Sven, Olaf." With a warning eye and pointing finger, Elsa informs her eager snowfriend, who was bouncing up and down to jump down from the sleigh he's been captive of for hours.

"But I want to see the Harbormaster, too…" Olaf whines like a child at being left out, as he pokes his opposable 'thumbs' together as he peeks over the sleigh's edge.

"Midshipman Olaf? The Queen's order is law in the Navy." With a raised brow and quietly
commanding voice, Prince Hans knew how to charm this simple snowman into instant obedience.

"Aye-aye, Sir!" Olaf salutes both his 'Admirals' and settles back onto the rear seat, whistling a sailor's tune beneath his flurry as Sven looks back to chuckle at him.

"Thank you. You're very good at managing Olaf. He respects you." Elsa softly comments as she reattaches her arm to Hans' offered one to walk along the rickety wooden planks of the pier.

"I can't imagine why." Hans softly responds, his mood still rather low after silent review of his past inequities all morn.

"Well, I can." Elsa says soberly as Hans finally looks up to meet her eyes with an unspoken mouthed 'thank you' passing between them as they stroll the deck.

"Do you have the horses, Storbror?" Hans asks Eugene as the pair pass by where the man, after scruffing Guddy's mop of hair back over his complacent face, was beginning to carefully approach the skittish pony, but for her, armed with gifts.

"Oh yeah! Who da man?! Got this filly eating right out of the palm of my hand." Mastering the art of handfuls of sugar cubes to feed Iriserende's sweet tooth, Eugene triumphantly pats himself on the back, he and high-strung horses previous to now not too 'simpatico.' "Wouldn't 'ole Maximus love to meet you and your soft lips on a dark night, sweetie?" He murmurs under his breath to the lovely Fresian mare.

"That goes for you too, Handsome." The teasing man insinuatingly gives the pair arm in arm a look that told volumes as he calls after them down the wharf.

Hans merely shakes his now crimson-eared smiled head as he opens the door for her to enter the cramped port representative's office.

"WHAT do you mean there's NO CREW for the 'Gler'?! WHAT kind of TWO-BIT backwater outfit are you running here?!!"

Neither Elsa, nor Hans expected to enter the Salsbrucket Port Authority's Office to hear soft-spoken Kristoff's normally low-key voice be anything but. The 6'5" tall blonde, who barely fit in the low ceiling-ed building, was bending threateningly over the scrawny, timorous administrator practically pinned up against the back map wall's corner cowering.

"Please sir! I must take great exception to your tone, concerning the productivity and efficiency of this port. Though it is in the Northern regions of this great land of ours, out of the way of most Naval traffic, we here still see to many important shipboard refittings that are essential in putting the final touches on the Navy's newly constructed fleet." He retorts huffily in great detail. "Our Salsbrucket Sawmill is one of the most respected viable, functional establishments, widely known for the honed wood-working skills of the hardworking carpenters in proud, gainful employment under direct order of Her Norwegian Majesty's service." The pointy chinned mouse-like pencil-pusher transforms into a fierce lion when his official duties in his beloved monarch's name was being questioned.

The Harbormaster stands as tall as his 5'5" diminutive height could muster before the towering Kristoff, who was undeterred and still glowering down at him just as equally.

*The art is all in how you present your case...*

"It is excellent to hear such a rousing show of utilitarian patriotism contributed in loyal upstanding
Naval service to your sovereign Queen, Harbor Master." Prince Hans was no slouch in the 'art' of the con, like his brother, as he swoops in to commend the ruffled feathers of the be-spectacled smallish middle-aged man with a few well-placed sympathized compliments.

"Ah, yes. We strive to insure that each and every ship that sails into the Salsbrucket Harbor upholds the highest standards of Naval regulations in due honor of our beautiful, exalted Queen." The Harbormaster, after pushing aside the flipped open section of the map Kristoff was hounding him about, snobbishly motions over his shoulder.

There, above the extensive oceanic maps of the fjords of this area that led into estuaries that would soon meld into the Norwegian Sea, a precious painting was carefully hung in all its gold-gilt framed glory not befitting this tiny, cramped and dowdy seaport structure that reeked of fisk.

And not just any picture.

"Why, thank you for your inspiring words and dutiful running of this extremely vital port. My country thanks you for your tireless years of service, Harbor Master—I am sorry, what was your name?" But when the tall blonde woman steps from behind polished smooth-talker Westergaard, the uppity government worker has to do a double take.

His beady eyes dart from beneath his thick rimmed glasses between his most favored portrait of his beloved sovereign and the real-life creature of royal elegant deportment actually standing before him in his little water closet of an office.

He stares for a full minute dumbfounded at Elsa before taking on and off his specs to rub them on his fluted tie to be certain his eyes weren't deceiving him—that he was literally standing in the presence of royalty.

He then drops to his spindly knees in head-bowed utter respect for his revered leader.

"Your Majesty. You awe your servant Alfen to deem my humble harbor worthy of a state visit of your gracious self. May I say? I am honored to be in your presence, Queen Elsa."

The nearly prostrate in subjugation man couldn't even raise his head, he was that enthralled at meeting his adored royal.

"Mr. Alfen, please sir, you may stand. We wish to speak to you on an urgent matter concerning a vessel under your command." Elsa touches the harbor official's shoulder, sending him to seventh heaven at her gentle welcoming touch.

"Of course, Your Majesty! Simply utter the word and it will be expressly seen to in your honor!"

The overzealous man looks up finally with her permission, a great big grin on his face in awestruck enthusiasm.

"Thank you, sir. As this man, my royal representative, was instructing you—" Elsa gives an abashed Kristoff, who was rubbing his neck, a tad shamed by his rash behavior earlier, a smile. "Please, call in the crew right away. We require immediate passage upon that Naval schooner Gler stationed in your harbor to take us to the Mosken Island in the Lofoten archipelago." Elsa states with all the regal dignity, grace, and manners her 'Pappa' taught her to address her nation's adoring servants. She fully believed her royal command would clear up any confusion of red-tape restrictions the man was conveying to Kristoff earlier.

"Except that." But Harbor Master Alfen's pinched face sinks in monotone when he must deny his beloved Queen's first official supplication under his nautical jurisdiction.
"Why not?" Taken aback by his refusal, Elsa asks in surprise at having her Queenly imposed authority questioned.

"Your Majesty. The HnoMS Gler has come to dock here in Salsbrucket port for several months for the final construction of the interior of the cabins and some detail woodwork on the bridge, not to mention the deck flooring of the birch, mahogany and cedar ramps that our skilled carpenters at the Sawmill specialize in for Naval use." The Harbor Master begins to explain.

"Well, we won't mind traveling with a few detail work construction projects half done. Please assemble the crew as soon as possible." Elsa gives her most winning smile, reassuringly dismissive of any minor tasks let unattended on their ship that seemed to be troubling the nervous little man.

"But Your Majesty! It's not only that!" Alfen anxiously waits for his exalted Queen to finish before interjecting.

"See? The little creep's a brick wall! Let me deal with him proper to get some proper cooperation." Kristoff seethes, his impatient anger starting to get the better of him again as he stomps forward to intimidate on purpose the minute man.

"Kristoff! Please calm down! We must give due respect to the Harbor Master. I'm sure we can work this out, in a more sedate manner." Elsa berates the big man like the irate little brother Kristoff was acting like.

"I am sorry to have to inform you that the Gler has been scheduled to be docked here in this port for three months and the crew has either been reassigned or granted shore leave in the interim." Alfen sheepishly admits under Kristoff's growling glare.

"So there is no crew here in Salsbrucket for me to assemble. No Captain. The Gler cannot legally leave this port without official consent from the Admiralty, if there is no Kommander representing them." The by-the-book official knew all the ins and outs of the Naval rulebook that he read as bedtime stories since he was a boy.

But those rules couldn't help him from shrinking behind his desk piled high with fresh paperwork of the day, in cowering refuge from the large blonde man who appeared angrier with every Naval rulebook stipulation he'd addressed…

"WHAT!? I AM THE ADMIRALTY! IF I SAY THIS SHIP MUST SET SAIL, THIS SHIP WILL SET SAIL! DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?! ASSEMBLE A SKELETON CREW, NOW! MY SISTER'S LIFE IS IN DANGER!...

But it was the other blonde in the room that Harbormaster Alfen should have feared. Queen Elsa virtually explodes as she outdoes Kristoff one in venting anger sufficiently well as she shrilly shouts the order at poor Alfen, shivering with cold in his tiny office behind his desk, where a strange gust of cold wind blows all the neatly stacked papers spinning through the air all about his frightened head.

"But…there…are no…officers around here. I'm so, so sorry. This is merely a ship building yard, with no naval officers based here to take the helm of that modern steamship's responsibility. Nor any I know of visiting in the near vicinity, Your Majesty. They've all been called in to the launch of the HnoMS Nidaros warship in the south, at the main naval shipyard of Bergin. I can't apologize enough for not being able to accommodate you better. I am so, so very sorry…"

The before blustery little man with the big bossy chip on his shoulder is reduced to a sniveling sycophant, almost on the verge of nervous tears as Alfen whimpers before his angry Queen, with a
frustrated to get going Kristoff ready and willing to pound the uncooperative harbormaster into submission right behind the fuming woman.

Good thing there was a yet a cool head (with a warm, stabilizing hand) waiting in the wings for his chance to speak.

Hans had been deliberating over his next words carefully, as he walks over to place a calming hand on Elsa's icy shoulder, the Queen's arms wrapped around herself, trying to regain control from her anger lashed out fear and Hans' hand was helping her at that task amazingly well.

Prince Hans then takes a sure step forward to gaze down and address the port official cowering behind his desk.

"Is the Gler seaworthy, sir?" Hans, who had remained subdued all whilst Elsa and Kristoff had vented their anger at the by-the-book man, asks quietly and sanely, his query.

"Beyond a full refueling of fresh coal for the steamship that will take most of the night—Yes, the HnoMS Gler would be ready to launch at the dawn if I get my men to work overtime through the night. So, indeed, it is technically possible, because I can order the men to even stay onboard to keep the boilers pumping on the steamship in place of the normal crew of stationary engineers below decks." Alfen starts to come around to Hans' persuasion. Being as open-minded as he could to the extraordinary idea presented, the bureaucrat was just about to give in to all but one final detail that the safety inspector could not forego for anything.

"But she still would have no Captain/ Kommander to run the ship's new modern navigation on the bridge. That would require an experienced, calm, collected leader's steady hand at the proverbial wheel with suitable nautical knowledge if your intended target is the perilous Moskenstraumen area of the North Sea…" The Harbormaster was doing his best to appease his Queen and be as accommodating as humanly possible, but there were restrictions of safety he had foresworn to uphold before allowing a single vessel under his purview to leave his port helter-skelter.

"But we do. We do have a lifelong experienced on the ocean, Academy graduate and extremely competent Naval officer, whom I have implicit faith in his dependability to command a ship of my Navy." Her inner calm found again within Prince Hans' level center, Elsa turns from the diminutive Alfen to look up at the tall, thin man whose hand was still lightly resting supportive against her no longer frozen cold shoulder, just as he had been there for her nearly this entire whirlwind adventure thus far.

Yes, I do truly believe that the Lord has changed your heart back for the good it was meant to be had circumstances not led you astray.

My Rock in whom I trust…Elsa fluidly moves across the small office with a purpose. For just above the framed portrait of herself, a long steel Norwegian Navy sword was hung in its beautifully detailed leather scabbard on display. She uses a bit of her ice magic to easily unhook and frosted air levitate the exhibited officer's sword from its place on the wall, until its gilt brass Phyrian helmet decorated pommel hilt and gold gilt wrapped ivory grip was firmly held in her ladylike fingers.

Elsa, no…Not me… Hans mouths, shaking his irresolute head at the great trust she was about to freely bestow upon him, and intelligent enough to see the way the wind was blowing, yet still repentant enough to count himself unworthy of it.

The Queen of Norway strides back to where the open mouthed young man was standing, stunned and stupefied into submission by her implausibly incredible trust in the man who had held an elaborate embellished blade such as that once over her tender innocent neck menacingly.
"Please kneel, sir." Elsa orders in the serious calm voice of a nation's ruler as she now wields the blade over his vulnerable neck, but with a far different outcome in mind.

"Lieutenant Hans Westergaard, formerly of the Royal Danish Navy, Sovaernet, I hereby appoint you as Kommander of this vessel, the HnoMS Gler, as chief commander of this special Naval rescue operation to save Princess Anna and bring her home to safety, under loyal service to Queen and country, in the name of Norway, under God." Touching lightly the sword's blade tip to his right then left shoulder, Elsa repeats as much of the traditional language of the official swearing in she had watched her Father preside over many times in the past, though Prince Hans would be her first…

"Please provide the documentation to be signed in your presence, Harbor Master Alfen." The bureaucrat is sent scurrying for the proper papers for them both to sign to make it official.

Elsa somehow wanted this to be as official as possible, perhaps subconsciously to give this disowned royal son who had pride in his Naval service, a place in this world to hold his head high again…

Her cyan blue eyes lock with his emerald green ones with utmost trust in his proven abilities.

As for Hans, he was rendered totally speechless for once, as he witnesses, with stunned eyes, how the harbormaster puts his finger right on the correct form amidst the piles of messed papers skewed about the floor of his office, to wordlessly fill it out and pass it and a dipped ink pen to his still adored Queen as he finally bows to her brilliant solution and magnanimous judgment. 

Elsa looks to share a nod with Kristoff as she takes the ink pen and incepts her signature with a lofty flourish. She then re-sheathes the sword and turns to hand it and the helm of the ship symbolically over to Prince Hans.

Shaking himself awake from the sheer awe of Queen Elsa of Arendelle's forgiving generosity and trust in his skills, Hans gently pulls Elsa to the side of the small room.

"Queen Elsa, I cannot accept this." He quietly protests with pure shock evident on his innocent wide eyed features, gazing at the beautifully designed hilt of the sword snug within decorated tasseled scabbard she had placed in his hands.

"Are you refusing your services in Norway's time of need, Sir?" Elsa asks the baited question with one raised purple eye-shadowed brow as a challenge.

"No! No…Of course, you know I'd only be…delighted…to aid you in your search for Princess Anna, in any way I can, however—" He says in low flustered tones as his reddened cheeks trip over their words.

"'The Queen's order is law in the Navy'." Elsa flaunts his own words from just a few minutes ago to Olaf back at Hans, with a smirking lift to her lips at the irony.

"It is decided. Kommander Hans Westergaard of my Sjøforsvaret, Prince of the Southern Isles, you are officially drafted to serve in my nation's Naval forces, under my direct command alone, as ship's Captain of the Naval steam powered schooner, the HnoMS Gler." Cutting Han's reticent sentence off, Elsa almost pompously declares her sovereignty over him as she returns to the desk and finishes signing the remainder of the official papers that would make Prince Hans now part of her kingdom's Naval defense forces.

Elsa then hands Hans the dipped pen with a hopeful look in her exotically lustrous eyes gleaming
up her confidence in him to guide their steam-powered craft to the North Islands for Anna's sake.

Hans could never deny those sumptuous eyes a single thing again. Their fingers gingerly touch one another's as the pen passes between their hands, and the Danish Prince adds his distinguished signature to the official looking form that would enlist him as a commissioned officer into the Norwegian Royal Navy, as stoic Kristoff looks out the window to the steamship awaiting to carry them all to their fate beyond the dock…

*Kommander Hans Westergaard, Sjoforsvaret...How is this much magnanimity possible to be granted to a sinner such as I? And why by the benevolent angel, this unworthy man wronged most in this world, am I over and over blessed?

"I will have your ship ready by dawn's light. May God go with you on your first mission, Kommander Westergaard. That sword gaining dust always longed for a fine Navy man to own it. It suits you well." Harbor Master Alfen offers with a saluted hand to his brow to first the newly appointed dashing young Captain, and then the gloriously exquisite Queen of the realm looking on behind him. Who, in her wisdom, had specifically chosen his destiny to serve her, with a purpose and an unfinished essay on the man yet unwritten…

*Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise: My footstool earth, my canopy the skies. Know, then, thyself, presume not God to scan; The proper study of mankind is man.
-An Essay on Man, Epistle I & II

Chapter End Notes

Storbror- big brother in Danish
Sovaernet- Royal Danish Navy in Danish
Sjoforsvaret – Royal Norwegian Navy in Norwegian
Kommander - Captain of a sea vessel in Norwegian
"I hope the food here is at least decent. Taverns aren't exactly known for their fine haute cuisine."
Flynn Rider says under his breath to his wife in his inimitable style. Rapunzel slaps his arm in punishment for his loud-mouthed rudeness as the couple follow Elsa and Hans into the hostel.

"Ouchy! Try the face next time. Everything else hurts! Okay, maybe not the face. What did you do to my delightful stubble, Woman?!" The vainglorious man pauses before the pride of the establishment's frosted glass mirror over the bar to inspect his deducted facial hair as they walk by the tavern side entrance of the hostel that the harbormaster had recommended the group stay for the night until the ship was ready on the morn.

"Sorry…!" Rapunzel apologizes to her handsome husband whose trademark smirk reappears at the thought of a real, actual bed awaiting his aching bones—and hers beside him, in the near future.

"No more 'sorries' for me, Darlin'—ever again. You just keep that baby of ours happy in there." Eugene Fitzherbert may not have ever thought himself to be a sappy, sentimental kind of guy, but something about being presented with the fact that he was going to be a new father brought out the protector in him as he winks and gently pats her full tummy.

She giggles at his touch, still relieved her husband was alive and well enough to enjoy these glad tidings, thanks to 'doctor' Hans.

Flynn then lightens Rapunzel's load of carrying the parcels of new clothing and traveling supplies that she and Elsa had just been shopping for in that shop they passed, before these five people came to lodge here 'luxuriously'.

Though Kristoff had already come and gone. His responsible yet distraught, one-track mind was expeditiously getting everything done before boarding that ship as soon as it was ready at daybreak before he would rest in a fancy hostel. Logically capitulating to the greater speed of the modern seafound craft Elsa had conscripted than his sleigh over northern Norway's multiple waterways' travel, Kristoff's total focus now was to set sail on that blasted ocean to chase those wacko crazed scheming pirates' tails to catch up ASAP. And then, once he got his big hands around them, he'd beat those bandit jerks to a mushy pulp until the blonde muscleman had his stolen Anna back safe and sound, no matter what it takes, before the poor man went totally stone crazy, not knowing what was happening to his new wife.

The group gathered in the hostel lobby were also minus the snowman and chameleon that they had stashed inside Sven's sleigh in the covered barn with the horses, so as not to bring undue attention, with as many carrots and sugar-frosted pepperkake, krumkake and panekake sweet cakes and treats that the mercantile had on its shelves.

"Eugene! Your arm!" The small brunette worries for her love's freshly operated on injuries.
But he was a man after all, and 'be careful' wasn't in his vocabulary.

"I've got it, Blondie. I'm tougher than my pretty-boy good looks confute." The swaggering blackguard in him was every bit as lovable as on that magical night they had first fallen in love under the magic lanterns.

Rapunzel smiles despite her woozy tummy attack as Eugene gives her a wink and a smirk, keeping his sucked-in-air pain under wraps.

"That arm will never heal properly if you persist in stressing it. Allow me, Storbror."

*Speaking of pretty boys…*

Eugene smirks as Prince Hans adds their parcels to his already overloaded arms after finishing settling the arrangements for the last three available upstairs rooms in the hostel, with an incognito Elsa hiding behind her new large hat at the front desk.

Now that his arms were deliciously free, Eugene immediately wraps his still partly functional appendages from the back around Rapunzel to massage her full with child—*his child*, no less—queasy stomach.

And all the uncertainty and morning sickness effects are washed away in the tender rocking waves of her love's embrace, that she and he had missed out on for these past contentious months of doubt in his secretive wandering questionable fidelity.

The reconciled married couple pause in this endless moment to gaze up the stairs where Hans was carting up their multiple luggage and newly purchased bags of necessities and clothing supplies.
"Now, that's what little brothers are good for! Picking up the bags. And the tab, if need be. Who knew?" Eugene instills a giggle in his pregnant sickly wife, she happily caressing his tickling, fondling fingers at her Scandinavian dressed lover torso.

