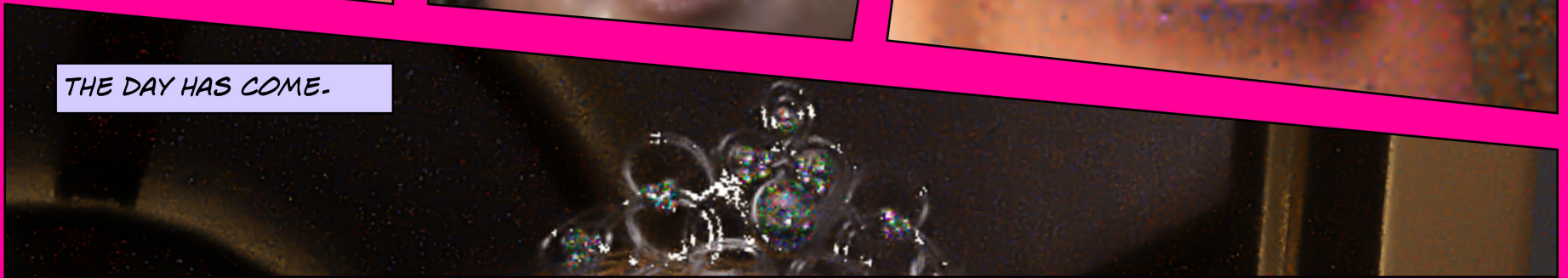


BROTHER BEWITCHED
CHAPTER 41





THE DAY HAS COME.



PRINCE SERREN BECOMES A BRIDE.



I'M IN A WEDDING GOWN, CORSETED,
PRIMED AND PRIMED FOR DISPLAY. I
CARE NOT. I WORRY FOR DEVIN. WHAT
WILL BECOME OF HIM IF HIS PLAN
FAILS? WHAT WILL I DO IF I LOSE MY
TRUE LOVE? I DON'T THINK I COULD
STAND TO LIVE WITHOUT HIM. I
SHUDDER TO EVEN THINK OF IT.



I MAY CRY AT ANY MOMENT. MY MIND RACES, TEEMS WITH FEARS. I CAN'T TRUST MYSELF. I CAN'T TRUST MY FEELINGS. I CAN ONLY TRUST IN DEVIN.




SEEKING COURAGE, I TURN MY THOUGHTS
TO THE GODDESS, PROGENITA. I FEEL HER IN
MY LIFE NOW THAT I AM A WOMAN. I TURN
TO HER IN MY PRAYERS: **GODDESS, I
BESEECH THEE, LET DEVIN SUCCEED
IN HIS MISSION. KEEP HIM SAFE,
DEAR GODDESS. KEEP US SAFE.**



GODDESS, I ASK
YOUR
BLESSING....

HOW SWEET. HE
IS A VISION. THE
MOST BEAUTIFUL
GIRL IN ALL THE
LANDS.





ARE YOU EXCITED
FOR YOUR WEDDING?
IT'S THE BIGGEST DAY IN
A GIRL'S LIFE, AFTER
ALL.

I ASK
THIS AS YOUR
HUMBLE
SERVANT...

HE CANNOT HIDE HIS LOATHING AT THE MOCKING SOUND OF HER VOICE. ANGER FLASHES IN HIS PRETTY EYES.

I MUST BITE MY TONGUE LEST I SAY SOMETHING THAT ALERTS HER TO DEVIN'S PLANS.

I HAVE ACCEPTED MY FATE.

AS ALL GIRLS MUST. YOU LOOK THE VERY IMAGE OF OUR LOVELY MOTHER IN HER WEDDING PORTRAITS.



HE HAS BEEN PRETENDING TO BE BROKEN,
AND HE RETURNS TO THAT ACT NOW.


IT IS
SO STRANGE
TO FIND MYSELF
WEARING OUR
MOTHER'S WEDDING
DRESS, AND YET, I DO
CONFESS, IT FEELS
RIGHT. TRULY, I'VE
COME TO BELIEVE
THIS IS THE
GODDESS' WILL
FOR ME.

MOTHER
ALWAYS DID
FAVOR YOU.
NOW, YOU'RE
THE DAUGHTER
SHE ALWAYS
WANTED.



I DON'T HATE
YOU ANYMORE. I
DON'T. IN FACT, IT
MAY SURPRISE YOU
TO HEAR ME SAY IT,
BUT TO SOME
DEGREE I ENVY
YOU.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a gold crown and a dark blue dress with intricate gold embroidery, stands in a throne room. She has a serious expression. The room features arched doorways, a large circular mirror, and a chandelier. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image.

YOU KNOW NOT
THE STRESSES OF A
KING. WAR HAS COME.
LIVES HAVE AND WILL
BE LOST ON MY
ORDERS. SO MANY
PEOPLE LOOK TO ME
TO GIVE THEIR LIVES
DIRECTION.

