Prologue

A storm began to rage across the island. While the rain wasn’t as heavy as usual, the thunder claps were deafening. A young man covered head to toe, in a dark robe with a hood that concealed his face in the dead of night walks towards the docks. The wind was blowing stronger by the moment, yet he did not deter from his destination. There on the docks, was another. This one however was dressed in an unusual fashion. He noticed the robed figure, as he climbed into a small boat and asked him “Are you sure of this?” “Yes.” The robed man stated clearly. “I don’t care what my father wants of me. I desire to see the outside world, and decide for myself what I shall make of my life.” The young man, nodding curtly climbed into the boat as he picked up an oar, and began to row away from the island. The mysterious figure looked outwards towards the great beyond. Who knew what awaited him? He knew full well, that he’d be facing peril, and danger at every turn, but that’s what compelled him to take this journey in the first place. He had trust in his skills...why his father wouldn’t, bothered him. He quickly put that thought out of mind though, as his friend, started rowing the boat out into the oncoming storm. “It seems your father isn’t going to make this trip easy for us.” He said as calmly chanted strange words. The robed man simply smirked, and quietly whispered to himself. “Let him try. Nothing shall stop me from seeking out my destiny.”

Chapter 1

“Mother?” a young girl called out. “I’ve decided that instead of seeing the lights...there’s a special paint I’ve always wanted for my birthday...but it’s not in the region.” “Well...I suppose I can get it for you. How far away is it?” A woman, with dark hair walked towards a younger girl. This one had longer blonde hair. “It’s about a three-day journey at least.” “Three days...? Hmm...well...alright then. Be a dear and prepare my meal for the trip then Rapunzel.” With those words, the young girl called Rapunzel happily made her mother enough food for the trip. After bidding her farewell, she resumed her usual chores around the tower. “Well Pascal...looks like I’ll be spending my birthday, just like every year...” Pascal, a small chameleon simply nudged her cheek in a show of affection, as Rapunzel giggled and rubbed his head.

The sun had already risen, and now people had begun bustling about, doing their usual business. A guard had finished nailing a posted on the nearby board. “WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE” it said. The two figures looked sinister and burly, but otherwise not too dangerous. A robed figure stood nearby, looking at the poster, as if examining it, studying the two figures in the poster. With a soft grunt that was barely audible he walked off. He had only heard small details about this place since his arrival last night. As it turns out, the princess was kidnapped at a young age, but no one had really seen who the culprit was. The kidnapping took place at night, but from what information was gathered, the culprit was wearing a robe, but had their face concealed. He had also heard that a jewelled tiara was recently stolen from the palace. As it turns out, this tiara belonged to the missing princess. He thought to himself, if the two thugs that the guards were looking for, were most likely the ones that stole the tiara.

He glanced over his shoulder at just the right moment, and noticed one of the figures standing behind him was one of the thieves from the poster. Avalionis didn’t want to create a scene, so he payed him no mind. The thug simply snorted slightly, and walked off. As he was walking off, he heard a rumbling noise. He noticed the ground started to vibrate a little. Avalionis glanced over his shoulder and noticed several men riding horseback were heading in his direction. And some had even drawn arrows at him. He didn’t wait to ask questions, as they looked like they weren’t interested in hearing stories or excuses. He did what he thought was the right thing to do. ‘Retreat’ he thought to himself as he ran. There was a time when that very word was like venom to him. But over time, he learned that ‘discrection was sometimes the better part of valor.’ After running for what seemed like miles, he stopped to rest for a brief moment, before he heard the sound of hooves again. But it wasn’t as thunderous as the last time. Had one rider decided to persue him alone? He remained hidden, as the mysterious rider came into view. No rider...just a horse. A white horse for that matter. Avalionis knew this horse was unique. He made use of his abilities as best as he could. He was able to sneak away into a hidden cavern, and not a moment too soon. It appeared the horse had caught his scent. ‘Damn...’ he thought. He closed his eyes and mouthed a strange incantation. Seconds later, the horse bolted in the other direction, in hot pursuit of something. Avalionis’s decoy had worked...but for how long, he wasn’t sure. He decided to make his way through the mysterious cave, to see where it would lead him. Meanwhile, the Guards had caught the two thieves, and were questioning them. “So, you’re saying your ‘leader’ of sorts, took off with the tiara?’ “Yeah...that’s right.’ The one-eyed thug said with a smirk. “Yeah, and he was wearing some weird clothes too...” the other said. “And he’s the one with the tiara?” the Palace Guard asked. “Yeah...left us for dead, he did!” the one-eyed thief cried out. “Maximus will find him...” the Captain stated. “In the mean time, you’ll stay with us. Once he returns with him, you’ll confirm his identity, and you’ll all be brought to justice. The thugs, whose hands were chained behind their backs, were being led along the forest path, in hopes of finding Maximus and Avalionis.