With a final companionable chuckle at his comedic words that always put a smile on her face, they climb the stairs in a trudge behind Hans taking the lead. With Rapunzel hanging adoringly on his arm, Eugene didn't mind so much the idea of having a little brother to pick up stuff and carry the bags, and generally kick around. It was actually starting to grow on the lazy bum of a daydreamer, instead.

As long as he stays out of the bedroom tonight…

Eugene gives the redheaded man an inhospitable glance after Hans carefully arranges their batch of parcels on the bed and desk of the inn's upstairs bedroom that was acquired for the married couple.

"We'll be departing early at 5 AM, sunrise, to board the ship. Please try to rest at an early hour after supper, at, shall we say, 1800 hours?" The ever polite gentleman of the Naval forces smiles at Rapunzel, though to her the mere thought of food intake was distressing, as she plunks on the bed
"Yeah, we'll do that, Handsome. Or should I be calling you 'Kommander?' Some guys get all the luck." Eugene teases with an insinuating raised eyebrow. "I wonder what services you rendered to get that little title from our frosty ice queen." He continues to murmur under his breath, so as not to be heard.

Hans gives him a strange look, sensing something inappropriate said, though not quite able to make out the last part of his big brother's rude comment.

"Now, scat! The little lady's not in any condition for company—other than me, that is."

"Understood. My best wishes on your speedy recovery, dear Lady." Hans heeds Eugene's dismissive hand, and swiftly gives Rapunzel a sympathetic smiling bow before exiting the room.

He stops to deposit the remainder of his and Kristoff's clothing satchels in the accommodations they would be sharing, and Elsa's designated parcels in the room situated between the other two.

In this seaport town, where many rough men would likely gather, Hans would have preferred the solitary female not to be left in a room alone, but with Princess Rapunzel in a sickly state and just reunited with the comfort of her husband, and neither Kristoff nor himself a suitable roommate for propriety's sake, Norway's sovereign had assured him that she would be quite safe on her own. After all, the others would be just next door.

But growing up on the sea as a young man, Hans saw enough ill-mannered debauchery amongst men, particularly against the opposite sex, to keep a warning light aglow in his mind.

With that unpleasant sentiment in his head, Hans hastily trots down the stairs. He was aware that Kristoff may be awhile seeing to the proper stabling welfare of the pair of horses they were leaving here, again on recommendation of Mr. Alfen. The official seemed to have a finger on the pulse of this entire dock port town as he gave Kristoff a letter to authorize the storage and care-taking of Iriserende and Guddy, as well as the Vis-à-vis coach sleigh, until they returned to the mainland.

"Elsa?" The disquieted eyed redhead glances quickly around the hostel's lobby where he had left the incognito queen with the innkeeper minutes ago, only to see the large bodied hostel owner berating some impertinent young delivery boys for their tardiness instead.

Considering to himself that he would have seen Elsa had she gone to the second floor, Hans rather rudely interrupts the trading old man to ask his urgent question.

"Excuse me, sir, the lady who was with me is…where?" He asks as calmly as possible, but his heart was strangely pounding.

"Hmm? That blonde young woman in the fancy hat? I couldn't tell ye, sir. She was here one minute, then gone the next. Now, get back to work before I set yer mother on ye, ye roustabout scalawags I have for children!" Obviously a seaman once upon a time himself, the big and tall, portly hostel owner all but brushes Hans off as he yells at the pair of small boys ferociously.

But the youngest, similarly redheaded youth pauses in his scurrying to the barn to tug at the end of Hans' grey cloak.

"Sir, I saw the pretty lady go in there with some of those mean men a few minutes ago." The little lad whispers in Hans' kneeled to his level ear.

"Thank you, young friend, you have the makings of a gentleman." Hans hurriedly whispers back,
mussing the grinning, pleased boy's already askew bangs in anxious perturbation as he rushes
away, following the young lad's leading point.

As he enters the dining room area, Hans was gratified to see Elsa seated at the table, quite alone,
trying to read some type of hand-inscribed map.

"Quee—I believe I should call you just 'Elsa' around here, if that's amenable to you, that is." Sitting
down opposite her, Hans asks in a soft voice as he glances around the strangely overcrowded
dining room, though it was neither dinner nor supper time yet.

"As long as you never call me 'Elsie,' again, I'll be happy with anything." Elsa smiles in a
murmured tease, quite satisfied with herself for engaging some of the men waiting in the lobby
with a few inquisitive questions as to the layout of the Mosken peninsula that several of weathered
seaman seemed acquainted with.

The queen had been agonizing over her beloved little sister Anna's kidnapping all morning. If any
chance presented itself as to exploring the remote island location to familiarize herself with those
pirates' intended point of travel, her big sister Elsa was more than motivated to be enthused.

"There aren't many 'anythings' equal to describe you, but I will endeavor to try, in the future." Hans,
in his concerned relief at locating her unharmed, finds his charming wit close at hand, able
to speak on its own, even as his suspicious eyes continue to gaze around the room full of ragtag
sailors or rough sawmill workers, either seated or rummaging about the area.

And he was fairly sure every one of them was eyeing the pair of them.

**Why did I leave my sword in the room?**

"What is it that you are poring over, may I ask, Que—Elsa." Hans corrects his own polite address
as he mentally counts the number of burly men to five, in all shapes, sizes, ages—and nationalities
—gathered in the small room.

**I can take four with my dagger...**

The confident swordsman pats the side of his lower thigh boot where a new and sharper trusty
blade was always at the ready.

"This is a hand drawn map of the remote, off limits Mosken Island between Nordland and the
Lofoten archipelago! It shows many hidden coves where seamen may dock and **pirates** have been
rumored to obscure their treasure...here...or...over here where the skull and crossbones are
markers. Though, to me, it appears just the rock face side of a mountain on this map those kind
men allowed me to borrow." Elsa innocently nods her head in pleasantries to the pair of big
bearded Englishmen glaring furtively at Hans.

"Yes, very kind of them." Hans answers her, though his alarmed tactical mind was already
considering his best options.

"I believe this section on the western side could be of great interest to us." An enthusiastic for clues
Elsa is surprised when Hans abruptly stands in the middle of her sentence and cuts her off by
startlingly saying:

"Would you care for a drink, Elsa?"

**Make that six...**
"Oh, yes, a freshly brewed tea or coffee would do very nicel…” In her prim, regal way, looking quite fetching in her new fashionable pale blue lace hat, folded over to stylishly conceal half her face, Elsa calmly folds the map so as not to soil its already pretty filthy, dog-eared edges to clear the table for their pre-meal refreshment.

"I mean, a drink in the tavern…Darling. Shall we?" Hans suddenly claims Elsa's shocked, pale hand after relieveing it of the folded map. With a pasted smile well disguising his worried features, Hans leads the lady by the hand from the room, as if it were perfectly natural for the pair to be so familiar.

…Darling?

Pausing by the center dining room table, Hans hands the map over to one of the pair of swarthy, big men seated there, staring at him.

"Thank you for the use of your map, kind sirs. My wife has always been curious about the mysterious seas to the north that she never will visit." Hans was as convincing a fibber as he was smooth on his feet, while he ushers a flabbergasted Elsa from the room.

…His wife…!?  

The Queen of Arendelle's mind whirs at his staggering choice of title for her. Hans bodily presses her towards the tavern opposing the dining room.

"Two crème de Cassis, please." A suave Hans loudly orders when he and a stunned Elsa arrive at the bar, enough to be heard from the lobby where several of the men from the dining room had disturbingly wandered into.

The silently nodding barkeep, who had been polishing his glasses, doesn't blink as he goes to retrieve the ingredients for the high-class fare of a sweet black currant French monk-inspired liquor cocktail.

A shocked Elsa from beneath her wide brimmed Victorian millinery stares at Hans, astounded at his strange actions and even stranger words. She wisely keeps silent but looks at him quizzically, though Hans' observant eyes were careful to be glancing at the men milling about. The tensed Naval officer was sure they were listening to every word.

"Sit, Elsa…please." He adds genially, and she acquiesces, thoroughly confused. She watches the pensive man sit silently beside her at the bar for several minutes, keeping an eye out as the men in the dining room and lobby leave the hostel front door, one or two at a time, without even looking at them, until only three remained in the dining room to genuinely eat an early meal.

"Edgy…” A tensed Hans whispers aloud, softly to himself.

"Prince Hans?" Elsa softly asks in concern for his unsettling behavior.

"It's nothing…Queen Elsa…I must be imagining shadows that don't exist. Please don't trouble yourself with the dark anxiety of a tortured man's apprehension." He chuckles at his own, now thankfully over thought nervousness. "I always did have the tendency to severely explicate matters too much, according to the few older brothers who didn't constantly pretend I was invisible."

I can't imagine what has my sixth sense so…on edge tonight. Hans thinks to himself on the side, just then noticing Elsa's voluminous blue eyes in study upon him.

"Oh, and do forgive my presumptive…my extremely presumptive…name…concerning you…Your
Majesty." Hans glances to and fro before properly addressing the by now perplexed queen. "I was only trying to talk my way...through...a thankfully fanciful episode. I hope this lapse of perception doesn't lessen your faith in my nautical abilities to captain a schooner for you tomorrow, but I ...

Hans trails off, shaking an apologetic head as he supposedly swallows a gulp of the said to be calming and heart-fortifying black currant liquor.

Absentmindedly adjusting the imported French chapeau on her head, a wide-eyed Elsa follows suit with her own glass in embarrassment.

Was it the unconscious quick sip or three of the crème de Cassis she had imbibed during the tense vigilant watch of those men exiting the dining room entrance? Or was it something more adorable about the way the normally composed and rational young man could stammer over his words when under the glaring spotlight of her gaze.

Either way, Elsa was amused enough to let a small giggle escape her parted glossy lips.

"I still prefer it to 'Elsie' any day." With a strange levity in her demeanor, Elsa lets that loose as well from her suddenly unchecked, giggling mouth until his shocked eyes make her completely sober again.

"—that is, perhaps I should retire to my room before supper." She says, with cheeks red and flushing, giving quite an attractive contrast to the one visible pale cheek beneath her summery chapeau.

"Ahem. Of course." Utterly perplexed and ashamed by this entire mortifying situation, Hans uncharacteristically clumsy, stands to his feet with his face as red as a beet, as he scrambles to help her from her barstool.

"Perhaps it is time I should be taking you upstairs, my Lady." He timidly offers her his hesitant arm to help her from the chair. Hans speaks in all innocence, though the gruff voice suddenly coming abruptly behind him was dripping with anything but.

"What's yer hurry, lad? Wouldn't we all like a go at this curvy bawdy basket of a doxy first?" The man's large fingers extend across the bar where the barkeep had mysteriously disappeared from, to try to touch Elsa's errant strand of hair, but she backs away.

The British accented, big thug from the dining room had sneaked into the tavern to lean against the bar's interior, across from where Elsa was still seated at.

He had come in this section of the hostel by the back service entrance that vigilant eyed Hans had been unaware of. His equally erstwhile dark bearded bruiser of a twin appears on the other side of the bar, chewing maniacally on a cracked walnut between his teeth beside a tense Elsa.

"We can show this lovely lass what a real man is like, better than this Job's turkey of a cock-robin toff." He says in the colorful rough sailor terms considered manly slang of the day, ending with a fiendish smile at the confronted young queen as he crudely spits out the nutshells on the counter directly in front of Hans.

"How dare you, Sirs! This is a lady you are addressing! And I will thank you to conduct your deportment in her presence accordingly." Hans' indignant angry gaze challenges the ill-mannered brute as the slender bodied red-head places himself significantly between Elsa and the twin bruiser at her side.

"Ooh! Ooh! Fancy words from this fancy-man red dandy of a saucebox!" A thickly accented
Hungarian roughneck, after catapulting himself over the bar, bellows tauntingly from somewhere in the saloon behind Hans.

The Naval officer's tactical mind is blown when another three men, obviously part of the same gang, emerge one by one from some secret entrance between the outbuilding wine cellar and the tavern.

"Come, dear." Hans turns from staring down the burly brown man he was standing toe to toe with to collect Elsa from her stool.

But she had already skittered away, shrinking back from the sneering close attentions of an unsavory strawberry blonde short stocky man who appeared younger and more eager than the rest, though every bit as rascally and tooth-missing filthy.

Flicking up her Parisian hat's wide brim to get a better look at her terrified face, the man with a spotty red complexion then clicks his tongue and whistles with fingers flexing at Elsa's unintentional displayed legginess as she nimbly hopped from the stool to avoid the first mocking man.

"Get back from her! Or I will be required to take drastic action against you." His own ired re up, Prince Hans actually growls right in the 'Irisher's' face, as he rapidly spins himself between Elsa and the man, defensively disgruntled.

Jealousy rears its triumphant head within Commander Westergaard's soul that the grimy scoffing creature even dared to lay his eyes—never mind his filthy hands—upon the beautiful pristinely white Queen.

"Hee, hee, hee! Listen to the Hobbadehoy, gents! He sounds ready and rearing for a jerrycummumble, though we's were just polite-like wantin' to sluice our gobs in celebration with this Gilly Gumpus and his new rib of a juicy Apple Dumpling Shop." After insulting Hans by the inferiority of his manliness reference and now calling the aggrieved man awkward, the seaman hailing from the Emerald Isles fixes his Irish eyes to smile upon Elsa's heaving well covered cleavage as if the red-faced man were mentally undressing her already in his dirty, fertile imagination. His tawdry avaricious look fixed on her chest that was rising and falling so acutely seemed to mesmerize him.

Feeling violated by just those beady dark eyes drinking her body in, Elsa hides herself behind Hans closely, and holds onto his strong shoulder for coverage and support.

"She is a fine figure of a doxy delle, isn't she, boys? From this end, too."

Though sheltered Elsa didn't understand half of his brogue dialect and all its slang vulgarities, she gathered enough from his greedy glances and the chortling with the other rough men beginning to gather about the pair of them to be frightened of his intent.

When the circulating around Irishman's bold hand has the audacity to quick pinch a cheek of her posterior, the Ice Queen was even more petrified that she was about to lose control of her restrained powers of ice…

"Eeek!" Elsa squeaks in horror at the man's audacity and shrinks further behind her prince.

But she wasn't the one to yield her cool, as a fiery incensed Prince of the Southern Isles who had been holding his sharp tongue, tosses all his well trained diplomacy to the winds of piqued anger's emotion.
"HOW DARE YOU TOUCH HER!" Commander Westergaard of the Royal Norwegian Navy roars in indignant rage, as he not only swivels on his heel in record speed to take another challenging step towards the menacingly grinning man who had dared touch his Elsa in such a fashion, but the classy gentleman amazes all by decking the sneering man with a bare-knuckled fisted unforgiving blow directly to the instantly dislocated jaw of the crude Irishman, who is knocked out cold to the ground.

Wait…my Elsa?!

Perhaps it was the electioneering potion that rendered Hans' jealousy stirred stout heart bold and also made the Queensberry rules of fair play here moot in a barroom brawl.

For that is soon what this becomes, as Hans (who never imagined his cultured self to be reduced to a common fist-to-cuffs scrap) tugs a dazed Elsa behind his back, her long fingernails grasping his shoulder tight.

Even as the rest of the five scalawags left standing start to encircle them like a pack of wolves, Hans intimately whispers so close to her ear, Elsa could feel his hot breath's moisture.

"As soon as I clear the path, you race up to my brother's room as fast as your legs can take you. And stay there until I come for you." His susurrated voice in her ear was as pervasive as it was commanding.

"But Prince Hans! I can help!" Referring to her icy prowess used in close combat battles before, Elsa hisses back in his ear. She was so close as not to be heard by the closing in crowd that his soft sideburns brush against her cheek.

"No, your majesty! I will be the one to punish these ruffians for their impertinence towards you, my Queen. Just stay calm and don't concern yourself about me. If I can handle four, I certainly can handle five." The assertive young man, feeling his brash arrogant oats at the peak age of 25, ends his reassuring sentence with an equally reassured calculated series of combination punches that batter the incoming fighters away like swatted flies, one after the other.

"You can't take them all on by yourself!" Shaking her terrified head, Elsa whimpers in fear for Hans' solo defending her honor's gallantry versus almost half a dozen larger, burlier, vexed males before her protesting, yet bedazzled eyes.

"'Straight is the gate and narrow is the way' that I'll never walk alone again." Hans flashes Elsa a brilliant smile accompanied by his Biblical reference. "Remember, deep breaths and inner calm at all times will give you strength when you're feeling overwhelmed." Hans bolsters himself as well as the young woman listening with these quick, yet heartfelt, truths. He tosses the statements to her over his already preparing for five diverse counterattack moves with a confidence she couldn't help her hazy mind from finding absolutely drop-dead attractive.

Elsa gasps to watch Cmdr. Westergaard's lean body feint to the left then the right between the thick-necked giant of a Swedish lummox's swinging fists and the twirled mustache Spaniard flicking a fencing sword in the air at him, as Hans ably defends them aside with his dagger, swiftly retrieved from his boot cuff in one fluid motion.

"Yes, she is worth fighting for, your bella mujer extraordinaire." A tan skinned Spaniard adds his flirtatious two cents to the fray as he and Hans begin to parry their unequal, razor-edged weapons.

"Tell me about it." Hans comments with a smile as he flips his dagger to use the hilt of it to bash the man's precious sword hand until the weapon held within it skitters across the floor, the
Spaniard scurrying after it.

Then the tall slim redhead delivers a clenched fist's left jab to the stunned Hungarian's now sunken black eye. Hans shoves the dazed former circus performer at the lumbering towards him slow blonde giant Swede, crashing the lummox off-course with the stunned well flung sturdy body of the Hungarian as interference.

A straight right then commensurate swift left hook knocks back one of the tall twins with a bloodied nose, while the forceful competence of two solid power punches belied by his slender build, they did not at all expect from this 'dandy prat' of a weakling, sends another set of accomplished trained quick upper cuts with his right fist to push the other British brother into the bar and tumble back over the edge.

The two big angry Englishmen simultaneously shake themselves awake from Hans' one man band unpredicted hand to hand fighting skills to produce their own switch blades, stepping up the violence with two snaps of their weapons over their growls as they both rise to get back into the fight.

"Now! Elsa! Go!" Seeing only a brief window of opportunity, Hans was sweating and panting by all the intense physical exertion as he commands Elsa, not as a dangerous in her own right Ice Queen, but as a tender damsel in distress who needed his protection. Elsa immediately takes to her high heels to dash for the tavern's exit

Glancing back as she runs, Elsa's wide doe eyes take in how his right hand confidently plies his own dagger and wields the sharpened weapon like an expert bladesman before his avoiding adversaries. Backing up, Hans defends Elsa's escape route, as she pauses near the saloon entrance to catch her breath and one last look at him.

Over the steel of his dagger's blade, Elsa's fearful eyes meet Hans' fueled by jealousy, angry riled ones at his enemies. And though, behind his great anxiety, they were still gentle and kind in pleading with her to safely escape.

Elsa heeds his signal and sprints like a gazelle through the hostel's front lobby and up the steps at lightning pace.

Hans makes certain she would not be followed as he goes on the offensive, furiously slashing his dagger against two—no, three now—knife producing villains. He staves off most of their nasty blade attacks with agility and grace as flexible Hans' pure muscle frame manages to land several backwards knock back jabs with his ambidextrous southpaw to some of the ruffians attempting to sneak up and illegally jump him from behind.

But Hans prays most of all, not for himself, but for Elsa's security, even while the deadly infighting in the saloon ensues.

Ice vergles puff from her huffing lips as Elsa stumbles up the final few upstairs steps. She skates on her own path of created ice to launch across the hall to the room to the right side of hers. With a hard deliberate bang on the door announcing her arrival, the Queen doesn't wait for it to be opened before she barrels into the bedroom, crying out for 'Help!'
Her male/female relationship novice eyes are confronted by the sight of her cousins' marital bliss on their bed, as Rapunzel was massaging her lover's aching muscles and cramps in that healing way she reserved for him alone.

