Curiosity Killed the Raven's Writing Desk

by nothingeverlost

Summary

A collection of stories about Jefferson and Alice. Some of them have nothing to do with each other. Some do.
Running Away

This is what Alice packs: two teacups, in case she meets a friend, a blanket, three sandwiches, a spare dress, a book of fairy tales, and the stuffed rabbit she sleeps with every night. This is what she doesn’t pack: the sunbonnet mama makes her wear, the icky medicine she has to take when she coughs, or the arithmetic book because numbers aren’t any fun.

She leaves after lunch, when papa is at work, mama napping and nanny is cooing over the baby. Alice is too old for naps, too young for work, and doesn’t like the new baby. Everyone else does, though; they won’t miss her when she’s gone because they have him.

Her plans is to walk until tea time, but by the time she crosses the bridge over the creek her feet are hurting. Maybe she should have worn her other shoes, but these are prettier and she likes them best. She sets down her bag and brushes off a rock; with only two dresses she doesn’t want to get one dirty so soon.

“Very neatly done, poppet.”

Alice looks over her shoulder; there’s a man leaning against a tree, drinking out of a funny little bottle. She’s curious. She’s also thirsty. “I’m not ‘posed to talk to people I don’t know.”

“If you only ever talk to people you know, how can you meet anyone new?” The strange man sits on on patch of grass next to her rock; it makes them almost the same size.

“I don’t know.” Tiny eyebrows knit together as Alice tries to puzzle it out.

“I bet you don’t know why a raven is like a writing desk, either.” He laughs. It makes Alice smile; she likes the way his laugh sounds. ”Why don’t we shake hands, poppet, and then we won’t be strangers anymore. I’m Jefferson.”

Alice tilts her head to one side and thinks a moment before holding out her hand; he’s nice, and maybe he’ll share his drink with her. "I’m Alice."
Promises

Chapter Summary

She wakes up alone.

Chapter Notes

A post curse break 'she's been in Wonderland the whole time' ficlet.

She was wearing his shirt and nothing else, but all Jefferson saw when Alice appeared in the doorway was the red eyes. "Rabbit?"

"I thought you were gone. I was alone." She shrugged and tried to smile, but he knew it was the hands you had to look at, and hers were restlessly rubbing together.

"I didn't want to wake you. I was going to bring you a picnic breakfast in bed. Grace is in the garden picking flowers.” She’d been sleeping so peacefully; he’d watched her for an hour before making himself leave the bed.

"It was stupid.” Alice poked at the eggs in the frying pan as she moved to stand at the edge of the counter.

"It was, of me to forget to leave a note.” They’d both been alone for so long, but his Alice had been alone in Wonderland and that was worse even then his own fate at Regina's hand. "I won’t ever be farther than another room in the house, my dearest rabbit, unless I take you with me.”

"Promise?” Her head rested on his shoulder. He tilted her head back so he could see her eyes.

"I'll promise every day, if it helps.” He wrapped his arms around her, not caring that the breakfast was going cold. Alice was what mattered.

"Papa, I found some yellow flowers. Do you think mum will like them?” Grace came running into the room, hair flying behind her and hands full of daffodils. She stopped when she saw her parents, until Jefferson held out a hand to her.

"I think mum likes yellow flowers better than anything.” He pulled her into the hug, and smiled.
“Just tired, my love. And still a little sore.” It was only a week since she’d given birth, sheltered in the home of a turtle that wasn’t a turtle.

“Are you alright, rabbit?” It had been a long walk, as they’d crept through the maze, having to move so carefully. The walls of the maze were carnivores, barely less painful then being caught by the Queen. But they were on the path now, the corner of the toadstool just visible. The doorway was just around the corner.

“Just tired, my love. And still a little sore.” It was only a week since she’d given birth, sheltered in the home of a turtle that wasn’t a turtle. "Do you think you can carry Gracie for me?"

“Of course, my sugarplum.” He held out his hands, but had to wait a minute as she cradled the babe closer and kissed its head.

He probably imagined the tears in her eyes.

“We’ll find a nice quiet place this time, and settle down for a bit. Like bears in a cave in winter. Papa bear, mama bear and baby bear.” He held her hand as they rounded the corner and caught sight of the mirror.

“You’ll be such a good papa, my Jefferson. Grace is lucky to have you.”

“And you, my Alice. Never was there a luckier girl. We’ll give her adventures, sweetness. And so much love.”

“All the love in our pair of hearts.” She tugged free, as they reached the mirror. ”Let me fix your hat before you lose it.”

“What would I do without you? Buttons done up wrong, no doubt and hat askew.” He smiled as she fixed his hat. ”Your price, my lady?”

It was a game they’d played a hundred times. ”A kiss, white knight, and nothing more.”

She kissed Grace first, this time, and then him; a kiss on the lips that should have been teasing but somehow felt all wrong. ”Alice.”

“I love you. Both of you.” And with a shove that took all her strength she pushed him through the looking glass, and collapsed on the ground with a wail, not caring that the noise would attract the Queen’s guards.

It wasn’t until he fell to the ground in the hall of doors that Jefferson understood what Alice had remembered all along. Two had come through the door, two weeks ago when Grace was still protected by her womb. And only two could leave. She’d made herself the sacrificial pawn to save the ones she loved.

He hated her for it.
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