

Not Stereotypical

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In the dark of the woods, MARLINE POTES is bending over in a purple hoodie and long coat. Beneath her are two small foxes, one black and one white, with the latter being visibly injured under a light purple glow coming from the palm of her hand.

MARLINE  
(to herself)  
Any second now...

The wounds on the white fox slowly close, with the animal now looking as if the wounds were never there in the first place.

MARLINE (CONT'D)  
Bingo.

After the purple glow dies down, the white fox gets back onto its four feet, the black one going over to nuzzle its partner in relief, with the former responding in kind.

Marline sees this moment, gaining a mixture of joy, sadness, and envy at the sight of the shared affection between the two animals, turning to get away from the scene.

Kneeling down to the basket next to her, Marline begins to gather her various herbs from their spot and puts them into her basket one by one, whistling a somber love tune the whole way through.

After finishing up, Marline pulls her hoodie up, re-adjusts her basket, and begins to trek back towards her home. She stops promptly at the sight of a big fire suddenly appearing in a distance and lighting up the night sky with its blue color.

MARLINE (CONT'D)  
What the hell is THAT?!

Seeing that these flames are a good distance close to her very own home, Marline runs towards the fire.

Silently yet quickly tugging through the forest, Marline goes towards where the bright fire, seeing the smoke rising higher and higher into the night sky.

MARLINE  
(to herself)  
Who or what the hell is causing such a  
ruckus at such a time?

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Hearing voices over the bright blue raging fire, Marline casts an invisibility spell as she reaches the spot where the fire first appeared. Going behind and cautiously looking over the nearest tree that isn't burned away, she can see two figures in the center of the area, where the embers are the least present.

On the ground and one end of the area is a blonde wearing a torn white nightgown with an injured arm and barely conscious, SARA GATES, desperately trying to crawl in the opposite direction of the other figure.

On the other side of the clearing, what seems to be a HEADLESS HORSEMAN, who is standing tall and has the same blue flames surrounding the area emitting from his body, where, in place of an actual head, is an orb of sinister azure flame.

SARA

Get away from me!

HEADLESS HORSEMAN

After all of the trouble you've  
insisted on causing me? Not a chance  
princess.

Acting quickly, Marline lifts her arm and lets out a blinding purple light that completely covers the whole area.

After the light goes away, the Headless Horseman looks around and sees no one around.

HEADLESS HORSEMAN (CONT'D)

(scratching his torso)

My life just got a lot more  
complicated, didn't it?

CUT TO:

INT. TREE - BEDROOM

2

KICKING the door open, Marline goes inside her room and carefully lays the unconscious Sara onto her bed as a big, white bat, NOA, hovers over her head, a small basket in its grasp, and slowly lowers it into the open arms of Marline.

MARLINE

Thank you, Noa.

Noa SQUEAKS before perching himself on the end of the bed as Marline takes out a bottle of medicine and some cotton. She then adds a drop of the medicine onto the cotton before

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

lifting up the gown and applying the medicine to Sara's arm.

SARA  
(waking up )  
Ah!

MARLINE  
(rubbing the cotton up and down  
her arm )  
Try not to move too much or else  
you'll make your wound worse.

Sara obeys, WHIMPERING at the stinging sensation of her closing wounds. After finishing up, Marline reaches back into her basket and gets out bandages before wrapping them around Sara's arm.

MARLINE (CONT'D)  
(releasing Sara's arm )  
And that should be it. Feeling better?

The contact between the two left Sara looking red in the face, simply nodding when words fail her.

MARLINE(CONT'D)  
(grabbing and uncapping a small  
flask of dark green liquid)  
Good. Now drink this, it'll make the  
recovery process go faster.

Tentatively taking the flask, Sara stares at it for a few seconds before smelling it, GAGGING as a result and moving the flask away from her nose, looking at Marline with great hesitance.

MARLINE(CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
(shrugging)  
If a foul-tasting medicine will save  
you from death, you hold your nose and  
choke it down.

Taking her advice, Sara takes one hand to pinch her nose before GULPING down the whole flash in on go.

SARA  
BLAH! Tastes like grass and bugs!

MARLINE  
Yes, you can thank Noa for that. She  
does love her bugs.

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Marline points in the direction of Noa, who waves enthusiastically at Sara. Sara gives a small wave back, clearly off-put by the oddly colored bat.

MARLINE (CONT'D)  
(crossing her legs)  
On the subject of naming names, may I  
ask for yours?

At the mention of introductions, years of etiquette kicking in as Sara immediately straightens herself to give a proper introduction.

SARA  
My name is Sara Von Elvege, 2nd  
Princess of the Gage Kingdom and 4th  
child of King Madine Von Elvege and  
Queen Elma Von Elvege...and I am  
afraid that I am in need of your help  
miss?

MARLINE  
(giving no visible reaction)  
Marline. Marline Potes.

Marline tilts her head slightly at Sara, staring curiously at the sudden request of Sara who is not at all flinching away from the black eyes on her.

MARLINE (CONT'D)  
And what exactly do you need of me,  
Princess Sara?

SARA  
(sitting up carefully )  
To help me against a certain...problem  
I have.

MARLINE  
Oh, you mean the blue flaming horseman  
that nearly burned down my home  
because of you?

SARA  
Yes, unfortunately. From the most  
likely evidence, it would seem that  
man was hired by the kingdom from the  
far north to kidnap me to have  
leverage over my family while they try  
to extract information of my kingdom's  
secrets from me.

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MARLINE

(giving a sly smile)

Are you sure it has nothing to do with the fact that you yourself are quite the lovely treasure to have? Because I am pretty sure that'd be more reason than enough to steal you away.