"Elsa?! What is it?!" The short-haired brunette wraps a sheet around herself wearing just her chemise before, clumsily removing from the bed with an unwelcome knee and foot kicked to unlucky Eugene's bare backside. She leaves him laying facedown atop their shared bed as the woman rushes to hug her trembling ice breath frosted cousin.

"Men in the tavern—I borrowed a map—They were rude to me—Half a dozen of them—They have knives—Prince Hans!—He told me to stay here!" Breathing heavily in her awesome fear of the fierce battle her ignorance of trust caused, Elsa spasmodically reveals the desperate struggle in bits and pieces.

Rapunzel holds her, rubbing her trembling cold arms with friction's warmth. For her empathic cousin knew Elsa was doing all she could not to have another emotional breakdown on top of the last—and perhaps freeze the entire building to solid ice in her unintended wake.

Elsa closes her eyes, seeing Anna's sunshiny smiling face and focusing on Hans' warm voice in her head.

'Stay calm, Elsa. Deep breaths and inner calm will be your strength.'

"Lock the door behind me and don't open it up for anyone save us three men. Got it?" Eugene was already up and back in his pants, tugging on a shirt as he leaves out the door before either female has a chance to respond.

Rapunzel then gives Elsa a quick kiss on the forehead before tripping across the room after him. Sheet wrapped around her, the young wife peeks out to spy her husband reemerge from the room two doors down, something fear-provoking in his hands.

"Eugene! She whispers urgently so he stops in his tracks to look at her.

"Don't get killed!" Taking a step out into the hall in her bare feet as her hastily applied sheet unravels about her lithe body quite fetchingly, Rapunzel boldly whispers the demand just as he was about to take to the staircase.

"What? Deprive the world of this good-looking mug? And make you a single mom for our poor fatherless babe?" He jibes to lighten the fragile mood of his expecting sweetie.

"Besides, we didn't finish that song you were singing yet, Blondie." Flynn Rider's lothario eyes wander all over his little gal, who still could be made to blush at his rakish commentary, even after all these years together.

He flashes her one last toothy smirk as his massaging needs were put on hold by his annoying kid brother - again.

"Now, get back in there and bolt the door! I got me a lil' bro' to bail out!" All serious and responsible now, Eugene commands. Rapunzel still admires her former thief of a husband who proved to be so very selfless at times as she sighs dreamily and returns into the room where unexpected sights greet her eyes.

On the verge of mental breakdown just minutes ago, a less primly attired with loosened collar and unbuttoned down top shirt, Elsa was now acting a bit strangely, dancing around the room, and singing?
"Inner calm, deep breaths. Deep breaths, inner calm, Let the sunshine in!" Elsa spins on her well-
turned heel, undone lacy French chapeau swinging about in her hand wildly as if she were
performing a topsy-turvy Quadrille with an imaginary partner.

"Are you okay, Elsa?" With wide eyes up at the twirling young woman, Rapunzel pauses to ask
with concern in her voice.

"I'm fine~~..." Elsa wiggles out the drunken words with a delirious smile.

"Elsa?" Her older cousin was worried now at her calm composed friend acting oddly, as she lightly
touches the taller woman's shoulder, causing her dizzied pirouette to pause.

"What?!" Eyes flashing, cool Elsa uncharacteristically snaps testily in a flat line annoyed tone, to
shock Rapunzel. But that silly smile again almost instantly replaces on her face the next moment,
confounding her worried cousin.

Well different people react differently to stressful situations, Rapunzel affords a kind stray thought
on the subject before grabbing her back to musically humming tall cousin's delirious arm to stop
the dizzying ceaseless energetic spinning around in happy circles, as if she were…

Nah! Not prim and proper Queen Elsa of Arendelle!

"Come on, Elsa! Eugene tossed my shoes somewhere in that direction…I think. Help me find
them!" The brown bob haired female frantically shakes the blonde who, with a dazed giggle, drops
to her knees in an undignified search for the missing footwear that walked away, coming up
with her skirt under the bed instead.

"Oh, good, I need that, too!" Rapunzel, after swiftly shimmying back into the rest of her scooped up
clothing strewn across the room, grabs the skirt from Elsa's bewildered dizzied hand.

"Finish getting me dressed!" The brown-haired young woman orders as a big sister would, for she
felt that close to Elsa and Anna now after all they've been through together thus far.

"I don't care what he says! I am not letting that man out of my sight ever again! Especially when
he's going to be all heroic and manly! Let's go watch!" A bit ditzy herself, though no longer blonde,
Rapunzel had been around Flynn Rider long enough to catch a bit of his lively zaniness. She
seemed rather excited to be too terribly agitated to send her love into a barroom barnburner, for she
and Eugene had seen their fair share of mixing it up in roughneck saloons, and still lived to tell the
tales of daring do, plus make a few forever friends along the way.

Back out in the dark hallway, Elsa's head clears a bit from all the blinking lights, dizzy racing
around and mind-numbing events she'd witnessed swirling around her fuddled brain. Before losing
all sanity again, Elsa takes a deep breath and reaches deep down inside to her calm center, where
Hans' warm voice was calling her to stay in control.

She nods to Rapunzel that she was ready.

Then the Queen of Norway and the Princess of Corona, acting like disobedient little schoolgirls,
hand in hand, sneak down the stairs, to rubberneck their handsome fellas in the sure to be exciting
bust up in the Salsbrucket Hostel's Saloon…
The odds in the barroom scene that meets Flynn Rider's struck with awe wide eyes were back to 6 to 1, all rough and tumble men converging upon Hans, all half dozen growling.

And I thought it was just me that no one liked! Guess he's really got my blood in that good-looking skinny backside somewhere…

Although, the single redheaded man with wily dagger in one hand and calculating fist clenched in the other had been holding his own against the superior muscle of the back on their feet again tag team of multi-national outcast misfits, who used this sleepy seaport town as their loser hangout.

Yep. Just our luck, Kid…

Okay here's the rundown, from Eugene's fresh perspective: one irrationally irate fighting Irish scrapper; a pair of big bearded British bruisers with switchblades; that silent strongman Swede strangler; a hot-headed Hungarian gypsy who was on the portly, yet deadly side with his knife-throwing skills; and finally a semi-svelte, socially suave Spaniard whose twirled mustache would've been comical had he not a meter long sword drawn.

Which, just at this moment was showing off to lop off the tops of every candle perched in their holders on each table without even dousing the flames lit in the tavern he was stalking through towards Hans.

"Oh, yeah. You think you're pretty darn impressive with that sword, eh, Manuel?" In his inimitable insulting style, Flynn Rider enters the rowdy scene, announced of all the arrogance and rudeness that tagged along with the former thief as he addresses the Spanish swordsman with faux admiration.

But as all six of the drunken lewd heads of these ruffians, converging quite unsportsmanlike on the outnumbered red-head, turn to see this new interloper, standing with one bum right hand resting on his jutted hip in the saloon's doorway as a ploy, it was what was dangling from his left fully functional hand that caught their interest, especially the Spaniard he just ridiculed.

"You haven't seen nothin' yet! Here ya go, Kid! Strut you stuff!" Speaking out of personal hard-fought experience on the receiving end of Hans Westergaard's rapier, Flynn was so confident of his younger brother's blade skills, you could almost call it brotherly pride in his abilities.

And boy! Queenie must approve of some other of your fine abilities to gift you a doozy of a sword like this baby!

Eugene casually tosses across the room with his good arm, the fine quality Naval officer's sword within its chequered brown leather scabbard and set of strap belts attached that Eugene had the foresight to stop by the boys' room and pick up on his way down earlier.

In slow motion, the sword flies through the smoky air of the saloon above the ruffians' heads, until Hans' outstretched sure hand catches its gold laced ivory grip and securely produces its deadly steel within a matter of seconds.

The newly bestowed sword in his right hand, a trusty sharp dagger in his left, it was now in the Danish Prince's court to do a little bit of flaunting himself. Hans exhibits both his sword wielding prowess and ambidextrous capability as he mimics the Spaniard's display with one of his own flavor.
SHKKK! CRASH!

SLICE! SMASH!

Make that double-dipped flavored! Whew-whee, that boy is damn good with his steel!

Eugene felt like applauding as he watches Hans send his left handed dagger to zing high through the barroom until it embeds itself in a dead-on bullseye of the dartboard on the wall. It landed just to the side of the Swedish giant who lets out a mocking laugh at the not even close call of this purported 'master swordsman', whose dagger had totally missed its mark.

Or had it?

"You call zis goot?" Pointing at the dagger harmlessly dug in the dartboard, the gargantuan galoot scoffs at Eugene's too high assessment of the red-headed fancy word haughty gentleman who was giving the ragtag team a hard time in flooring.

What the hulking strongman didn't notice was the trajectory of the dagger's horizontally thrown blade as it whizzed high overhead, nor the rope it cleanly sheared that was the main support of the large tavern wooden chandelier directly up above the Swedish man's head…

With a loud crunching crash the ceiling overhead light fixture loses its bout with gravity and plummets onto the giant. Its wide encircled wooden band supporting its five lighted candles just fits neatly snug over the dirty blonde lubber's wide shoulders and chest, that the hulk was completely bound, a candle or two still lit melting wax atop his delirious KO'd head.

Ah ha! And for our next trick! Eugene was getting a kick out of his kid brother's finesse when it came to putting on a rollicking good show.

At the same time that was happening over there with the falling chandelier he caused, Hans was simultaneously aiming at a closer to home target. As, with deadly accurate precision again, he kneels to the ground to level his Naval sword's sharpened thin blade's refined polished steel at the carved point of the legs of a wooden table that the stout and stocky Irishman had climbed upon to make a flying leap at Hans and take him down for good.

But in foiling those best laid plans, Hans' swiftly calculated and smoothly executed deduction of three of the table's four legs cause it, along with the caught off-guard man balanced upon it, to topple backwards.

Now, the whisky bottle used for both weapon and 'courage stiffener' that the Irishman had filched from behind the bar counter before smashes upon the rushing in to attack Hungarian knife thrower's own bad-tempered head, until he too could swear no more. Both men were thoroughly rendered unconscious as their passed out heads clunk together, their bodies falling backwards to the ground in a heap beneath the upturned table.

"Drop off your garbage here!" Eugene snidely states of the heap as he sticks out a well-placed boot near it to trip over the wandering dazed giant who was trying to extricate himself from the metal banded wooden chandelier ring. The Swede giant, chandelier and all comes down over the poor Irishman 's prostrated form with a head splitting bang!

"That's my kid brother, God love 'im! Don't mess with the man when he's got a sword in his hands, if you know what's good for ya!" Eugene proudly extols Hans' quick practical aptitude and even quicker clever ingenuity that the older man was increasingly growing enamored of.
Young Westergaard's storybook quality deft prowess with a sharp weapon in taking down three of the brute squad in the matter of a few well-choreographed and calculated moves garnered Flynnigan Rider's immense respect.

"Don't speak too quickly, Storbror. They were the more straightforward assailants to apprehend." Savvy Hans was far too levelheaded and competent in battle to let cavalier reckless overconfidence of his older brother's more bombastic personality overstate their triumphs, as the sword-wielding Spaniard comes to, angry that he was so cruelly taken down. He challenges the ably bladed Hans to a fair sword fight and the Prince of the Southern Isles gladly obliges the dark European.

"Spoil sport." Flynn Rider mumbles under his breath with a smirk tracing as Hans and his new challenger parry away. But that smile was soon to be wiped off Flynn's simpering face.

"Yipes! Knife!" He squeaks out in that high soprano of his as, from out of nowhere, a sharp flying knife projectile takes a stab at coming within mere millimeters of slicing off the tip of Flynn's beloved nose as it whizzes by.

"Don't we know this double blinkered Gollumpus? Hey, Bert! Haven't we been seeing his picture around somewhere?" The big burly Brit takes this moment of tensed inattention his knife caused to step closer to one of our more handsome paired siblings.

"Yeah, you're right, 'arry! He's that sneezelurker snotter on that 'WANTED' poster our half brothers on the continent sent Mum for her birthday as their letter from that prison in Prussia."

"You have GOT to be kidding me!" Flynn Rider has a jaw-dropped cringing feeling as he concludes that this pair of brutes and his oh-so-friendly pair of brutes back home were related. Does fate have to be such a damn comedian at my expense all the time?

"Now, that IS just mean! Gimme a break, fellas!" Eugene comments when the identical large muscle man produces, with a sneer, the letter he and his partner fortune hunter twin were delivering home to their old 'Mum' from their incarcerated brethren soon to be on parole. It was addressed to: 'MOTHER STABBINGTON, London, England.

"And after my little woman's sweet bleeding heart asked to invite those losers to our wedding! Well, they are NOT coming to the baby shower. A man's gotta put his foot down sometime!" Flynn grabs hold of the WANTED poster with his already ingratiating likeness even further 'artistically' altered. In his own amusing brand of insanity, an indignant Eugene Fitzherbert holds up to his self-described 'gorgeous mug' the famed 'WANTED' poster of the roguish thief.

"Does this even remotely resemble me?! They still got the nose all wrong!" Eugene whines, appalled at the mess.

For the increasingly disfigured face upon it was so painstakingly well done in colored pastels that the image that once slightly resembled the dashing figure standing before them now looked like the horned devil Satan straight out of the pages of Dante's inferno meets the Sunday funnies section buck-teeth long-nosed Jug-ears with a gauche sinister smirk on the creature's silly face that insulted the vainglorious man greatly.

"I think the likeness is spot-on, Bert. The boys even got the whole mourning right! Har-har-har!" The laughing villain was referring to the sunken black eyed look in their beer-garden jaw language that Flynn's unfortunate childhood made him all-too-familiar with its mocking.

The bruisers then surround the affronted Eugene with menacing glances encircling him. The pair
laugh maniacally in his face as they move in. Eugene feels an eerie sense of cold cruel déjà vu.

"Hey! I've just had a serious operation. You fellas wouldn't hurt an injured man, would you?" Charmer Flynn pleads with the brothers who were just as wicked as their clutching Corona counterparts. The two glance at one another with a knowing smile.

"No."

"Never." One lies and the other swears to it. Both devious men feign smiles at a cornered Eugene as Bert (or was that Harry?) sends a fiercely fisted liver punch crashing the illegal left hook blow that was deemed so devastating it was banned from boxing matches.

His target was Eugene's lower abdomen—a spot in your opponent that would guarantee them to be brought down, sick and paralyzed.

_C-c-crack!_

But the Briton's power punch is rewarded by his bared knuckles being excoriated and shattered as the broken bones of his hand throb with immediate intense pain upon connecting with Flynn's super firm abs.

Eugene takes this opportunity to counterpunch the shocked and wounded man with a stiff right cross, until Harry, the bruiser, is sent flying back against the bar with a bloodied nose writhing in squealing pain at his busted appendage, before one final kick in the pants bashes the poor man's head against the beer barrels with enough force to crack the barrels open and spill onto the floor.

"Oh, gee. It must be that intense stomach crunching exercise workout routine every morning that gives me these rock hard abs!" Eugene pats his unnaturally tough gut with his own aching knuckles from that throw punch.

_Ouch, that hurt…!_

He secretly flexes his hurt hand with the guise of fixing his mussed hair back.

_Lunge!

_Traverse!_

_Sidestep!_

_Glide!_

"You know, we're going to have to pay for this mess you're making, Storbror." Hans calls over his expertly apex angled positioning of his sword, in perfect rhythm with one arm placed behind his back as a gentleman should behave in a proper fencing swordfight.

His equally attuned opponent was impressed with this talented redheaded prince's skilled feint and jab knowledge, with more than enough confidence as they parry swords. So much so, that the thin _Apuesto caballero_ was able to converse on his feet during their intense jousting match. It would have been over ages ago with any normal man who dared challenge the expert Spaniard to date.

But Hans Westergaard was every bit as much of a seasoned pro, astute in the swordsman's art form of blocking, dodging and riposte of his foible's thrust, cut and lunge with utmost grace and agility. Hans felt as natural with the sword that Elsa had bestowed upon him just a few hours ago as if he
had been using it all his life as he displays an impressive panache in his attacks.

"I currently have no soluble funds at my disposal." Hans continues his friendly conversation with Eugene across the saloon, quite at his ease while fencing.

"Yeah, well, ask the wife. I don't own a pfennig." Eugene admits flippanantly with a wink at the lobby stairwell he had an itching feeling that his better half didn't 'obey' his husbandly command to stay in their room.

"I married up."

He knew his cute brunette must be smiling ear to ear from her 'peephole' on the stairs at his symbolical thumbs up, before focusing on the big man giving a growl for attention before him.

"Ookay…Back to the job at hand…Care to have a go, tall, dark and ugly?" After a few moments of recovery and sidestepping avoidance, the former thief now taunts, as he displays his chest with a clear shot open for the man.

"Shut yer bone box! I'll show you a flooreer, you fimble famble snotter!" Bert cries out but decides on a different tack than his twin in taking down this rotten thief.

"Oooh, I'm scared. Are you gonna talk sea sailor dirty or are you actually intending on trying to knock me out like your brave twin at least attempted? Because if it's the latter, you are doing a really terrible job—" Throwing his hands up as if he was scared, Flynn goads the seething man, who suddenly pauses in his heavy breathing. His beady eyes slant upwards with a slight nod to his dark, swarthy head, perplexing Eugene.

"Eugene! Look out behind you!" Upon seeing, from her bird's eye view, the stocky Hungarian awaken and gather his knives up from the far corner of the tavern, Rapunzel's high pitched scream calls through the lobby into the saloon section of the hostel—so loud and urgent—that her husband would have had enough time to dodge the incoming knives about to be thrown by the third aggressor left in the barroom brawl, had big Bert not grabbed him by the shoulders so that he could not budge an inch.

"Storbror!" After one more agile bit of engaged swordplay that he was rather enjoying the sport of, Hans hears Rapunzel's shrill yell, too. Without missing a beat, with no time to apologize to his accomplished opponent before simply ending their drawn out combat struggle by simply traversing one long leg to the side, then returning his momentum with a shoved golden decorated hilt across the back of his worthy opponent's head, with a forceful unexpected blow that rendered the Spaniard completely unconscious.

"Touche, my skilled friend." In the split seconds that follow the closure of his exhilarating fencing match, Hans makes the judgment to take the defensive rather than simpler offensive of squarely running through the large muscled man who had captured Eugene in a chokehold, despite the former option's greater risk to his own life.

His lean frame swiftly rolls in a lunge forward, as Kommander Westergaard was already making glancing blows with his naval sword to the first two of the Hungarian gypsy's successive stream of knife throws down low.

The next knife was aimed high but his quick reflexes fend it off, in mid spun motion, as Hans stands now back to back with his still accosted brother.

He would defend him with his life, if that's what it took.
Eugene Fitzherbert had a wife and a child on the way to live for, while he, Hans Westergaard, had nothing so precious in this world…

And he never would deserve the only one woman in this wide universe for him, anyway.

Was it his wandering mind's morbid inattentiveness or some secret self-loathing death wish to end the sorry existence he had lived, in exchange for another's in what he believed to be righteous?

But Hans would not need to find out, even as the fourth and fifth condemning flying steel blades of the dark haired ruffian on the opposite side of the room are unleashed.

In the second that seemed to last forever, already logically seeing that his sword's trajectory would be too delayed and slow to save his own life, Hans Westergaard's final picture in his mind was of the beautiful, dazzling lady, who so benevolently gave him absolution and trust in the trusted Kommander-ship of one of her naval vessels, among other things.

For his inexcusable crimes against her, he deserved no more than contempt, if not death, but his heart knew now that for all Queen Elsa of Arendelle had given him, he would give back the only thing he had left to offer her in this world—

His forever grateful, undying love.

Hans could do nothing but watch the knives close in at an alarming rate. He only prayed to God for his body to absorb all the blades himself so that Eugene would survive somehow…

Zzztt! Zzztt! Zzztt!