WHAT
WORRIES DOES A
SILLY GIRL
SUFFER? I HAVE
TAKEN THIS BURDEN
ON MYSELF AND IN
DOING SO SPARED
YOU THE AGONY
OF THE
CROWN.

SERREN KNOWS HIS SISTER LIKES TO SEE HIM ACTING FEMININE AND SWEET, PLAYING THE PRINCESS SHE HAS MADE OF HIM.

I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE. I'M SO EMOTIONAL I WOULD PROBABLY SPEND ALL MY HOURS IN TEARS.



RING

RING

RING

RING



THE BELLS BEGIN TO CHIME. THE CEREMONY BEGINS. MY FUTURE NOW STANDS IN THE BALANCE. NOTHING WILL EVER BE THE SAME.

SERREN SCANS THE TEMPLE FOR FAMILIAR FACES.

RUNTICK. I
DESPISE HIM
AND WHAT HE
THOUGHT TO
MAKE OF ME.



ASRYN.
PATTENIA
WANTED HIM
HERE TO
FURTHER
SHAME ME.



NEMERIA.
MY MAID OF
HONOR.



ACTONIA,
WHO
PRESIDES AS
PRIESTESS.



AND, OF COURSE,
DEVIN, COOL AND
CALM. OUR EYES MEET,
AND THOUGH HE
BETRAYS NOTHING, MY
HEART FLUTTERS.



THIS IS THE MAN I
WILL SPEND THE REST
OF MY LIFE WITH, THE
MAN WHO MAKES ME
GLAD TO BE A WOMAN.

EVERYTHING BECOMES A BLUR. PATTENIA WALKS ME TO THE ALTAR. ACTONIA STARTS SPEAKING, BUT ALL I HEAR IS THE SOUND OF MY HEART HAMMERING IN MY CHEST. I'M SO SCARED. WHEN WILL DEVIN STRIKE? WHAT IS HIS PLAN?



*BLUR... BLUR... AND THEN ACTONIA
BEGINS THE INCANTATION THAT WILL
BIND OUR SOULS IN THE EYES OF
THE GODDESS. NO. THIS CAN'T
HAPPEN. DEVIN, WHERE ARE YOU?
WHY AREN'T YOU SAVING ME?*



I CAN'T HELP MYSELF. I
GLANCE IN THE
DIRECTION WHERE I
LAST SAW DEVIN. I
CAN'T HELP BUT SMILE.



DEVIN IS IN PLACE, AND PATTENIA HAS NO IDEA HE IS ABOUT TO STRIKE. I FEEL SOME SMALL REGRET, SOME SORROW FOR WHAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN. SHE IS MY SISTER, AND WE DID HAVE SOME FUN TIMES TOGETHER WHEN WE WERE YOUNG.



IT'S A SHAME THINGS COULDN'T HAVE TURNED OUT DIFFERENTLY, BUT THERE IS NO STOPPING THE COMING EVENTS. SHE BROUGHT THIS ON HERSELF, I REMIND MYSELF. SHE BETRAYED ME.

DEVIN PREPARES TO STRIKE. I ALMOST SCREAM, BUT I HOLD BACK.



AS HE DRAWS THE
BLADE ACROSS HER
THROAT, I GASP.
CRINGE. THE SIGHT OF
MY SISTER'S BLOOD
WILL BE SUCH A
HORRIBLE THING TO
WITNESS.



I AM ABOUT TO SEE MY
SISTER MURDERED. I
DON'T WANT THIS. I
DON'T, BUT I CAN'T
STOP IT.

I DON'T KNOW IF I
WILL EVER... MAGIC!

WHAT?

HAHAHA!

HAHAHA!

HAHAHA!



SURPRISE! OH,
LITTLE SISTER,
THE LOOK ON
YOUR FACE!

DID YOU
TRULY THINK
TO OUTSMART
ME?

WHOOSH!

A man with a thick brown beard and a woman wearing a golden crown are embracing. The man is looking upwards with a pained expression, while the woman is smiling. They are both wearing dark, textured clothing. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

AAARRGGGG!

I'VE
ABSORBED
THE STRENGTH
OF TEN MORE
MEN SINCE I
STOLE YOURS.
DEVIN IS NO MORE
THREAT TO ME
THAN A
KITTEN.




I'M READY!

EEEEEE!

EVER THE MAIDEN, I
STUMBLE AND FALL.

DEVIN!





NOW,
WATCH, LITTLE
FOOL, AS I BEAT THE
MAN YOU THOUGHT TO
RESCUE YOU
SENSELESS.

POW!!!

TO BE CONTINUED...

SCREAM!