Those words cause Sara's face to heat up as much as the Headless Horseman's own flames.

SARA

(scandalized)

A-Anyways, as long as he draws breath, that Horseman will look everywhere in this big forest to get to me...even if it means burning anyone and anything that gets in his way.

Sara turns her head to look out the window of the room, taking in all of the beauty this forest has to offer this night.

SARA (CONT'D)

We must stop him by any means.

MARLINE

I noticed that you said, "as long as he draws breath".

Sara turns her head to look Marline straight in the eye, the steel in her blue pair matching the one in her tone easily.

SARA

I do what I need to do for my people and my kingdom.

MARLINE

As should one of your status. Now that we are on the same page, any ideas on how we can handle this your pursuer?

At a moment's notice, the steel in Sara's blue eyes is replaced with mischief.

SARA

Just how much damage are you capable of carrying out?

Marline and Noa blink innocently at the question, both tilting their heads at the question.

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CONTINUED: (5)

MARLINE

I am more than capable of dealing my fair share when need be. What do you have in mind?

SARA

I may have an idea or two...

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS

3

The Headless Horseman rides his steed through the forest slowly, the horse walking at the command of his master, though a clear amount of boredom can be seen in its sluggish movements after simply just walking through the area for an amount of time it stopped counting a while ago.

Its rider, however, has not lost one drop of his determination when it comes to recapturing Sara, his entire figure shifting in every direction in case of the slightest clue makes itself known.

HEADLESS HORSEMAN

(hissing lowly)

Come on, come on princess. Wherever you are...

CRACK!

At the sound of the broken twig, the Headless Horseman's body turns to see a silver of burnt white going into the bushes.

The Headless Horse feels like he could smile if he still had a face.

CRACKING his strap against the animal, the horse LEAPS through the bushes, landing in a strangely empty field.

Right in front of a terrified Sara.

HEADLESS HORSEMAN (CONT'D)

Well, wellly, well. Look at what I've caught!

The Headless Horseman urges his horse forward slowly, taking his time to clearly savor his victory, not noticing that the wounds on the princess should be far more severe than they appear to be.

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HEADLESS HORSEMAN (CONT'D)

Now, now, I was told that you had to come out of this whole thing as unscathed as possible if I wanna get my full reward for a job well done. So no need to be too afraid.

Sara's response is to crawl backward as quickly as possible, only to hit a tree that abruptly stops her in her tracks.

The Headless Horseman stops his horse right in front of Sara, bending over his body to get right in front of Sara's friend.

HEADLESS HORSEMAN

Anything you need to say before we end this little chase?

At those words, Sara suddenly stops shivering in fear and gives the Headless Horseman a terrifying smile.

SARA

NOW!

The Headless Horse is thrown completely off of the horse, SLAMMING onto the ground with great force.

HEADLESS HORSEMAN

(distorted )

Wait, what?!

Caught off guard, the Headless Horseman is helpless as a large, dark purple circle of rotating runes came to life underneath his body.

Looking up in horror at what is about to happen, the Headless Horseman sees Marline, one hand waving glowing the same color as the circle, and the other waving goodbye smugly.

MARLINE

And thus, the chase ends.

At that, the circle explodes into a bright light that completely covers the surrounding area.

After the light dies down, there is no evidence of the Headless Horseman ever even existing in the first place.

MARLINE (CONT'D)

(dusting her hands off)

That ends that.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

SARA  
(shakily nodding )  
Y-Yes. I suppose so.

Marline goes over to Sara, extending her hand.

MARLINE  
In need of assistance?

Sara looks at the hand, the very same hand that destroyed her captor, with a hint of fear in her eyes, before carefully taking it

SARA  
(getting up )  
Thank you for the assistance twice over.

MARLINE  
And you are welcome twice over. So what happens now?

SARA  
What happens now? Now we leave and go back to my home before my family unleashes the greatest search hunt these lands have ever witnessed.

MARLINE  
We?

SARA  
Of course! My family and my people must know of the savior who rescued their princess from whatever dreaded fate awaited me if not for your interference.

At this, Marline goes over to the nearest tree, leaning over onto it, hands inside each pocket coat.

MARLINE  
Are you sure that's the best idea princess? I'm not quite sure how your family and your people would react to my presence.

SARA  
Oh, hogwash! Looks shouldn't matter when your actions clearly speak for you.

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CONTINUED: (4)

As she says that, Sara walks over to the horse of the now deceased Headless Horseman, the horse looking lost without its master.

With great care, Sara caresses the black mane of the horse, who eagerly accepts the comfort.

SARA (CONT'D)

(more to herself)

Besides, why exactly should a wonder such as yourself be kept hidden from the world?

MARLINE

(eyebrows raised)

A "wonder" you say?

Sara freezes at the repeated words, clearly thinking that it was only she who was supposed to hear those words, her face heating up very quickly as a result.

SARA

(completely embarrassed)

T-That is to s-say from a simple observation! Yes! Why else would someone as lovea- likable! Why should someone as likable as you not get the love sh-praise! I meant praise! Dammit all!

As Sara continues to stumble upon her words, Marline strolls over to the princesses' side, boldly sliding her hand into her own, causing Sara to stop talking and look at Marline face-to-face.

MARLINE

(grinning )

Well, if the princess of the kingdom literally next to me thinks as such, who am I to deny such a request?

Seeing the genuine happiness of Marline, Sara couldn't help but feel her own smile grow on her face.

MARLINE (CONT'D)

But first, shall we return to my own home first? If such a celebration of your return is immediate, then it would be rather wise to bring some traveling items along.

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CONTINUED: (5)

And with that, the witch leads the princess back to her home and never lets go of her hand, the now masterless horse of the horseman following the two back unbeknown to them.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END