But out of nowhere a sparkling, magical icicle makes a direct hit to the one incoming blade and knocks it off course, and away harmlessly; while a coat of frost hangs heavy on the other until it clangs to the floor at Hans' feet that could have only one explanation—one lovely enchantress, one ruler of the frozen world she was mastering, day by day, in her God-given gifts of this pulled-it-together Ice Queen's mysterious inherent powers.

"Bloody hell!"

As the man swears, Hans realizes that Elsa's finely honed powers that had battered away the sharp knives must've struck across the unsuspecting cheek of Bert the brute. The ruffian curses as he wipes the blood dripping down his face, in doing so, removing one strong hand from its stranglehold around Eugene's neck.

But that's all the leeway our wily thief needed.

His one hand, freed from struggling to protect is jugular vein, reaches beneath his tunic and…

C-clang!

Eugene wallops his would-be strangler with his newly purchased by his intelligent, loving, gorgeous wife—while she was shopping—shiny, iron skillet frying pan.

Down the bigger man goes, sinking like an autumn leaf to the floor.

"Just like the old days! You little beauty!" Eugene kisses the iron handle of his now favorite weapon of choice. (Though he sticks out his tongue soon after tasting its unpalatable metal flavor.)

As for Hans, it didn't take his quick, striding legs long to pin in the far corner of the tavern the
shrinking back in fear 'last ruffian standing.'

The Hungarian knife throwing former circus performer was no longer laughing at this 'red dandy saucebox.' The sniveling man hiding in the corner, was now cowering against the darts board, tail down, when Kommander Westergaard and his brandished naval sword arrive. He had, at this exact second, may not have looked so imperturbably young and scruff as he did earlier to the now terrified man.

But he was still definitely red, and angry.

As Elsa and Rapunzel race into the tavern with anxiety, fear and excitement etched across their pretty faces, Hans beckons for the Queen to come over to him.

"Have your filthy eyes look with respect upon the pristine lady you and your cohorts disparaged, and find it in yourself to apologize. If she accepts your apology as sincere, I may not have to run you through."

Enraged, yet still having the presence of mind to be commanding, Prince Hans demands of the cowering man, the Dane's extended sword in hand easily pinning the frightened man's shirt neck to the dart board.

"I do! I do! Forgive us, lady! Please don't kill me!" The tearing up man begs for mercy from Elsa, who nods regally at him as she nears the scene, though the incensed look in Hans' dazzlingly glowing eyes did not appear so forgiving as hers. He draws his sword across to now re-position it to be held against the gulping, grubby neck of the miscreant, who was, by now, weeping openly, in pleas for his life.

Gasp…!

But the distressed sound of her startled breath brings the temperature of Hans' burning need for justice in a jealous revenge that the fierce battle had built up in his chest down slowly from how it was roiling in his hot redhead the moment before. His fury's train of thought is cleared, thanks to her calming effect on him, this time.

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." Hans thoughtfully repeats Scripture that settles his rage as he slowly and carefully removes the deadly blade of his sword's annealed polished razor edge from its perfect cutting angle at the man's neck.

Elsa smiles in relief at Hans with unfettered pride at the Prince's relinquished anger at her bidding.

"We will let you go free. But tell the others of your ilk that Norway and her Queen are defended from your thuggery." Sword still in hand, the tall lean figure of a man warns in dark tones down at the short, scared ruffian.

"Now, get out." Hans quietly rumbles as the grateful former circus performer scrambles to his feet, hightailing it out of the saloon by way of the back entrance.

"Thank you, Sir. You are a gentleman...and my hero." The Queen of the land says in shy gratitude to this former Prince of the Southern Isle for defending her honor this day most courageously.

Then meeting his eyes and holding her head high with all the decorum she could gather, Elsa tries to nictitate back the dizziness as she steps closer. But after having pulled her all senses together, thankfully, enough to focus on saving Hans Westergaard's self-sacrificing life earlier with her ice powers, the fragile young woman was feeling spent and depleted now that it was all over.
In her current dazed and clumsy state from the aftereffects of the small amount of alcohol she drank earlier resurfacing in the aftermath, Queen Elsa fails in her attempts to remain the cool and dignified pillar of her society as she trips over the protruding feet of one of the big defeated men lying strewn across the tavern floor.

Out of control and in a thoroughly head spinning dizzy, her frail equilibrium faltering, despite her best efforts to stay lucid, Elsa falls forward, towards where Hans had luckily just completed re-sheathing his ultra sharp sword in its leather scabbard attached to the belt he was re-adjusting to fit his slim waist size.

"Queen Elsa!" In yet another valiant moment, Prince Hans moves in to catch the tipsy woman in his arms to steady her.

All breathless, she gazes up into his viridescent eyes with something more than the pride and gratitude she'd just professed from somewhere deep in her uninhibited soul.

Taking a hint from Rapunzel's osculation with her own heroic love in reward from where the Queen could see the kissing couple's tender embrace over Hans' shoulder, Elsa stands on tippy-toe to wrap her long arms around Hans' surprised neck. She then heedlessly pulls his unsuspecting head into a wildly passionate kiss that had been waiting for his special warmth upon her cold lips for a long time now.

But that cold warms up tenfold when Hans' adrenaline rushed body heat reflexively presses into Elsa's willing lips and melts away her icy fears, as the reality of the physical room and everyone else around them begins to fade away, until there was only the two of them there…

When their lips part, Hans stares deeply into Elsa's deliriously acquiescent eyes reflecting nothing but passionate love for the brave man whom she was secretly elated to have him jealously defend her honor so courageously.

Drinking in her adoring glances, Hans lifts Elsa's trembling weak-kneed body that had stumbled against his strong one, up in his arms in one fluid motion. He carries the royal Queen who was leaning in close to enjoy the reassuring warmth of his pounding heartbeat, away from the unsuitable chaos of the violence hit barroom left in he and his older brother's skirmishing wake.

All for the sake of the Queen's honor, Kommander Hans Westergaard would do it all again, without a second thought, as her dauntless hero exits the tavern with the delicate beauty of an Ice Queen in his embrace.

"Mmnh-Mmm-ooh, Blondie. Hold that thought." Tearing himself away from her scrumptious kiss, Eugene Fitzherbert places a quieting finger over his own canoodling recipient's satisfied lips. As out of the corner of his eye, Eugene spots Brit Bruiser #1 named Bert, whom he had previously punched out, begin to rustle awake in the spilled beer he was unconsciously swilling in.

The ruffian emerges from behind the bar to scan his downed comrades with a vengeful look crossing his ugly mug.

With his new frying pan still available at the ready, older, and not too much wiser, Eugene didn't
possess his little brother's finesse, nor mercy.

As Flynn Rider just bashes the iron skillet over this twin's angry noggin, Bert is sent back on a jolly holiday to dreamland on the beer soaked ground just as he was getting to his feet.

"There. Now you twins have matching eggheads, compliments of Flynn Rider…and his little bro Hans." Eugene generously tacks the redhead's name to this little scrap Hans helped participate in as Eugene returns to the inviting call of Rapunzel's soft comforts.

Just going in to finish their kiss, Eugene is once again interrupted. This time it was by the hostel owner, who chooses to reenter his establishment from the back barn stalls where he was chewing his lazy sons out for not cleaning properly.

"What on God's good Earth happened here?!" The large and round in every way-eyes, head and body-hostel manager was flabbergasted at the utter topsy-turvy disorder of downed men strewn over broken furniture, cracked glass bottles of booze, smashed beer keg, not to mention the overhead lighting equipment fractured in pieces about them. But thankfully his precious large mirror, hanging over the bar, made it through unscathed.

"Oh, my rowdy buddies must've gotten the party a little out of hand." A few of the collapsed ruffians were conscious enough to hear Eugene's cover for them, as Flynn begrudgingly garners respect from the ne'er do wells. But over the years, he and his wife both were loathe to send up any ragtag team of losers who reminded them of that sorry bunch of saloon-made friends, circa the Snuggly Duckling.

Prince Consort Eugene Fitzherbert smiles his most charming at the astonished man still shaking his head, standing there glancing around his tavern in horror, heard to be saying over and over: "I'm ruined! Ruined!" as he holds his head over his destroyed place of business.

"Oh, don't worry, pal! We'll foot the bill for all you repair expenses. After all, fair's fair, right?" 'Honest citizen' Eugene offers the blubbering man over his shoulder quite generously to the wide width Salsbrucket Hostel owner's sighed relief.

"You just see my cousin when he gets back in. He handles all our monetary transactions. You can't miss him. Big, tall blonde, sweet-faced bloke who just married a princess of his own himself."

Eugene fails to equate into account the fact that he too was wed to a Princess Fair enough to splurge a few Thallers and Pfennigs around once in a while.

Getting money was one thing, but parting with it was such sweet sorrow. Eugene mixes his metaphors as old habits die hard for the thief.

He then, quite carefree on the matter, goes back to his wife's welcoming massaging embrace, with not a thought of worry to where his sword wielding partner in crime of a younger brother and that lovely Queen of long legs that this whole kerfuffle was all started about, disappeared off to…

Kicking the unlocked door to her hostel room open and closed behind him, Hans Westergaard had been giving his best effort not to succumb to the Queen's pervasive charms along the way, as
undeniable as they may be.

But that was proving to be difficult for the vital young man, for all the pawing and caressing and nibbling—yes, nibbling—on his neck and chin and, by now, bright red ears, as Hans was carrying a frisky Elsa's supple body upstairs and into her bedroom.

He recognized that the naturally reserved, dignified young lady must've been intoxicated from the erratic way she was acting.

*But how? On only two, maybe three small sips of low alcohol content crème de Cassis?*

He had seen Elsa's yet nearly full glass of the black current based drink he had ordered for the two of them as merely a ruse to fend off any unwanted attention from those villains.

*A failed tactic, alas…with such unintended unfortunate results…* Hans chides himself for his vain attempts at cunning chicanery.

Hans was almost completely certain that the blonde young queen had only taken two or three sips of the lightly alcoholic liquor 16th century monks had produced mainly for healing medicinal uses.

*And yet…*

"You were so brave, my Hans-some Prince." Elsa giggles at her pun as she huskily breathes his name. The bewildered as what to do titian haired man lays her loose body, that certainly had all the signs of being drunk, on her bed.

Well, he at least attempts to, as the platinum blonde struggles to keep his arms around her, so impressed was she with her new Naval Officer's manly display of courage and competence…and open jealousy that excited her, right before her bedazzled eyes.

"Queen Elsa, please. You are unwell. You must sleep before our ship dispatches tomorrow." He concludes responsibly as he tries again to extricate his captured neck and gripped arms from her as gently as he could from her endlessly clutching long fingernailed hands.

"Yes…” She whispers with an enthusiastic giggle, clinging to his neck.

"Kommander Westergaard… 'Kommander Westergaard'…I like the way that rolls off my tongue, don't you?" At the mention of tongues, Elsa quite agilely cranies her limber upper body up and forward, to lick her cool tongue across the side of Hans' startled closed lips, stunning the man utterly by her amorous boldness.

Uninhibited in this way for the first time in her adult life, Elsa of Arendelle pulls against his leaned down neck, sizzling his name luxuriously before tasting his nape's bare skin.

Upon finding she liked the flavor of it, the intoxicated Queen makes frosty tracks back up his neck with snow butterfly kisses all over his noble chin until she reaches the destination of his lips for another try…

*After all, you did say I was your wife, didn't you?*

After a few seconds of dazed amazement at the level of the sheltered young woman's unquenched passion, the true gentleman in Hans continues to resist her potent advances, chalking this all down to the fault of the demon liquor he'd foolishly ignorant introduced for her in imbibe.

"Your Majesty! Please, you're…you're not yourself! It's only the intoxication's effects. I understand
that this is not your fault at all. You don't know what you want, right now. You...me...this is...wrong. Please, you'll regret this all later." Hans was giving his best stab at diplomacy in such a delicate area, doing his utmost to gently stave the frisky girl off.

But Elsa's slender arms were stronger than they appeared as she laces her chilled hands around the retreating back of his head in a fight to pull him down and meet her mouth, huffing cold breaths up at him.

"No! You're wrong! I finally know just what I want!" Her high pitched voice snaps at him in willful defiance.

"I want to be warm. When I'm with you, I feel so warm and complete...When I'm with you, I finally can let it all go—and just be me." Lightheaded, Elsa snuggles the frozen cool tip of her sweet little nose to Hans' sideburns, breathing in his rich scent with approving sounds murmured in her throat.

Hans listens intently to the vulnerable young lady's expressions from her heart revealed in this inflicted state of delirium. Elsa was at last opening up to someone from outside that world she's been trapped inside for nearly the entire span of her lifetime.

_How could you feel that for me, my darling Queen Elsa? After what I did to you... I am... too unworthy to ever be good enough for you._

Hans own guilty conscience kicks in, as he uses some muscle to pull back from hovering over her at the side of the bed, overpowering her frantic grasp.

"No! Don't leave me, too..." Squeezing both his freezing hands in hers desperately, the Ice Queen's inebriated senses were so heightened that she easily and ably starts icing him until Hans could no longer protest being tugged back, her magical cold ice pervading his no longer movable body.

Hans is struck by the intensity of her cold passion, as driven Elsa presses another kiss on his willing but unwilling lips.

"Queen Elsa...please...I beg of you..." Wholly breathless and frozen stiff in place, an iced, blue lipped Hans just manages to huff out in between her frozen cold fierce kisses. But Elsa's icy grip around the back of his neck was not letting up as she lets go of all her denied past's pent-up emotions in a wild full mouthed kiss he knew he, of all people, shouldn't be the lucky man to be the first to indulge in.

Although, Hans finds his well maintained restraint slipping, for his own hands, supposedly ice coated frozen in place, had made their way to grip around her tiny waist sometime in the heat of passion.

And an idea begins to form in his strategic head at this realization.

"Tell me we haven't kissed like this in your dreams, too. Say it, and I'll let you go." The young woman, whom spirited drinks caused her to be both extremely giddy and extremely amorous, makes this offer beneath purple shadowed heavy lids, as she awaits his answer, even as she caresses his sideburns and each distracting freckle on his handsome, yet blue-tinged face hovering so close to hers.

"I promised myself I wouldn't lie to you ever again." In a sultry voice at his limit, unable to hold himself back for much longer, this virile young man honestly had to admit his own fantasies with the irrepressible desire catching aflame in both of them as Elsa's luminous eyes and intoxicating
lips were wearing down at his proprietous ethical moral fiber and 19th century principled sensibilities.

One more inviting nibble from her to his lower lip and the 25 year old man can withstand all her forces of nature no longer. In a brief lapse of his well maintained restraint, Hans suddenly unleashes his red hot passion for this Ice Queen, pressing his now regaining warmth lips down to Elsa with all the passion he'd been harboring for this beautiful blonde woman these past two unrequited years. He had fantasized of her ever since he'd physically had the chance to hold his lifelong dream girl of a flawless Princess turned beautiful Queen in his arms when he carried her on his horse Sitron down from the peaks of her North mountain ice palace.

As for Elsa, she was deliriously basking in the glow of an aroused Hans pressed to her cool frame in satisfying ways the Ice Queen's cold world never thought humanly possible before Kommander Hans Westergaard had commandeered her heart.

The high strung cool young Queen, forever holding back her surging icy powers was in constant awareness that the slightest chemical imbalance in her system could cause her to be irrational. In this case, it let out all her bottled up years of self-restraint and pent-up denied emotions, set loose at those one or two innocent little sips ruining her self-control.

The fine balance of mysterious energies of chemistry running through this prim proper young lady's royal veins had been wildly thrown off kilter before, by a mere spoonful of patent medicine whose partial ingredient was of a stimulating liquor content, as Elsa and Anna both discovered in trader Oaken's homemade cold remedy from a few years of birthdays back. That's when the girls found out the constitution of the magical queen could go haywire at the slightest trace of alcohol.

As what was happening once more again.

Hans' intensely hot breaths in Elsa's mouth mix with her cool ones until an inversion of hot and cold within their locked lips gives both recipients a sensation that was nothing short of absolutely thrilling.

As a result, Elsa's ungovernable chaotic frosted ice is immediately melted and nulled by Hans' feverishly delivered kiss. The sheer force of his will dissolves all of her wildly unmanageable ice reams coating his body, as he consciously focuses all the clarity of his mind's true passions for her to literally melt the ice holding him hostage.

And although Hans Westergaard really didn't wish for this insatiable dream to end, he knew it must.

*I will live the rest of my life longing for your kiss to capture me like this again, Snowflake...And knowing it never can be...*

Though it was killing him to leave this bliss behind, determined to be righteous Hans manages to extricate himself from this woman—the only woman he's ever wanted—upon sensing that his working supposition of melting her ice with his passionate warmth had panned out to stymie the frenzied female's dangerous ice powers into remission.

But as he selflessly relinquishes her moist, no longer frozen cold lips, a few sad words escape Elsa's dizzied, yet now seemingly stabilizing to normal mind.

"Anna…I have to bring you home…” She says sobbing, with the worry hanging over her heart even more so when it was breaking for her lost little sister who had become the center of her world.
Pushing his own desires aside, Hans realizes that this troubled anxiety was the root cause that drove Queen Elsa to this escapism madness almost equally at fault with the mind numbing evils of the alcoholic drink.

"I will bring her home to you, my Queen, if it's the last thing I do on this earth, I swear it, on my honor. It is the least I can do for you both. And then I will leave and never bother your serenity with my curse again..." Hans whispers sweetly from his adoring heart in her semiconscious ear with his peaceful emotional voice humming directly to her overwhelmed confused mind. His soft tenor leads her troubles into calm submission with an old Danish lullaby, coincidentally written by a another man named Hans in 1586, that an inconsolably lonely little boy had learned the comfort of once upon a time from the kind nuns at the boarding school academy that the unwanted child had been shipped off to at an early age…

"'Sov sodelig, sov bodelig…' It's all right. Shh, shh.. You're fine now. 'Sleep sweetly and softly' Reassuring her sobs in between each line, Hans sings with devoted adoration for his distressed love —yes, I love her—in his gentle most tender tones to lull the poor girl to a fitful crying herself to sleep in worry for her dear sister. And then he compassionately covers her incognizant lissome body with a soft blanket.

"Go to sleep, your Majesty, and forget this ever happened." Hans says with a final soothing pat of her drowsy brow and mussed blonde hair as he mannerly bows and backs away to leave the room, as if nothing untoward had just occurred between them.

…Try to forget all about me, my chaste Queen...

But this night would be hard for the repentant man in him to let go of the memory of her.

...The girl I can never have…

And I am ashamed to think that I would have been no better than those thugs had I given into temptation when my poor angel was not in control of herself, no matter how much she was begging me, no matter how much I wanted to just let it go...

I'm afraid I didn't behave as a proper gentleman should treat a fine lady when she's in such distress. Weak-willed man... What was I thinking?!

I can only hope your opinion of me has not been diminished too greatly by this impropriety I unwittingly caused that I must take full responsibility for. I know I mustn't be a distraction to you. I pray Queen Elsa, you will still think of me kindly in the morning...For, by daybreak, we must both focus on this new mission, for Princess Anna's sake. I will try to be a better man...for you...

'Sov sodelig, sov blodelig, luk dine ojne til. Gud Fader udi Himmerig din vogter vaere vil…'

'Sleep sweetly and softly, Please, close your eyes.

God the Father of Heaven will be watching over 'til you rise…'

Chapter End Notes

‘Sov sodelig’- Danish lullaby 1810
Quadrille - French society square-dancing type dance

bella mujer extraordinaire – especially beautiful woman (in Spanish)

apuesto caballero - Handsome man in Spanish

pfennig – coinage in old Prussian

Thaller – Dollar equivalent in old Prussian

'Sov sodelig, sov blodelig'- 'Sleep sweetly and softly' Danish Lullaby 1586

19th century seaman slang:

Job's turkey – A thin badly fed man

cock-robin toff – Soft, easy rich or upper-class man

saucebox – Pert young person with a smart mouth

Hobbadehoy – A youth not yet regarded a man

Jerrycummumble – tumble about

sluice our gobs – Share a hearty drink

Gilly Gumpus – tall awkward fellow

Rib - wife

Apple dumpling shop – A woman's bosom

doxy delle – woman who cohabits with an important man

electioneering potion – spirits of alcoholic beverages that cause a person to be stout and bold

dandy prat – Insignificant, trifling fellow

double blinkered Gollumpus – Clumsy fellow with 2 black eyes

whole mourning – Both black eyes

beer-garden jaw- Coarse rude language slang

cold gruel – misfortune/bad luck

bone box – mouth

fimble famble snotter – lame excuse for a thief

floorer – a blow sufficiently strong enough to knock a man down to the floor

tail down – to lose courage
Towards You, My Beloved

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Act II

Chapter 29

"Towards You, My Beloved"

The sun was still fairly high in the sky at 8 PM as it hangs over the seemingly endless waves of the Norwegian sea.

Blinking her dazed eyes against the engulfing sunlight, Princess Anna of Arendelle staggers up dizzily from the below deck of the ship in a bedraggled, sweaty state of appearance.

Her two orangey braids were dusty, uneven and wildly askew. Her dirt-smudged cheeks were flushed and huffing as she climbs up onto the main deck to take a deep, deep breath of the salty sea air whipping in her face.

Raising both hands to touch the sun drenched sky, Anna greedily sucks in the breeze. Closing her eyes tight, her face soaks up the blazing sun overhead.

"You be a hard workin' little gal, Missy Anna. Job be surprised you be a pampered princess." Job's deep baritone comments as he lumbers up the ramp behind her to the deck. He pauses to survey her coal-dusted small frame as Anna stands in the blinding sunlight.

Though her face was streaked with dirt, her tiny hands covered with soot, and her pretty light green dress singed from when she'd gotten too close to the small engine room's boiler furnace she had been aiding Job in refueling, the dark Caribbean couldn't see how the young waif could glow any brighter.

"Who's a 'pampered princess'?! Hmph! If I can get up at the crack of dawn to go early morning ice harvesting, I can shovel coal into stoves like a trouper! I'm a tough guy! Besides, 'Hard work defines the true measure of a man.' At least, that's what my Kristly says. S'pose it still counts for a woman, too?" Haughtily wanting to be classed as an experienced woman by the ripe old age of twenty, Anna repeats the phrase she'd heard her industrious lad coin so many times when he put his own proverbial nose to the grindstone and went that extra mile in his laborious exertion of hard work, uncomplainingly.

Hey! My twenty-first birthday's next week!

"Then he be right in tinkin' dat." Similarly diligent, quiet man Job glances warily into the bridge wheelhouse ahead on the deck as his dark eyes carefully observe Captain Houtebeen's aggravated silhouette bob and jerk forward with the ship's movement, bent over some stolen tome, as the old man dozes from time to time over the ancient text he was futilely attempting to translate.

For these past few hours, the first mate had wisely kept erstwhile Anna close, giving the irate Captain the excuse that he could use her as fill-in duty stoker for fueling the hungry coal fire steamship that the peg leg captain demanded run at full throttle.

"Here. The deck need a swabbin' next, Missy 'tough guy.'" Job almost affords Anna a smile as he
forcefully shoves a mop and bucket into the sprightly young girl's filthy hands that he'd filled with sea water and had used a pulley to bring up from the small ship's side.

"Oh, goody, I love washing the floors back home at the castle." Anna says, in a sarcastic monotone with a pair of twisted lips.

"And I bet I can do it even better and quicker than that Hans—I mean, that last skinny excuse for a cabin boy you had as a sorry deck hand." But her liveliness was soon replacing it as undiminished as her 'high' opinion of Mr. Westergaard as Anna vigorously sets her enthusiastic hands to the task with a quick song on her lips.

"Just whistle while you work. Hmm hmm hmm hmm hmm hmm."

As she sings and whistles loudly, Job glances over at Captain Houtebeen, giving him a wary eye. The Captain looks up from his own preoccupied mental absorption at all the evening noisy whistling and ruckus that the one rude little meisje was causing on deck.

Luckily, he was too engrossed with his reading to do more than ignore her, with one disgruntled shout. "Argh! The sea's rumbling from all that blasted racket, Job!"

"You best be keepin' it down, Missy. The Cap'n likes a quiet deck." Job wisely advises in a low tone to the vivacious girl with the dirt streaked face.

But Anna doesn't cease her somewhat annoying song. She merely lowers the volume of both it and her shrill whistle as she swiftly pushes the mop in front of her forward along the deck with such alacrity that it sploshes up droplets onto her dirty black coal-powdered cheeks. Then, at the other end of the deck, she picks up and plops the big bucket on the planks beside the railing.

"Oooh, that water's cold!" She giggles at herself as the chilly ocean water splashes all over her face again. Anna then pulls her favorite filmy sunflower sprinkled pale blue and green floral scarf, that had been one of her 'best one yet' early birthday presents this year from Elsa, from around her neck tucked beneath her folk dress blouse to dab at her grimy chin and cheek that the splattered mop water caused to run muck down her face. She then dips it again in the seawater bucket to wash the remainder of her soiled mug.

"Oh, hello, birdies!" Peeking out from beneath the scarf when she catches a glimpse of fluttered movement out of the corner of her eye, Anna speaks to the group of sea aves that had gathered above the steamship at her lovely melody's beckoning.

Ever since she was a child, Princess Anna had an affinity for song as well as small furry and feathered creatures. They had been her only companions some lonely childhood days gone by. In fact, Anna had the type of charm to bewitch any living thing with the lilt of her music.

"I wish you little guys could tell my Kristly not to be too worried. I don't know what's going on yet, but I know it'll all turn out all right in the end. It just has to! Besides, I've already made a friend here, in Job watching out for me. He's not as big and scary as he looks. Goes to show that first impressions are often wrong, as far as I'm concerned. Especially concerning redheads, hmph! He's probably mooning with those puppy dog eyes all over Elsa now that I'm not there to supervise. I hope she's smart enough to see through his wily subterfuge..." And opportunistic fraudulent kisses...What in heck was that pirate talking all about?! 'Shipboard romance,' my patootie! He's after Arendelle's crown again! That jerky Hans just better keep his mitts off my sister while I'm gone! Or else there'll be heck to pay!

"Anyways...please go and find my worried sick guy! I know him inside and out. This being
separated from me will kill him! My Kristly needs all the moral support he can get! I have to let
him know I'm alive and well or he'll go whacko!" Effervescent Anna, after bemoaning her absence
of sisterly supervision for a restless angry tick at a certain cunning young man, does a 180, her
fiercely apoplectic thunder cloud face returns to a wistful smile at the calming thought of her cool-
headed fella. The optimistic on-the-world-turning-right-side-up-again Anna leans down to plant
her own pleading kiss on the blushing forehead of the seagull that had been bold enough to flutter
and land on her welcoming hand.

The curious white gull looks up at the hopeful, always buoyant able to bounce back young girl
with a quizzical expression on its cock-eyed feathered and confused long billed face at the pretty
young maiden's contrasting moods of vicious anger and fondly tenderness.

"You can't miss him! My Kristoff's six foot five, skyscraper tall, with perfect skin and an
absolutely gorgeous muscular build. He has a messy shock of fluffy angel, buttery blonde hair over
the yummiest chocolate brown eyes on his sweet handsome face—oh! And he's usually riding in
his Ice Master sleigh with a good-natured reindeer named 'Sven.' Sven has always been his best
friend. So when I became Kristoff's new best friend, you know, because he loves me in every way,
all three of us are best friends now. And mark my words, my Kristoff is coming to get me, so you
just tell him that I'm not worried. I know my beloved's coming for me! I believe in him with all my
heart..."

A be-smitten, in love, proud of her guy's good looks Anna confidently relates all that to the curious
little seagull cupped in her hands with a whisper. Then, as she pats its back tail feathers with a nod,
she causes the off-balanced seagull to nearly 'scuttle' his ship.

But after a few seconds, the dizzied fowl makes a determined squalling sound from his decidedly
non-melodic throat and joins a few of its mates who too were listening in to the pretty, nature-
loving human girl's lilting song and entertaining sweet prattle. Suddenly, the flock take flight from
the deck across the winds in a southeasterly direction, as their widespread, black tipped white
wings pepper the ocean sky.

"Who you be talkin' to, Missy?" Job returns from his checking on the steamship's funnels to catch
the last bit of Anna's conversation to the empty thin air.

"No one! No one…just singing! 'Someday my prince will come, someday we'll meet again!' So…
where are we going? When do we get there?" Looking up at him with bright eyes, Anna abruptly
interrupts her own 'heartfelt' high pitched warbling to slip in the query when she thought the big
man may have been gazing upon her with softer eyes.

Though she didn't seem very 'tough' at all with her plaintive tunes, the little songbird scrubbing the
deck had hit a particularly mucky section and goes right down on her knees to give it a thorough
scrub, that quite unbefit royalty.

But it made her all the more lovable in his hardened eyes.

"You ask too many questions, girl, for your own good." After a moment of staring at the still
bright-eyed pixie hard at work, Job sadly shakes his head down at her. "You keep a-swabbin' the
deck till I come back—and no more singin', ya hear? You be disturbin' the Cap'n and you probably
not want his attention right now." Job tersely instructs with a pointed finger towards the deck that
Anna was to finish cleaning until it shone.

"Oookay, grumpy pants…" Anna mumbles under her breath but the rebellious streak in the young
woman couldn't help but hum low (humming is technically not singing) thinking (not singing!) the
words of a haunting melody she'd heard Gerda sing so many times while the kindly housekeeping
'nanny' was busy at scrubbing floors like this. Many past hours for young lonely Anna were spent listening to Gerda tidying up the castle with this song the plump woman herself had learned from a wandering minstrel in her own youthful adventures in the far northern reaches of their magical Land of the Midnight Sun on her similarly still untainted, optimistic lips:

"Towards you, my beloved, I quickly come to you with all of my love. Your words, from those times together, keep a light alive for me..."

On the road west, a few kilometers from Salsbrucket Port, along the Kvistenfjorden was the village of Lund. It was there in that small village that Harbor Master Alfen gave Kristoff permission papers to allow the care and sheltered housing of the horses, Guddy and Iriserende, as well as the Vis-à-vis covered sleigh, for an indefinite amount of time.

Once that task was complete, responsible Kristoff started back on the road, riding Sven. The impatient young man all the while was inwardly cursing at himself and already wishing he'd continued on alone.

Anna's welfare had been preying on his protective mind until Kristoff was in a pensive state of apprehensive disquietude. His mood matched the suddenly overcast grey sky, for the longer time dragged on, the worse his inner demons tortured him.

[Don't you wanna talk about it, Buddy?] Sven cranes his neck around to try to make some eye contact with his silently driven pal, as the reindeer 'speaks' through their special link.

But Kristoff had purposely kept their communication closed all the ride long he'd been astride Sven's back.

"No, Sven." Kristoff finally breaks his silence. "I'm too angry with myself to talk. Unless you want to hear about how rotten a husband I've turned out to be." The tone in Kristoff's usually mellow voice was even parts dejected and vexed, as he keeps his brown eyes transfixed forward on the high cliff road between Sven's tall cream colored antlers.

[Come on, Kristoff! It's not your fault! Anna wouldn't want you to be kicking yourself around like this. She loves you too much, and so do I.] The compassionate reindeer possessed a heart as innocent and untainted as the day he and Kristoff were given to one another, all those years ago.

Funny...I can just about remember the accident now...

"Thanks for trying, Sven, but that sentimental stuff's not gonna bring her back." Shaking his wandering mind back to reality, Kristoff grumbles aloud through gritted teeth. He continues to psychologically beat himself up in his wild mental imaginings of what horrible fate may be befalling his precious little wife under that wicked pirate's thumb.

"Damn! Why did I let her go?!” Red blooded, virile young man Kristoff vents his anger by mindlessly clutching Sven's sharp pointed rutting antlers, squeezing his palms against the reindeer's in-velvet summertime prongs until it breaks his skin and starts to bleed.

[Kristoff! You're bleeding!] Sven mentally cries out with a grunted rangifer roar as the reindeer
comes to a screeching halt on the edge of the tall cliff Naeroy road.

"I'm fine. It's nothing." Balanced on the cervidae's back with his powerful thigh muscles alone, Kristoff cradles his multiple open wounded left-handed palm with his right, as the blood spills over Sven's mantle of taupe fur.

Just then, as if on cue of an uncanny run of bad luck, the dark storm clouds that had been hanging over the sky open up and begin to pour a strange torrent of rain that drives Sven's off-balanced cloven hooves down the side of the steep cliff that had been created by glacial erosion over time.

[I guess we're heading to the fjorden down there. At least you can wash your hand in its cool waters—that always helped you when you got hurt before.] Always seeing the sunny side of life, doting Sven worries for his bleeding friend. The reindeer starts to gingerly glide on the muddy hillside towards the edge of the freshwater Kvistenfjorden's long, narrow inlet that the pair was being pulled down into by gravity.

"All right, all right. Why not? We'll be holed up in that fancy hostel for the night anyway. There's no rush back, I guess, 'til morning." Kristoff finally relents his stubborn stance at Sven's insistence directly into his brain. "Actually hearing you in my head, Sven, is starting to be a real—"

"Whoa! Watch out! Where did you come from?!!" The tall, blonde man pulls back from where an even larger brown bear was disoriented from the lashing rain driving it too down the cliff.

[Bear!] Sven rears back with imprinted fear in his wobbly voice to match his wobbly legs that begin to full skid down the mud sliding cliff's edge.

"Be careful, Sven! We don't know this area well enough to get so close to the banks in this heavy a downpour!" Kristoff warns his headstrong friend of this fjorden's unknown quantity as the frightened reindeer, in avoiding the equally frightened brown bear, recklessly veers dangerously across the steep precipice where the waters were raging below the sheer escarpment they were wildly winding their way down.

"Steady on, Sven!" Kristoff screams out over the din of the rushing fjorden's crashing currents as his reindeer best friend's mud-caked cloven hooves beneath his four spindly legs slide clumsily this way and that down the hillside, out of control until the furry creature was about to plummet into the racing waves of the 4.6 kilometer astonishingly deep fjorden.

But not without courageously tossing Kristoff from his bareback ride to the safety of the fjorden's comparatively shallow threshold embankment first.

"SVEN!" Kristoff yells out his lifelong friend's name powerlessly as he struggles to stand on his own stunned feet in the slippery shallows Sven had just thrown him to land.

Kristoff's waterlogged heavy legs quickly attempt to rush forward as he tries to catch hold of the reindeer's flailing antlers before Sven was swept downstream.

But the currents were too strong this night, due to the oncoming storm's flux.

{"Kristoff! Don't try to save me! Anna needs you more!}' Sven's selfless mind manages one last heroic thought before the struggling reindeer's awkward kicking legs start to give out beneath the rushing currents that were sweeping him further away from where Kristoff was hanging onto a lowered tree limb as far as he could go without too being swept away against the unrelenting currents of the storm-tossed waters.

"Sven!" The tall, blonde man was in heartwrenched tears by now. For the only other precious thing
that truly belonged to him in this world, beyond his Anna, was also being stolen from his pitiable soul.

Kristoff had to make the terrible decision again to try and save his kicking and struggling reindeer friend from being pulled downstream and most likely drowned, or just watch his best friend go and stay alive himself.

_No, not again! I can't take this again—Sven! I'm coming!_

Kristoff lets go of the tree limb and starts trudging out into the racing water across the harsh currents.

_Whoosh!_

A flash of white fur yanks him back to the rock at a dizzying speed, bringing our confused mountain man back against the boulder rock as he comes to his disoriented senses in the torrential rain.

"Kristoff! Catch!" That's when a voice even deeper and more profound than his reindeer buddy's was suddenly calling his name over the deafened roar of pelting waves below and crashing thunder overhead.

Kristoff instinctively grabs hold of the grappling hook thrown through the air to land at the boulder rock he was clinging to. The soaked blonde strains his eyes between his flattened bangs and the pouring rain to glimpse the silhouette of a sure footed, tall man in a tall pair of brown boots and a tall dark hat several meters downstream, standing at the unforgiving fjorden's edge.

That man then swings his end of the lassoed rope in the air in a cylindrical pattern, three times, like a rodeo pro, before loosing the lasso’s long cord of rope across the rushing fjorden.

At everything happening so swiftly, in sheer amazement, Kristoff watches how the expertly thrown rope entangles around Sven's writhing body's shoulder and thick neck, and stops the spent reindeer's final flailed descent to the black muddy bottom of the four and half kilometer deep Kvistenfjorden.

The tall stranger then utilizes the 165-foot rock climbing long rope he had already bound around a sturdy tree some meters from the banks to begin to winch the rope for greater torque leverage near the pivot point of the tree.

The man in the tall hat curved under a hood then swiftly moves to the side of the fjorden's bank where Kristoff was, to take firm grasp of the rope that Kristoff was still tightly holding the other end of. He calls out to the tearful and staggered younger man.

"On the count of three, you pull, son. You pull as if your best friend's life depends on it—because it does." The scratchy voice was changed from its mellow tone over the two decades since the boy had first seen the man, although the stranger possessed that type of enigma to be more forgotten than remembered.

Though Kristoff Bjorgman was oddly acquainted with the man's startlingly grey-brown eyes that seemed able to pierce straight through him with a wisdom beyond the many years upon the older man's creased brow beneath that concealing grey hood, Kristoff did know the stranger. He just couldn't place when or where they had met.

The singular man was the kind to slip between the shadows of life—unnoticed and unthanked, just
"One, two, three, PULL!" Immediately responding to the sagacious maturity of the grey hooded man who takes a firm stance in front of him with the commanding order, Kristoff pulls with all his might simultaneously with the stranger—and the young Ice Harvester's amply flexed bicep, tricep, and extensor muscles were considerable indeed.

The leverage of the rope to pivot around the sturdy tree gave the two men combined enough torque power to pull the doubly heavy struggling and soaked to the bone normally 300 lb hefty and overfed Svalbard reindeer back to the fjorden shore's safety.

"Sven! Are you okay, Buddy?" The warmhearted young man immediately drops his end of the rescue rope to dash over to the huffing and puffing, yet grateful to be alive reindeer lying on the shallows of the fjorden.

Kristoff drops to his knees and swiftly removes the lasso-ed rope around Sven's body that saved the reindeer's life. The anxious mountain man then rubs his buck's heaving chest until it finally quiets to find calming breaths under his lifelong friend's comforting touch.

{Sorry, Kristoff. I slipped.} Sven mentally apologizes, his big mournful eyes gazing up at his beleaguered buddy with a smile.

It's okay now, Sven. Just take it easy. I won't let anything happen to you, too." Kristoff pets Sven's fuzzy brown forehead crown between those freshly grown large summer antlers 'in velvet' that had just finished maturing this season to their full proud 4 ft height.

"Thank you, sir." Kristoff stands against the cold rain to shake the hand of the man in the long grey hooded cape with the gold circlet designs on its edging. "I don't know if we would've made it without your help." Kristoff, as respectful as his adopted troll mother Bulda taught him to be, nods to the stranger as he extends his right hand out to shake.

When the leathery skinned bony hand grips his with a firmness beyond their aged appearance, Kristoff's startled brown eyes scrutinize the tall mysterious man beneath that dark cloak.

Certainly, the tall stranger was an older gentleman, from his era gone by style of uniformed clothing that surely was a throwback to Norway's past military days of old. Yes, he had a wrinkle or two on his prepossessing well worn square-jawed long face. His sideburns were doubtlessly greyed at his temples to match the washed out creams and greys of his once dark golden tan mane of past shoulder length wavy hair.

His yet erect straight body form did not conform to that of an old man, though that certain something behind his wise observant eyes relayed to Kristoff the impression that the man standing before him was indescribably ancient.

And undeniably familiar.

Kristoff's brown eyes slit in consternation when the silvery white wolf who had pushed him back before, now appears from out of nowhere to gather up for his master the rope Kristoff had just undone from Sven to sit at its place at the aged man's side. That reminiscent action cinched it the rest of the way for Kristoff's curious mind.

"…Holger?" Kristoff gazes through the raindrops into the glowing black eyes of the large white furred wolf that knew no age, with a sudden recognition that the young man's conscious mind was unaware he possessed beyond childhood's dreams.
The alabaster furred creature then in turn nuzzles his long thin snout against the blonde-boy-
turned-man's arm to raise Kristoff's bleeding palm upwards.

{'Sven was right. You must wash it before it gets infected.'} The silky silvery wolf's corresponding
silky silver tongue gives a lick to the forgotten deep wound as he too speaks directly in Kristoff's
head.

{'Yes. The icy waters of this land can bring healing comfort, as much as they can cause pain.'}
Obviously privvied to listen in on the mental exchange, the tall enigmatic gentleman joins the
psychic conversation as he gathers up the remainder of the rope lead attached to the grappling hook
that he replaces around his broad shoulders in place of where a lute once hung strapped to his navy
blue army trenchcoat's back.

He had pulled off his grey hooded cape that concealed his identity earlier. And the svelte man then
places its warmth around Kristoff's soaked, involuntarily trembling shoulders in the pounding
rainstorm as he takes long strides towards the blonde man and the two caring animals surrounding
him.

"Old Ragi! It is you, isn't it?!!" As more of the man's features are revealed, visions of pieced
together memories that the sane and grounded young man laughed off before as silly boyish
fantasies, come flooding back to flash across the cold icescape of Kristoff Bjorgman's mind...

Playing in his memory, was each past encounter of his formative years when young Kristoff
learned the ice harvesting trade through first hand hard work and diligence at the mountain men's
camp .There, 'Old Ragi the Traveling Minstrel' would often visit to entertain the weary
mountaineers after a long day's work in the ice fields with his trusty lute. It was the very same
instrument that the kind old man would take the time to apprentice the youthful, wide-eyed and
curious boy there to play under his wing.

Old Ragi's somber ballads that told of age-old moral stories around the campfire then mainly
revolved around the unshakable love of a man for his true soulmate, enough to defy the odds of
Nature itself to give her life's happy ending she eternally prayed for…

Remembering those heart-wrenched words now, more than he appreciated the sappy stuff in his
emotionally pent-up teenaged adolescence then, Kristoff only recently had come to understand the
depth of such emotion, in his love for Anna.

But there were memories that went even further back, that were cloudier and more frostbitten than
the rest within the shackles of Kristoff's confused inner mind that he had successfully locked away
for all these years that were just coming unhinged right now in a foggy memory cloud...

A dark-skinned bundled up sweet Saami couple ride in a reindeer herding sleigh screaming in fear;
a devastating avalanche left a frozen cold pale child, no more than a toddler, who had been placed
in their care, suffocating beneath the overturned sleigh in a deep blood stained snowbank trapped in
the inky cold darkness; the sounds of a white furred wolf's urgent howl and frantically digging
paws overhead; a handsome middle-aged man in a tall blue-grey hat breaking through the thick
barrier of frigid snow to incredibly power lift the sleigh up; then a pale bluish cool hand reaches
through to pull the small blonde boy out from the encapsulating packed snow; a flawlessly
beautiful woman with dignified pulled back iridescent shining platinum tresses, much akin to
Elsa's, likewise with her graceful lavender lips, touches the numbed child's cheek with all the love of a worried mother before she hands the tender babe over to the warm man's care; the elegantly high collared frosty woman then turns back to swirl her struggling magical snow powers to hold back the remainder of the rumbling mountain avalanche from harming the wee child again.

The recollection of a chilled droplet tearful farewell from that stunning icy lady and the gently placed warm wet nosed baby reindeer, conjured from a mirrored portal gateway, gifted as a forever friend into the pleased and gurgling buttery blonde boy's lonely arms was all of that past scene Kristoff remembered, even in the far reaches of his mind.

Although, if his bedazzled eyes had looked then beyond the joy of receiving his furry new pal, young Kristoff Bjorgman would've seen the untouchable timeless blonde beauty melt into her one and only man's embrace. She unselfishly was letting go of this special impossible child of her dreams for a second time, to give him his own chance at a normal life she herself only glimpsed for a short blissful time of recovering convalescence where he was conceived.

Her curtailed innate ice powers had been receded and diminished by the near fatal injury that this wondrous brave human named Ragi had saved her from in that pit of a violently hot molten volcano fissure that the grown altruistic Snow Queen had been attempting to selflessly squelch the Poas Volcano in Costa Rica in order to save innocent lives in the year of our Lord 1828.

It was then the noble Snow Queen's once frozen cold heart had been thawed by pure unmitigated love in the reward of her long-awaited yearning of God's cherished miracle of miracles-

The blessed warmth of motherhood for her beloved Christ-bearer...whom greater love forced her to quietly abandon to live a true life of his own freedom's choosing...

"You remember me, boy." It was always difficult to read the reserved tone of Ragi's monotonous voice, but Kristoff had spent enough time learning the ropes on how to play the lute from the older man, among other subtle wisdoms passed along the way, to know that the elderly man was exhibiting affection with this phrase.

For as long as 23-year-old Kristoff remembered him, Ragi was like this. The indefatigable resolve of the enigmatic man seemed unaltered by the ravages of time. The tall, emotionless, steadfast soldier had to be in his late eighties, though he appeared no more than in his fifties.

And the still capable and wiry man—who had the vitality and spirit of a thirty or forty year old—had a proud smile upon his well weathered tanned and deeply scarred face as he looks upon Kristoff now.

The two men share that smile and respectful nod as Ragi leads his junior to the fjorden's bank to wash out that injured palm as the downpour begins to soften.

"How come you've always been there to bail me out when I need you to, Ragi?" Kristoff kneels to the embankment to manfully scrub at his wounded palm to wash out all that dirt and grit and gravel his grasping hand's open palm had picked up from that moldy algae coated boulder he'd been clinging to minutes ago.

"Just as you will always be there for the one you love, if you don't let anger consume your better judgment along the way. Much like the dark clouds, heavy with their burdens, block out the light."

As the allegorical man was speaking, the young new husband was distractedly noticing the golden wedding band gleaming on his own ring finger that Anna had shoved on it, not a dozen days ago. As it glitters upon the waters, the strange wet deluge ceases and the reemerging sun scares the rest
of the storm clouds away, reminding Kristoff of another glittering ray of light he held close in his arms not so long ago.

"Her name is Anna. Princess Anna of Arendelle. She agreed to marry lowly me and I still can't figure out why I was so lucky. I love that little gal more than life itself, and will adore her until the day I die." Kristoff says quite emotionally choked up as he finally opens up to this older man he always felt a peaceful camaraderie with in conversations concerning delicate subjects, such as his childhood loneliness or now, true love's honesty of his secretly sensitive heart.

To him, Old Ragi was more akin to the trolls, minus their rude, loud, overbearing-ness, of course. For there was something deep and metaphorical beneath that rough emotionless surface that Kristoff was sure camouflaged an enlightened perspicacity and insight that few of this world comprehended.

"Yes, I know your Anna. I was at the wedding in Arendelle." The older man had been a silent witness for a great deal of Kristoff Bjorgman's life. Our 'pungent reindeer king.' as Olaf so dubbed him, was just becoming aware of that fact himself in this moment.

"Look, we've got a ship that sails in the morning to go find Anna. She's been kidnapped by some peg-leg old pirate who's taking her to Mosken Island for who knows why. I've been out of my mind with worry ever since, knowing I've failed her, just as we were starting out on life together." Kristoff was more pained by his own tormented words than the bandage Ragi produces to wrap securely around his palm as he stands to the other man's level beside the fjorden bank.

Ragi opens his mouth and then pauses before he speaks his next well chosen phrased words.

"Then you must cut the safety rope you've tied around Anna in your mind, first, Kristoff." He inscrutably says in an even tone, looking the boy directly in the eye.

"What in hell does that mean, Ragi?! She is my wife! Of course it's my responsibility to watch out for her safety! You've obviously never been in love or you'd know how I feel, old man!" Kristoff, as Ragi self predicted, instantly explodes in virulent anger as its wrath—whether lashed out at himself or another person—was indeed proven to be consuming the normally sweet and mellow boy's tender heart to the point the pragmatic youth was rude and coarse tongued to his elder.

The old soldier silently kneels back down to the rushing fjorden's bank, dabbling his long bony fingers in the rambling stream of waters.

"Your love right now, is that of these young leaves. Joined side by side by their sticky fresh tree sap in this freshwater fjorden at its threshold, they're just beginning on their epic journey out to the deep North Arctic sea. But if those tender leaves of yours become too wild and storm-tossed by the harsh currents, their sap will dissolve and they'll be dashed apart on these angry rocks. Before they even make it beyond the delta, before they even set out to glimpse the sea. While my love and I, as patient old intertwined branches survived the rushing tides, to travel slow and steady and forever inseparable."

The simple analogy way he spoke in is all Ragi need say with his even monotone full of deeper context for Kristoff to sense he had offended the man kneeling at the banks. Though Ragi never looked up once from surveying how verdant green leaf set after leaf set are ripped apart by the strong currents if they get caught on the craggly rocks at its outset, while the stronger intertwined branches flow smoothly around the bends, still clinging to one another for strength and refuge together, side by side.

"I'm sorry for blowing up, Ragi. I'm just so angry at myself inside." Kristoff apologizes as he rubs
his right hand up over his eyes and through his slicked back wet dark gold shaded hair. The
careless action full of humility made his handsome, enlightened features all the more stunning
under the late sun's gleam.

"And I do know exactly what you're going through, my boy, because I've lived through this storm
of anxiety before for years on my own, too. I am testament to the fact that alone is never an easy
road to travel." Ragi lays a sympathetic, yet supportive, hand on Kristoff's wide shoulder, a
consoling look in his wise aged eyes.

"But I found my solace in the cognition that none of us are truly alone in this world. And only the
heart that is pure, without anger and hate can freely flow upstream with God or hear His creature's
encouragements along the way. We are His creatures, too, after all." Ragi's old eyes were wiser for
his reverence to the Creator of all, above the sky he was facing.

"Remember, Son, if your heart is too angry, it will not be as pure as it was born to be able to hear
nature's voices all around you. And it will never be clear enough to decipher the colors of the wind
that will paint arrows pointing to your love. You must learn to listen with your heart, Spirit
Whisperer…"

And with those final sapient prescient statements, the perceptive old sage gazes up the steep cliff
where the brown bear who had inadvertently startled Sven onto his unnerved descent down the
slippery precipice earlier had returned to the scene of the accident, holding a trio of bear cubs close
to her large furry body.

"No, my dear. Everyone here is unharmed and unsullied by that wily old Hobgoblin's deceptive
artifice of self-blame and recriminations trying to split them apart with the sin of anger."

Silently answering the mother bear's inaudible query, Ragi's soulful eyes speak his heartfelt advice
with meaning behind his stare to Kristoff. He gives Sven's now standing sturdy flank a supportive
pat before the navy blue coated man climbs up the steep path to meet the bear family. Faithful
Holger, as mysterious as a wisp of wind, was at his master's side in the matter of a blink.

Once the tall elderly gentleman made it to the top, he turns abruptly to face Kristoff and call down
in an assured voice: "The time is coming for you to soon fulfill the destiny you were born to
proclaim, my boy. Be strong and of good courage, and don't allow anger to taint your way again.
Here! You too may need this in your time of need." Ragi tosses a crystal pendant he yanks from his
own neck over the side of the cliff to land precisely in Kristoff's hand, just as the wind Ragi
seemed to command carried it.

"Make your Mother and I proud of our impossible dream's promise to this land." The puzzling
enigma of a man speaks quite cryptically before disappearing, just as he came, over the Norwegian
west coast's sunsetting mountain vista range along with that brown bear family.

"My Mother...?" But the soft spoken young man's questions of the unknown parents he believed
long dead were again left unanswered. He stares in fascinated wonderment at the pale blue, eerily
luminant at his touch snowflake shaped crystalline pendant the original Wind Whisperer just
tossed to his hand.

Kristoff then closes his bewildered eyes to steady his skewed thoughts and follows his old mentor's
advice to let go of all the self-reproaching anger hindering the clarity of his thoughts.

Determined Kristoff Bjorgman decides here and now to use every bit of his energy to center on the
path the wind was guiding him to find his love and bring her home again, as the gentle post-storm
breezes wash their calming peace over his tousled thoughts.
The wind blows through Kristoff's moistened bangs with so many whispered voices of the mountains surrounding that painted a vast plethora of varied hues of summer colors across the vivid landscape. And they were all beckoning for him to seek out and find the girl who surpassed them all for her vibrancy and radiance. At each point of nature, his heart subconsciously begs for them to point the direction towards his Anna to the best of their vast collected knowledge.

"Come on, Sven. Let's get back to that hostel before Elsa sends out a search party to find us."

Innocent Kristoff had absolutely no idea of all the misadventures and hi jinx that had already been taking place this night in that supposedly restful tavern lodging, as he offers his forever best friend a smile. Feeling calmer and of greater purpose, the tall blonde takes hold of Sven's leather holster straps and leads the traumatized reindeer up the steep and winding hilly path, with all of God's nature singing its windswept song to guide his soul towards his beloved…

Towards you, my beloved, with all of my love I will race to you
The wind embraces me as I run and fly to your arms…

Chapter End Notes

"Towards you, my beloved" ("Daisuki na Kimi ni") is the English translation of the ending theme song from NHK's "The Snow Queen" ("Yuuki no Jou") where Gerda, Kai, Ragi and Holger's turn of the early 19th century adventures with the Snow Queen can be seen in the well done Japanese adaptation of Hans Christian Anderson's classic fairytale that "Frozen" was made to be the sequel of.
"La da di da, la da da di—Oh! I've a fix on my radar! Bogey at five o'clock!" A dizzy seagull pauses overhead in his careless weaves in and out of the southeasterly clouds he's been traversing.

This seemingly intoxicated Larus mew haphazardly glides its black and white tipped wings through the damp air, several hours into its neighborly volunteer work as messenger pigeon—ahem—seagull, for that sweet voiced Princess in distress.

"Solicitations, Prince My Kristly!" The white seagull almost drunkenly crashes into the treeline where Kristoff was walking alongside Sven.

He zeroes in down to his target.

"Hey! How do you know my name? And why am I talking to a bird?" Realist Kristoff was still getting accustomed to the ability he had in speaking to the birds and animals. But this ditzy excuse for a seagull more reminded him of another zany black and white creature—a goofy, talking snowman, namely—than anything mystically amazing.

"Let's see...'Six foot five giant skyscraper tall'—2, 4, 6 and a half—wing!" The air bound bird clumsily measures his stretched two foot wingspan to practically crawl and aerial descend sideways and downward from the tip of Kristoff's head to his bewildered boot toe.

"'Perfect absolutely gorgeous muscle build.' Mhmmmm...uh-huh..Yup! Whoo boy! Those are big!" The bold bird squeezes his grey feathered 'fingertips' around Kristoff's ample bicep with approving sounds, clicking his aves tongue. "Check!"

"What are you silly birds doing?" As Kristoff and Sven walk along the road, birds hover on either side of him, as the strangest of them all gives the human a physical rundown.

It was quite a show, according to the acclaimed twitters of his audience of several other gulls and puffins. They had tagged along with adventurous brother Scuttle to fulfill a promise to the pretty songbird Princess who had made friends with them onboard that pirate steamship.

"Just making sure you fit the bill." Scuttle answers the 'Wind Whisperer,' not at all phased that the human man could both hear and speak in the gull's bird-ese language, either.'Get it-Bill?" The cracked fowl points cross-eyed at his own orangy schnoz.

"Mhmm-mhmm, mhmm-mhmm. Hair is golden buttery blonde. Yup, yup. But not exactly 'fluffy angel' quality, though. What do you girlies think?" After sizing a thoroughly weirded-out Kristoff, like he was going to be shown off as some prize show-dog, or even better-tossed into a pan as dinner roast. The partly unhinged white gull then asks his less verbal feathered companions for their judgment on the iffy matter.

"Tweet tweet tweet! Yes, yes, yess!" The three practically fainting feminine fowl twitter in impressed cacophony at Kristoff's other fine, overtly masculine features.

"Yeah, maybe so, maybe so. How about more like that?" Scuttle flutters up to use all his webbed toes to none too gently muss up Kristoff's slicked back, still moistened tufts of blonde hair.
"Ow! Hey! Oww, that hurts!" Our gentle hearted mountain man holds back from throttling the bird to save for mew stew later.

"Oh, yeah! That's an improvement!" Young Scuttle and the rest of his aves entourage nod in silent cooing agreement at Kristoff's re-scruffled mass of blonde wavy hair.

"What's going on here?! What are you crazy birds talking about?!" Kristoff throws up his big hands in frustration as he is, once again, ignored by his ridiculers, as if he was not there at all.

"Okay, moving on." The white seagull then clumsily lands on Kristoff's shocked shoulder and uses his feather digits to pry and stretch at the man's face. Scuttle peers into Kristoff's dilated eyes for several seconds way too long for poor Kristoff's taste.

"Yup! There they blow! Yummy chocolate brown eyes. The 'handsome face' is human female objective, of course." Scuttle proves that he was not only a birdbrain, but a comedian as well. His clumsy pun's delivery gains more than a few birdy chortles and swooning biddy chicks at an aggravated Kristoff's red-faced good looking features.

"CHECK!" The scatterbrained gull loudly caterwauls the affirmative right in the man's shell-shocked ear.

"All right! All that's left then…" Satisfied with the identification process thus far, Scuttle zigzags his fluctuated wings until he is able to hover directly parallel to Sven's cantering fuzzy head.

"Are you a reindeer?" The kooky one-eye squinted seagull turns his interrogating spotlight on the recovered rangifer who nervously blinks back under the grill of the hot lights.

Sven gulps and nods, his eyes extremely large and baleful at the sergeant major of a seagull.

"What's—your—name—Mister?" Scuttle pokes an accusatory feather into the larger mammal's sheepish mantle of fur with each forceful word.

A skittish Sven shrinks back from the smaller creature, totally bullied.

"Stop that! His name is Sven, and I'm Kristoff. What do you birds want from us?" Kristoff decides to hold the reins here now as he takes a provocative step in front of his harassed best friend. He confronts the suddenly turned aggressive genus Larus class kleptopractic bird as it takes a fancy to the Royal Ice Harvester & Deliverer badge dangling from his reindeer partner's furry neck.

"A-ha! Krist-off! So you've slipped up, now, you shameless felons!"

"Wh-what?" Kristoff scoffs at the crazed inventions of the insane fowl bothering them.

"You two are guilty of impersonating Prince Kristly and his best friend of a reindeer! Pah! Who in his right mind would name a self-respecting reindeer 'Sven'? What a fake name! You don't even have the Royal Ice Harvester's sleigh that she was so proud of. Ha! Tried to trick a trained investigator like me! Imagine!" On a tirade, the dumb bird thinks he has the slippery pair on the ropes as he now was fingering Kristoff's matching RIH&D badge too. Though unable to read its designated markings, the klepto-bird liked its shine.

"This is ridiculous! I am Prince Kristly—I mean, I AM the real KRISTOFF! And this is the real SVEN! Olaf! Tell them who we are! I give up!" All of the interrogated ride back to the Salsbrucket Hostel, Kristoff had kept his cool, as Ragi advised, until the exasperating birds just got too darn vexatious to take anymore. So he passes them off to the cool-headed, likewise insane snowman to handle as the birds trail Kristoff and Sven into the hostel barn.
"Oh, hello, little-birdy-wirdies. Nice to meet you." Olaf had that condescending air on again, as he looks from Kristoff to the fowl he was conversing with, as if the man was the one off his rocker.

"This is Kristoff. This is Sven. This is their Royal Ice Harvester and Deliverer sleigh that Elsa appointed to them after Anna hinted like a ba-zillion times." Scuttle had just met his match for inane prattle in this three piled snow mound creature we all have come to love.

"And I'm Olaf. I like warm hugs." The always pleasant snowman extends his branch arms out and moves towards the befuddled skittish birds that instead scatter wildly across the barn at his open invitation as Olaf patronizingly addresses the seagulls and puffins that were hitching a ride on Sven's accommodating back. "Where'd you all go?"

_Blink. Blink. Blink. Blink._

After assessing the situation from his perch in the high rafters of the barn where he was keeping a look-out all night, dutiful Pascal abandons the safety of his post. Though quite self-aware of the carnivorous fowl and their tendency to be predators for small prey such as he, the previously obscured chameleon stealthily sneaks up to the feathered gaggle as they rest en masse nearby. Pascal then uses the power of his hypnotizing eyes on he goofy birdbrains to perplex them into baffled submission and they cease their distracting kerfuffle.

"Ohhhh! Prince 'Kristly' is short for 'Kristoff'! Why didn't you say so in the first place, boyo?"

Scuttle had remained close to his quarry as he wobbles across the barn stalls to follow Kristoff who was seeing to Sven's watering and carrot and oat supper he retrieves from in the sleigh's rear bed.

Doing his best to ignore the feathered annoyance, a tired out Kristoff rolls his eyes to the heavens as he takes the second chomp of the large orange carrot after Sven had already slobbered on it.

"A-hem!" After clearing his gargled throat loudly self-important, the stout long-billed seagull prepares to deliver his memorized speech to the Wind Whisperer. However, to a few passers by housing their own horses for the night, it all sounded like ear-splitting squawking birdlike wails that the nutty young blonde man was conversing with.

"We have a message from a pretty little lady for her 'beloved Prince Kristly'"

"What?! When?! Where is she?!" Kristoff nearly chokes on the carrot he was sharing halves with Sven in place of dinner. He stumbles forward to where the seagull ringleader and his other carnivorous friends, who had come to again, were encircling around a smiling Olaf and pensive Pascal perched on the snowman's shoulder.

"Over the sea! Over the sea! Or was that 'under'? Always mixing up my directions!" The zany bird's eyes roll right around his strange head.

"Anyway, your little princess is singing away, scrubbing decks on a little steamship heading northwest of here over that ocean some 50-60 km away." The birdbrain actually says something of sensible import between his ramblings that tilted a bit Caribbean flavored musical.

Just like he had heard the music traveling on the winds overhead one day long ago from a funny little crustacean that had just hatched from beneath the sand and scurried all of its creepy claws to the ocean. All whilst singing that gleeful tune before joining its mermaid and merman populated deep ocean denizens _Under da Sea_ for good.

"Missy Anna' told us to tell you 'not to be worried' because she's 'not worried' because the little songbird made a new friend in …let me see, his name was…Job! Yeah! Job! He's watching out for
the little lady, so she knows everything will turn out fine because she believes with all her heart
that her Kristly is coming for her. That's you, Bucko! Whew! There ya go! Message delivered.
That'll be one shiny gold thing-a-ma-bob as service charge." After delivering Anna's message in a
run-on not-stopping-for-breath-sentence, as accurately as his addled brain could retain, Scuttle
sticks out his open palmed feathers before Kristoff who was too grinning in relief from ear to ear to
notice.

After Pascal gives the cocky bird a pounded fist look, the seagull bursts out in full fledged laughter.
"Bwa-ha-ha! Made ya look! Haa, ha! Just kidding, guys! Had you going for a minute there, didn't
I? Ha! Ha!"

"No. Why was that so funny?" Olaf responds at the pause honestly naive. But the literal
snowperson never did get any jokes barely.

"You just get out a boat on that big 'ole sea and the 'Scuttle Reconnaissance' will do our best to lead
you back to that lovely lass of yours. Won't we gang?" Though Scuttle believed he was talking to
his choir, his fellow aerials were more entranced now with Olaf's comedy act antics involving an
empty pail, a handful of oats and the snowman's snow flurry cloud as he raps his wooden
drumsticks upon the frosted metal drum. Happy to hear of Anna, the oats upon it were dancing to
Olaf's own peculiar snowflake beats.

"Come on, troops! No more silly parlor tricks! We've an important mission to stake out that
kidnapped little girl! I gotta keep these airhead slackers in line." Scuttle murmurs to Kristoff that
last line behind a raised wing as if he were the perfectly sane one of the bunch.

"Remember, we'll find you." The recon commando seagull does little to quell Kristoff's suspicions
on the aerial squadron's reliability as he salutes in his topsy-turvy manner.

For after a few squawked wails signaling the others to leave, Scuttle leads his foolheardy group
straight into the barn door. Each one goes down SPLAT! SPLAT! SPLAT! SPLAT! against the
hardwood before righting their dizzied bodies to exit through an open window hole near the horse
stalls.

"Bye-bye, Birdies! Tell Anna 'Hi' from me, when you see her!" Olaf waddles over to the window
as he waves pleasantly, tracing their aerial path across the now moonlit sky of 11PM.

"Right. You'll lead the way..." Kristoff shares a skeptical look with Sven, who had remained radio
silent all while the strange seagull sortie was ruling the roost.

"At least now you know that Anna's doing okay." Sven mentally taps into Kristoff's somewhat
relieved thoughts as he recalls the Anna-like phrasing and descriptions of his physique that only
could come from his cute little firecracker of a wife.

"Thank God." Kristoff breathes a sigh as he pats his reindeer pal's head. "The message said that
guy Job is looking out for her as a friend? I guess Anna does have that effect on people." Kristoff
thinks to himself with a self-deprecating smile. Just then, the wise words of his old friend and
mentor...and Father?...creep back into the forefront of his mind amidst his still unquenched
concern for his beloved's welfare.

"Let go of the anger, my boy, and you'll hear nature's voices. The colors of the wind will paint
arrows pointing to your love on the horizon, if you learn to listen with your heart, Spirit
Whisperer..."
Feeling Ragi's words, Kristoff's distant eyes follow the far-off trail that the little flock of God's feathered creatures was weaving across the finally dark sky.

The tall blonde mountain man just notices, in the corner of his eye as he's about to turn away, how the five birds' black-tipped white wings cross the full moon in pursuit of reuniting the starlit path of these young lovers, in the perfect shape of an arrow head…

After his long, revealing night, an exhausted, yet pleased to have word of his Anna, Kristoff Bjorgman trudges into the Salsbrucket Hostel. Only to be accosted by the irate owner of the establishment, who stops the tall blonde at the reception desk to inform him of the extensive damages his inn suffered as a result of his party's actions. A shocked Kristoff is slapped with a lengthy bill for the damages done to the man's prized tavern.

*Thank you very much, Cousin Eugene.*

By the time those two bad boy brothers' barroom brawl's resulting cost of broken furniture, liquor bottles and beer barrel destruction were tallied, displayed and fairly argued as to monetary value, our tired hardworking mountain man doesn't get to his room for some well deserved sleep until nearly midnight.

Quietly making his way through the darkened upstairs hallway after removing his boots at the stair top as not to disturb others who were fortunate enough to find sleep already, Kristoff opens the unlatched door.

Before he left to take care of the Vis-à-vis and the two horses, big sister-ish Elsa had informed her 'little' brother-in-law of the room she'd designated for him. And she slipped in the fact that, with only three rooms available, he'd have to be sharing it with a certain undesirable Prince Hans, of all people.

Kristoff's keen senses were grateful in a suspicious cynical sort of way that someone was indeed present this un-chaperoned night in *his* hostel room, rather than in the Queen's, temptingly just next door.

The well-built young man stealthily crosses the moonlit room as silently as he could. Though acquiescing without complaint to Elsa's unspoken desire for him to smell clean (not barnyard) aboard ship, Kristoff would have preferred sleeping in the barn with Sven and the smelly horses rather than in a soft bed with this unpalatable—albeit undeniably sweeter scented—former rival for Anna's affections. But a rugged hard life taught Kristoff long ago that 'needs must'.

With only the three bedrooms available, it was either Hans or Elsa up for his bunkmate, with the married couple taking one room. And the way those two singles had been dancing around one another—relationship-wise—these past few days, even in his own tumult, experienced married man Kristoff could sense when his interfering presence may be a necessity in Anna's place.

Kristoff really didn't give a wit beyond general caring of the Queen's safety, but if it was important to Anna, it was *imperative* to him to make sure to keep a close vigilant eye over her untouched pure sister and that wandering smooth-talking lothario in his wife's absence.
Even if close, this time, meant he had to physically share a begrudging bed with the skinny twit.

After fumbling his way to a chair to hang his yet fairly damp shirt and vest cloying to his chest all this while, Kristoff plunks onto the bed with the resigned sigh of a martyr.

*My pants and I are not separating tonight—no way, no how!*

His large robust body can't help but bump—though he tried his best to avoid—Prince Hans of the Southern Isles' rather greedily sprawled out form, after his own evening's battle exhaustion. The red-headed prince was all skin and bones beneath those pale blue thin silk pajamas that were a size or two too big, that one of the females purchased for him when buying extra clothes for them all earlier in the day.

*I wonder which one…*

Kristoff thinks to himself with a smirk as he tries to settle in. Despite his slight frame, Hans was still everywhere on the double bed.

"Move your skinny butt over." Kristoff gives Hans' dozing shoulder an unfriendly shove as the bigger man tries to resolve his mind to sleep himself.

"No, my Queen. I mustn't mar your purity…" Whispered on the winds of a moonlit dream's darkness, Kristoff could just about make out the strange declaration on Hans' yet agonized slumbered subconscious as he stirs when the Ice Harvester first lays his own head down to the pillow on his far side of the bed.

*Did Hans just say that out loud?*

Or was it the Wind Whisperer eavesdropping unbeknownst on some semi-inebriated dream?

Unsure of his newfound abilities and still reeling from the night's adventures and revelations with Sven and Ragi, Kristoff decides to give Hans the benefit of the doubt and let the loose statement go.

Taking another stab at elusive sleep to ready for the big day in the next leg of their journey tomorrow, Kristoff closes his eyes tightly until he feels a warm hand tentatively touch his bare back.

The blonde's eyes pop open in unnerved shock, frozen in place as he was pretty sure now that Hans was actually verbally speaking in his sleep, in the faintest of soft voices.

"Snowflake…Please forgive me if my brazen and forthright admiration for you has inveigled you to acquiesce to fill the void in my heart that holds you in every dream…I am inconsolable to the fact that I know you and I can never be now…after what I did you…"

Wow! Even when he's in unconscious sleep this guy's longwinded! What did you do to her, you lout?!

But I'm glad to hear you're backing off now, pal. For everyone's sake. Kristoff thinks with an uncomfortable smirk, as, at the same time in a deeply masculine voice, he speaks one deliberate terse phrase aloud to signify his irked presence in place of the fantasized ice maiden:

"It's Kristoff."

Then adds a truly darkly threatening: "*Now, get your hand off my back.*"
"Hmm? What?...Oh! Do forgive me, sir. I-It won't happen again!" As red in the face as his red hair tumbling uncoiffed about his startled awake pretty boy face, a fiercely ashamed Hans Westergaard immediately removes his wandering appendage's palm from its comforting touch on Kristoff's broad, muscular, and warm—in stark contrast to Elsa's slim, delicate, and cool—bare back. How could he have made such an error?! Even in his sleep! The shamed young man sits straight up on the bed, his lowered voice brimming over with evident mortification.

Unable to meet Kristoff's by now challenging gaze, Hans shrinks back with as much distance between them as possible to his far side of the shared bed.

"It better not. Or I'll break your scrawny arm six ways 'til Sunday." The newly wedded virile young man was more amused than he was disgusted (though that repulsed sentiment was still there somewhere) as he revels in the joy of upbraiding one of the pair of cavalier criminal culprits who caused the hostel owner this night to raid Kristoff's unhappy money purse. It was nice somehow to see the former villain of Arendelle get his comeuppance of curling into his vain self in utter humiliation. That beat this lofty Prince's uppity elitist superiority anyday, in Kristoff's book of justice.

Though his own conscience knew better, Kristoff couldn't help himself from enjoying taking down this royal pain down a peg or two. But seeing how wretched the man looked all curled up, and after hearing Hans' heartfelt confessions before, the good boy Bulda raised wouldn't be totally devoid of compassion for his fellow forlorn creature.

"Just get to sleep. Don't even dream of her. It'll be easier that way." Kristoff advises and sympathizes with the painful machinations of the human heart in his down to earth way.

And yet, as he settles his own fatigued bones down to rest on his side, Kristoff can't restrain himself from adding one last barb.

"After all, you've got a schooner to take the helm of in a few hours...Kommander Westergaard." With the ridiculed moniker, Kristoff allows the tiniest smile to tickle his lips before dismissing the rattled man beside him fully.

Kristoff's brown eyes then meander to the open window where the penetrating moonlight was just breaking through the dark midnight clouds that had parted.

And that ship will take me across that damned sea to my Anna.

Kristoff's mind then steadies himself to make his first attempt to reach Anna via this special new skill he'd been told he possesses over and over.

First by those old Saami, then Sven, and now even Ragi.

Did even the trolls know something about his extraordinary connection to this icy land way back then? Kristoff doesn't waste much thought on that potential musing, although the yellowed crystal necklace his rock-like foster parents had given as a wedding present was strangely beginning to glow. Unbeknownst to either man in the room, the crystals' eerie golden gleam that had the power to channel the Aurora Borealis itself, or so troll legends say, begin to blink and shine.

The golden incandescence pulsates in intensity from inside the one clothing satchel that he had managed to preserve this entire trip, under the chair across the room. The radiating glow was in sync it seemed with the 'Snow Prince's' singularly treasured concentrated thought of his love for Anna as he sends it out across the winds …
He focuses all his strength of mind on one thought, one person, as he closes his soulful chocolaty eyes, almost in a prayer…

"If you can hear me, Anna. I promise I'll be there to save you soon. Just you wait and see. I'm coming for you, Baby. I love you…” The Wind Whisperer in Kristoff Bjorgman uses all his focus to transmit the sentiment of his heart along the moonlight's reflective golden beams to his true love…

Those radiating lights twinkle their golden path across the crests of each sea wave until the crystalline sparkle reflects in the mirror on the face of the full moon above Princess Anna's head.

She has the sudden urge to glance up to the emerging stars in the illuminated moonlight as it shines ten times more brightly than it had just been silhouetting her petite frame against the night sky, the stars like little fireworks exploding in her gaze.

Anna was perched atop the small steamship's wheelhouse, where Job had hefted her up 'to give the bridge's roof a good scrubbin'' and to check for any damage after that sudden, inexplicable storm that the little vessel had just been tossed and tussled on the angry waves to survive under the experienced Caribbean's hand.

Her pitter-pattering feet and stumbling scraping sounds directly above that had been annoying a grumbling Captain Houtebeen for some fifteen minutes now instantly cease. The patch-eyed pirate in the bridgehouse below cocks his head, with one suspicious eye squinting at the irritating child's abrupt lack of distracting aggravation.

Noisy, infernal wench!

But Anna's deep heart in love could indeed intuitively hear her true love's voice calling to her across the waters. Their love was so great that her senses were keen to his presence, even in the very air. She hears her Kristoff's whisper on the wind as clearly as if he were right there on the bridge house's roof next to her.

Foregoing her diligent scrubbing with the brush at those persistent birdy droppings, dreamy Anna sits back to stargaze. Her own whispered response was every bit as heartfelt as it was innocent enough to believe that the voice in her head was truly her husband sending a message to her and not only a 'vocal mirage' for her needy, lonely soul.

Her faith in her boy was so ardent and pure that their link over the distance could be this impassioned.

"I love it when you call me 'Baby.'"

Still in a deliriously in love with her hunky new hubby state, as this emotionally driven girl probably would be for the rest of her life, Anna gurgles to the wind's whispers. She embraces its invisible warmth to her chest, where beneath her blouse, hung on a brown hemp cord, was a single golden yellow crystal accosted from her new husband's handmade necklace that was a present from her inlaws, the Trolls. She feels the jewel's faceted edges exude a curious warmth as she presses its obscured dazzle even closer to her heart. Princess Anna smiles, despite her own desperate situation,
in an expressive lovestruck security hug towards her lover.

Anna recalls the fun scene of her 'snitching' one of Kristoff's gems from his wedding gift. After all, the roped necklace the trolls had crafted for the groom to wear at their troll marriage ceremony was replete with such shiny crystals. So why shouldn't his new wife swipe one crystal sparkler right off his ripped muscular chest when he was feigning sleep after it caught her mesmerized attention with its soft pulsating glow? His pleasurable 'punishment' for her naughty stealing that came soon thereafter on their first honeymoon night spent in that cave in Valley of Living Rock was nothing short of glorious, as the golden crystal, now around her neck, glowed all the while.

And Anna could sense his true love undulate through that crystal again in this moment upon her thumping heart.

His windswept declaration had reached her heart and she knew he'd be coming soon. Anna blows a kiss to her Kristoff, on the brightest star twinkling down from the heavens as she makes a silent wish upon it.

*Please let Kristly and I be happy together again...soon.*

Anna's wish upon a star, coupled with her unquestioning belief in her love's assured protection that had been projected to her over the miles, causes her, through her crystal that captured all the mysterious glimmer of God in Nature's beauteous phenomenon called the Aurora Borealis, to sparkle atop the highest spot on the small boat, like a shining star herself, all aglow with his utterly pure love...

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Sleep had been an elusive commodity for the remainder of his guilt-stricken night by the time a sheepish Hans Westergaard rises, nearing their 5AM appointment with the sea, Kristoff had already departed to ready Sven and their supplies for the trip.

Alone, Hans quickly changes his clothes into some that intrepid seamstress Princess Rapunzel had quick measured him up for before she and Elsa went into shop at Salsbrucket's ample offerings of textile mill produced clothing in the mercantile district they had stopped at—for themselves and the three guys they were traveling with.

After giving his night's stubble a welcome shave and his sideburns a delicate trim, fastidious Prince Hans—ahem, Kommander Westergaard—appeared a far more dashing a heroic figure in the vanity's mirror than he felt.

Hans recalls how he and his brother Eugene had successfully thwarted those ruffians in their evil intentions and mocking of the Queen. Yes, he remembered the thrill of the swashbuckling combat with his beloved sword and a worthy opponent. But also vivid in his mind were the rash indulgences and uncontrollable acts after the exhilaration of the 'battle's' success had clouded his mind.

He keenly recalls how he had carried the tender bodied, dizzied Queen Elsa up to her room. The passionate kisses that had ensued with the delicate beauty soon after were nothing short of heaven for the guilty man who was now putting himself through hell for allowing them.
How could I have been so weak to have allowed that? She deserves so much better...

Hans nearly nicks his handsome, noble chin with his sharp razor knife in some kind of masochistic punishment as he and his conscience put the final touches on his contrite face.

Could she, after giving lowly nothing me the great honor of commissioning such an unworthy man to be the top ranking ship's officer in her royal navy, now look upon that man with anything beyond derision and shame after last night? How can I face those flawless, crystalline eyes without flinching in remorse and contrition now that I am aware of the emotions my improper behavior towards her innocence illicit?

And yet, was that impassioned expression of my esteemed regard and admiration for her ever truly a deception?

At the wash basin, Hans splashes cool water on his face one more time in one more attempt to clear his befuddled mind's tangled cobwebs.

He knew one thing for certain, though—nothing could ever erase his inebriated 'Snowflake's' kisses from his memory.

But I know what I must do to unravel your mind's disarray—for your sake, my beautiful Queen. Whether out of kindness or pity, I fear you have grown too attached to me...

After clearing up the remainder of his meager belongings from the tiny hostel room that he and Kristoff had shared last night as an odd couple indeed, Hans cautiously peeks out before entering the hall.

Once out there, he could plainly hear, through the thin doors, how his brother Eugene and Rapunzel were bickering as married couples were wont to do—about how too warm or too snug her clothing choices for his traveling clothes were mainly.

Then a loud, tearing ripping sound soon follows thereafter that signaled the unlucky man's 'minor' adjustments of newly purchased wear that would require some quick stitching now.

But it was the silent room in the center that captures the majority of Hans' attention. He imagines the young woman within as she would be preparing for their imminent rescue mission to save her little sister from kidnapped captivity.

With a longing expression for a past to have been a different world entirely concerning himself and Elsa, Hans, still a bit dazed, stands in the darkened hallway dreaming of a place where princes and queens and royal houses and kingdoms took no precedence to matters of love.

He is startled when the quiet door his green eyes had been fixed upon cracks open and Queen Elsa, wearing a little grey shawl over her long, gold trimmed deep purple dress, takes a tentative step out into the dark hall.

"Oh! Good morning, Prince—or should I say 'Kommander' Westergaard." At first surprised to see him standing there, Elsa's smile was as genuinely blinding to his hungry eyes as the first rays of sunlight that were beginning to dawn over this Land of the Midnight Sun on this early morning through her room's window behind her. Those sunstreaks play on her platinum tresses to cascade down into her trademark, elegantly prim side braid.

"...Good morning." His eyebrows were furrowed in uncertain confusion as a torn Hans responds far too politely and succinctly, but he could manage little else.
"Were you waiting for me? I am so very sorry to be tardy right on the onset, but for some reason, I woke up with a bit of a headache. Do forgive me, kind Sir?" Elsa was pleasantly smiling and teasing him, completely unaware of the troubled man's agonized discomfort.

Whether last night's interlude of flirtations with the very man standing in the dark before her was too much for her regal proper mind to process, or some innate self-preservation to keep control of her ice powers that had guarded her from such excess emotional wear and tear, or if it was merely the common after effect of even that small amount of alcohol in her fragile system's none-too-normal processes—whatever the reason, Queen Elsa had blocked out last night. It had been forgotten and chased to the recesses of her mind in denial.

That is to say, up to a point.

"I suppose the strain and pressure of our impending voyage and its imperative outcome has been weighing too much on my little mind." Elsa finds her self-conscious humor not received with a kind smile and witty humorous retort she had come to expect and desire from Hans Westergaard. But the redheaded man fighting a battle within his own conscience was simply gazing upon her with flat consternation.

"And with all the new clothing and bedding that Rapunzel insisted that we may require onboard the ship, it did prove to be a little difficult to squeeze into my one trunk. But I finally used a little ice power to seal it closed." Elsa's exotic eyes purposely glance back into her room and the trunk upon the bed for the 'gentleman' to courteously retrieve as he had always jumped to her every whim, waiting upon her hand and foot up to now, without so much as a word.

However, the aloof and reticent manner on his unforthcoming, drawn line face gives the Ice Queen chills that she had not felt from the Danish prince before, as his green eyes avoid her blue ones purposefully.

"I see." Though it was killing him inside to be so cold to her when he only wished to give this fragile lady all his warmth, Hans utters the two words simply, in disattached response. He then pointedly turns towards the room to the right where Eugene and Rapunzel were emerging from their door finally.

Nervously confused, Elsa giggles as she blows that stray, pesky wild bang back from her face. Hans had to do all he could to fight the urge to push that blonde tuft back for her, but his gloved hands restrain themselves to rest upon the leather holstered sword on the belt of his gold and crimson trimmed naval jacket uniform.

It was then that Elsa notices the tall, thin man was no longer sporting the Arendelle grey cloak she had given him as he had previously on this journey together. But rather, he was wearing a new dark Navy issue coat over the dark blue naval tunic she had personally selected for him with Rapunzel.

"I am glad to see that Kommander's jacket fits you so well. Rapunzel herself aided the storekeeper, upon my request, for it to be tailored especially for you with all due haste, especially for our trip this morning. It's silly, but it seems that most Naval Commanders that the uniforms are designed for in this port are several sizes heftier than you—"

Elsa was desperately trying to make pleasant conversation with the laconic young man, until he gives her an almost indifferent curt reply.

"I apologize if my slightly built proportions are less than satisfactory for a Commander in your Navy, Your Majesty." Hans states, much too formally clinical for Elsa's taste.
"Oh, no! That's not what I meant at all. I was merely saying…” Elsa's cheeks flush as she stumbles for words under Hans' cool gaze upon her. "Please allow me to restate how your physique made more than an impressive performance last night." Referring to her memories of the barroom brawl, Elsa attempts to 'right' any ill-spoken words with a well placed compliment that a pair of curious pitchers pick up on right away.

"Music to any man's ears, am I right, little bro?" Eugene elbows Hans in the ribs with a catty glance and a wink in Elsa's blushing direction. "I see you two are bright eyed and bushy tailed and up with the dawn. Or have you crazy kids skipped the sleeping stage altogether?" Flynn Rider ambles up to the incommunicative pair with his own adult mood insinuations.

After all, he had personally witnessed both the ultra-passionate consented kiss between the youthful couple after the fight ended, and the valiant way that his brother had carried the seductive eyed young queen up to her room last night.

It didn't take much for Flynn's worldly imagination to put the rest of the night together for them.

"You sly dog, you. Didn't know you had it in you, little bro. Can't say I blame you, though, with Her Legginess over there." Flynn again elbows Hans in the ribs as he mumbles like a proud elder brother such crude statements right in Hans' appalled ear.

"Enough, Storbror. Please retrieve the Queen's trunk from her room." Dismissively striding right past Elsa, without so much as making the eye contact she was longing for, such as she was hanging on his every word, a detached Hans takes the two small sacks from his older brother's quizzical hands and then goes out of his way to fetch struggling Rapunzel's heavier load of double trunks and medical supplies baskets.

When Eugene gets bloodied and wounded this time, I will be prepared!

"Gee…Thanks, Hans…? You okay?" Chasing after the seemingly distraught quick-stepping young officer, as he heads down the stairs double barreled fast, concerned Rapunzel asks in a low voice, after she exchanges a bewildered look with her husband. Eugene gives her a pair of big eyes, rolling in likewise curiosity as he shrugs his shoulders over Elsa's deflated, hung head as Rapunzel too shrugs at his high signs before she scurries down the steps after Hans. The blonde young woman lets out a repressed sigh.

"Prince Hans? Did I do something wrong?" Never imbued with much self-confidence and feeling quite abandoned by his cold looks and thin, nonexistent smiles, rejected Elsa whispers through the dark to the air, as her voice catches in her constricting throat.

Eugene was just about able to make out her words in between the cold ice-puffed breaths, as the older man joins the dejected younger female in the hall, at the top of the steps that his wife and brother had already disappeared down. The Ice Queen was staring after them in disheartened shock.

"Chill, lady. I mean, not literally, just figuratively. Cut him some slack—we guys are known to try to act a little macho and aloof the morning after, just so you still think we're cool. He's just going through a little phase, believe me. I've done the same. Many times." Flynn, rather big brotherly, makes a yawning attempt at mending icy bridges between these young new lovers as he saunters past to fetch her bulging trunk and head downstairs, like the cat who knows someone ate the canary.

Macho? A phase? The 'morning after?' After what?
Flabbergasted and naïve, Elsa of Arendelle's frosted over mind at Hans' cold shoulder was now worrying with all these new ideas that smug, experienced man-of-the-world Eugene Fitzherbert was enigmatically injecting into the situation.

"I don't understand…What went wrong?" Dispirited Elsa innocently whispers, alone in the darkness, quite disappointed that someone she had believed she was becoming close to—someone who could be, perhaps, her champion—was growing distant, and she didn't have a clue as to the reason why.

The romantic escapade last night was so impermissible to Elsa's orderly mind that the Queen of Arendelle had all but wiped the liaison from her memory as light feet take her down the stairs to join the others.

But as she turns the corner of the lobby, looking so very demure and sweet, a tormented Prince Hans could not sanction his thought processes in such a disjunctive manner as she, concerning his growing sentiment for her.

Perhaps because not only was he raised from childhood to be a lonely man, but he also recognized, now more than ever, that he was in love with the one woman he must never have.

The sins of his crimes against her personally were far too great to overcome.

"But I've practically already paid for redecorating your entire barroom! You don't have to charge me a king's ransom for staying one night in this three flea-bitten—"

Let the anger go, my boy…

A disgruntled Kristoff hears Ragi's voice calm his heart, so easily irate with shop owners and businessmen the blonde man normally was.

"Hey…never mind that. Thanks for providing a dry roof over their heads while I was out in the storm. I'm sorry for being short with you, but my new wife is missing and her family and I are setting off to go find her now." Heeding the words whispered in his head, Kristoff instead opens his heart to the portly man, whose plump, vexed red face turns right around for the kind word.

"Oh, you poor boy! Ingeborg! Rustle up a quick breakfast to go for our travelers while the boys and I load up their sleigh. It's the least that Salsbrucket Inn can do to provide our friends with warm and full bellies as they set out on their important journey. And I'll only charge you for the two rooms, since you were out most of the night, battling the elements, my good man."

Quite a change of tune for the hostel owner causes Kristoff to lightly smile. He was reminded again of how even the mere mention of his Anna could brighten the atmosphere.

I guess just like Ragi said, we are all of us God's creatures, too.

So, with a bit of help from new friends, with a full food basket in hand, and waved well wishes 'goodbye,' Kristoff drives Sven's full Ice Harvester's sleigh towards Salsbrucket Port—just a few kilometers west.
The space was limited between the five people, and the one sweet-toothed snowman scarfing down the traditional Norwegian powdered sugar coated pancakes called 'pannekaken,' until the rolled and folded crepes filled with berry and jams were smudged all over his face, not to mention all over one now extra colorful (and gooey) chameleon and their multiple trunks and supply baggage.

Rapunzel had soon been pulled onto her tactile, teasing husband's lap, along with a napkin wiped Pascal on Flynn's shoulder as his doting wife feeds the three of them in turn, with some of the sweet offerings the hostel owner's wife had cooked up for them that Olaf didn't yet devour.

But the pair in the middle sleigh bench was more of the silent and taciturn variety, despite Olaf's best efforts to get either Hans or Elsa to speak.

"Hey, Olaf, why don't you pass around some of those pannekaken crepe…thingys to your friends up there? I always say a good breakfast in the morning keeps 'em full, keeps 'em focused! And these fellas can sure put a sweet smile on your face! Mmm hmm, good! And it's only five in the morning!" Feeling lively this early morn as he chews expressively on his fruity Norwegian pancake, Eugene tries to lighten the sleigh's depressing mood for his emotional sweetie's sake if not his sour-pussed little bro, as Flynn Rider gives it his best selling technique.

He encouragingly pats the snowy shoulder of the only passenger of the middle seat who was paying any attention to anyone or anything beyond the treeline. Eugene glances quizzically on either side of the bench that Hans and Elsa were purposely as far separated upon with as much luggage in between them as possible.

"Here, Hans!" Olaf offers up to the person on his right but the Naval officer declines the sticky crepe offer with a waved away hand, after the hungry snowman had already stuffed one sweet powdered, sugar fried breakfast fare into his big-toothed mouth whole, without chewing.

"No, thank you, Olaf." Elsa, too, refuses the pannekaken. Fond memories of cooking up the Danish version of her own pancakes was a little painful right now, as the friendly snowman waves the folded crepe in front of her face until it splits open and several whole, loose jam coated berries spill out onto the queen's unsuspecting lap.

"Oh, Olaf!" Elsa cries out, never fond of a mess, especially not blood red berries strewn upon her neat apparel that instantly stain her pale blue gloved hands as she tries to wipe them away.

"Oh, sorry…" Olaf stuffs the remainder of the pancakes into his mouth for safekeeping, Kristoff not even getting one offered crumb of the free meal he'd earned this morning..

Reacting to her distress, Hans immediately springs to action, using his own fresh new pair of white gloves to be saturated against Olaf's clueless melting bottom snowmound pressed against the focused heat of the quick thinking man's warm hand. Once wet, Hans leans over the piles of luggage to use his moistened hand to carefully press the created water onto her skirt. He tenderly, yet firmly wipes the red jam stain from the gold trimmed belt section of Elsa's prim purple and blue shirt where it connected with her long fancy gold trimmed violet skirt.

"But, Prince Hans! Your new gloves will be stained!" Though thrilled by the sensation of his merest touch, Elsa protests Hans' gentlemanly selfless act in his concern for her appearance more than his own. As he continues, pointedly focused on cleaning her belt, Elsa can't help but gaze in unabashed longing and admiration towards him while she was sure he wasn't looking.

"But at least this type of stain can be washed away, if attended forthwith. So please allow me to endeavor to try, your Majesty." Acquainted with the sort of stains that were not so easily removed, Hans says softly in that gentle voice he reserved for her alone again. Forgetting himself entirely
again in the beauty of her enchanting eyes, Hans and Elsa share an unresolved forever glance until Eugene's coarse voice breaks the moment.

"Aw, he got the stain out! And here I thought you'd enjoy having 'red fox' berries on your lap permanently, Queenie." With a coy smirk, Eugene wickedly teases Hans and Elsa again as both look up from one another's entranced gaze to blush at his juicy comparison. Hans clears his throat in embarrassment and returns to his distant seat, the reticent look returning to his guilty eye.

Rapunzel slaps her insensitive mate's arm in punishment for blowing a tender moment to smithereens.

"Yowie! Bad arm...Darling." Eugene wails in her ear, then amends it to a fond nickname.

"Ooops, sorry...! Wow—!" Rapunzel starts to apologize, but her attention is soon stolen away as the sleigh maneuvers around the harbor dock to arrive at the HMnoS Gler's loading bay area, with the ship shimmering and shining against the rising sun.

"Whew! She's a beauty! Your first vessel awaits your conquest, 'Kommander' Westergaard." A whistling Eugene signals with his one good arm towards the docked schooner in all its rigged, clewlined glory.

Half-proud and half-mocking, Hans' older brother lifts his pregnant wife from the parked sleigh's rear in a show off his own 'leadership command.'

"Or should we call her your 'second conquest'?” In an undertone murmur, Eugene's eyebrows at eye level with Hans still in the sleigh, raise up and down quite jovially as Rapunzel, who grasped each one of her love's alluded to innuendo, knowing him so well, inside and out, was careful this time to whack the correct appendage in doling out just punishment to her uncouth, shameless tease of a husband.

"The Gler is my first command...if the offer still stands, that is, Your Majesty." Offended by the older man's crass phrasing in his ear, a shocked and uppity Hans exits the sleigh. He gives Eugene a pursed lip look as he alights neatly beside his handsome yet rascally, elder sibling.

Hans then turns to speak to Elsa at last. The ignored queen was eager for his attention of any kind, albeit formal and polite, as he deems to help her from the passenger seat with one offered ungloved hand.

"I have every confidence in your abilities to lead this vessel in search for my sister." Queen Elsa, monarchal head of the Norwegian Sjoforsvaret, says with complete assurance as she takes Hans' hand.

Just then, Harbormaster Alfen appears from the ship to dutifully attend the Naval schooner's launch at his ruler's side, after a few final instructions to the reliable workers of the steam crew below deck, who the harbormaster had hand selected as good reliable workers to run the boiler room for this journey.

"As official overseer of this secured Naval Port of Salsbrucket, as Harbormaster of the Nord-Trondelag municipality of Naeroy, under her Majesty's direct order, I, Halvdan Alfen, declare this ship, the Her Norwegian Majesty's Ship Gler, seaworthy." Performing his duties to a tee, every document signed and sealed for this emergency naval commission under the explicit order of the Queen herself, Alfen proudly states, looking to Queen Elsa for approval, which she gives in a regal nod, self-consciously removing her red berry stained gloves before any of her subjects saw.
"And I hereby commission the command of this Schooner class vessel of the Sjoforsvaret of Norway, the HMnoMS Gler—" The Harbormaster pauses in his speech at the rising dawn to look the taller man standing before him in the eye.

"—to Kommander Westergaard."

Despite this morning's shaky relationship's cold shoulder, Elsa still feels a surge of proud warmth tug at her heart as her right hand lightly touches Kommander Hans Westergaard, of Her Majesty's Royal Navy, on the firm golden epaulette and decorative roping shoulder to signal her unconditional trust in placing one of the gems of her kingdom in his care.

"I am proud to serve to the best of my abilities and honor this ship under your direct command, Your Royal Majesty, Queen Elsa." Wearing his debonair navy blue Kommander's jacket and complimentary white formal suit pants uniform, Hans kneels at her feet, his forehead pressed against Elsa's thin pale hand in show of absolute respect for her authority as the new Sovereign he was pledging to serve under.

But the shy young woman, yet unaccustomed to another human's direct skin-to-skin touch, never mind this particular handsome young man's winsome attentions, blushes violently, unable to quite know how to react and still keep her cool. Literally.

Seeing this predicament he had placed the delicate maiden in, as the gallant young man rises, he tenderly takes hold of the elegant Queen's trembling palm. With great warmth, Prince Hans then arranges the back of her slender pale ice blue long-nailed hand for his awestruck, adoring lips to graze gently across in utter grateful tenderness, despite himself.
And as Hans Westergaard stands to his full 6 foot 2 inch height, his dulled olive green eyes were not quite able to withdraw from Elsa's surprised, yet inexpressively pleased ones as she bats those heavily violet shadowed eyes up at him, then demurely draws her right hand over her stirred heart at his intimate startling bare skin touch she didn't expect.

Hans' resolve falters within this immeasurable moment of her precious trust being bestowed upon
the young man who had only daydreamed of the grandeur and distinction of a Naval Commander's appointment with such a worthy vessel. For, as 13th in line back home, due to the rules of Naval seniority succession, young Prince Hans would never command any ship.

The red-headed officer could only watch now in disbelieving astonishment as his tall black boots, shining in the new sunlight, take their first steps across the sparkling clean deck of the first commission of his Naval career. His viridescent eyes, in a melancholy mood previously for the relationship in turmoil with the woman he loves, but knows he shouldn't, sparkle involuntarily upon her altered from timid to beaming a smile for believing in him, despite himself, to give the undeserving man this remarkable tremendous chance of a lifetime.

"Thank you." In all earnest, Hans mouths to Elsa across the deck as their eyes interact with his most genuine, grateful smile locking with her gorgeous trusting one, receiving the utter radiance of her effulgent brilliance as reward. And his shining lady of ice all wrapped in royal purples, pale blues and gold shimmering against the dawn, could be no more lovely in his besmitten eyes.

There, upon the tentative pair, the diminutive rays of the first sunlight cascade down as the sun begins to make its assertive ascending move. As now does Kommander Westergaard, for the trained Naval officer wastes no time to take command of this vessel. He strides his long thin legs purposefully into the bridge wheelhouse where a volunteer helmsman was awaiting his commanding officer's order with a respectful greeting salute.

"As you were, Helmsman. Set a course to navigate us through this port, via the Kvistenfjorden and the Norwegian Sea, towards the Mosken Island of Vaeroy in Nordland county. Enroute with this faster vessel, we hope to intercept a small steamship under pirate control. Our dear Princess of Arendelle has been kidnapped by the villains, and we hope to apprehend the guilty and free the lady unharmed to safety as swiftly as possible. Has the rest of the crew below deck been informed of our pertinent mission?"

"Yes, sir!" The young man with droopy eyes and mousy brown hair responds quite enthusiastically.

"And please give the order to hoist the anchor to break ground to clear us of the seabed. Then set main sail to course, with all due haste. And spare not the engines, Helmsman. Time is of the essence." In full display of his experienced seaman's moxie, Kmdr. Westergaard was born to be in Naval command.

Elsa proudly attests this in her pleased mind of his intelligent capability as ship's leader as she steps one well-turned high heel onto the bridge of the Gler to listen into Kommander Hans Westergaard's first order of his commission. And, though their tentative relationship was now on shaky ground and she could not explain why, the Queen of Norway is still certain she made the right choice for the correct man to perform this all-important job.

Perhaps this is why God brought you back into my life, to help save my Anna, bring her home, and redeem yourself in doing so. Or perhaps there is more of a destiny between us than either of us realize that He has in store for us, just yet...

As the HMnoMS Gler rumbles to life beneath their feet in its paramount mission to take them across the sea in a quest to find beloved sister, wife, and friend, Kristoff, windblown in his newly inherited, gold design trimmed grey cape, leans over the railing to gaze across the vast blue in the early morning's muted sunlight that was pointing crested wave trails towards a distant uninhabited island's far off mysterious shore...
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