After trecking through the cave, being cautious every step of the way, Avalionis emerged into a small valley. Before him, stood a tower with a waterfall behind it. Carefully, he took steps towards it. He had experienced his fair share of towers before, and not very many were pleasent to begin with. So he had reason to be wary of this one. What was more, there wasn’t any way in, that he could see. ‘Why build a tower, yet not make an entrance...’ he thought. He glanced up and noticed the window at the top was open. Suddenly, he heard the familiar snort. He knew the decoy would only throw the horse off for so long. With no other solution in sight, he began to climb the tower wall. He could’ve floated to the top, but he didn’t want to startle whomever was living in the tower. And while he made use of some of his powers, he didn’t want to overexert himself too soon, so he just used a small portion of his power to enable him to climb more easily. When he finally he reached the top, he climbed through the window, and closed it off. He glanced around for any sign of life. It did appear this place was home to someone...but whom? Being very careful, he took a few steps forward. After pushing the hood back, he ran a hand through his hair. At one point it was light blue, like most of his kind...but years of stress had taken it’s toll. There were streaks of blue here and there, but it was mostly silver now. He examined the paitings around the room. Whomever lived here, was quite an artist...but what bothered him the most, was why he was pursued so hotly. Then he remembered the one-eyed thug that was standing behind him. He also remembered there were two. He reached for his satchel, and with eyes sealed shut, he found out why, the palace guardsmen were after him. Those two thugs had slipped the tiara into his bag, to throw the heat off themselves. ‘Great...’ he muttered under his breath. ‘I ran away with...’ He sensed another presence in the room...thankfully this one was human. Being very careful, he used his ability to scan the room to see who else was there...but it was too late. With a loud thud, he hit the floor. Whomever was there, had knocked him out cold.

Chapter 2

“ What do you think he is Pascal?” Rapunzel asked. Pascal, whom was resting on her shoulder simply shrugged. She had taken the satchel away, and after examining the tiara that was inside, had tied Avalionis up to a chair. She noticed he was starting to stir, so she remained hidden...not knowing what he was capable of. Avalionis had finally awakened, groaning from the impact he received. But when he tried to move, he realized was tied to a chair. What he had just started to notice, was that the person who tied him up, didn’t use rope. It was hair. “What...?” He looked around for any clues, and noticed the trail of hair leading to a dark corner. He could make out a shadowy figure. “Who are you...?” She spoke in a stern tone. It didn’t take long for him to realize this person lived here...and didn’t take kindly to uninvited guests for that matter. She walked out from the shadows, and Avalionis saw, that the young girl’s hair was longer than he had originally realized. He also saw, that she was wielding a frying pan. It was one thing to be caught and tied to a chair with hair, but to be taken out by a frying pan was all together something new. “I asked you a question...who are you?” the mysterious girl thrusted the frying pan towards Avalionis.

He didn’t flinch, or even move. He didn’t even blink. He was used to being in situations like this. He didn’t exert any power, as he wasn’t sure who this young girl was, or what she was capable of. He looked up, and noticed Pascal, sitting on her head, who simply leered at him, as if daring him to attempt an escape. But escape wasn’t on his mind. He wanted answers. “My name...” he thought for a moment...should he inform this stranger who he was? Did he trust her enough with that much information? She looked ready to whack him again, so he decided to go with his gut, and trust her for the time being. “My name is Avalionis.” “Hmm...and why are you here...Avalionis?” she asked again. Her tone still had the same sternness as before. “I...am exploring this region right now.” He replied. He eyed her carefully. He had quietly and carefully used an ability to study Rapunzel. He sensed she had some magical powers but he wasn’t sure exactly what. “So you’re...an explorer?” she asked him. He looked at her, studying her quietly again “You...could say that.”

“So...you’ve seen the world outside my tower then?” Now Avalionis was getting confused. From what she was telling him, it seems like she’s been stuck in this tower for quite a long period of time. “Yeah...” The girl had pulled some curtains back to reveal a mural of sorts...what appeared to be several dots on a blue surface. “Can you tell me what this is then?” she asked him, her frying pan, still aimed at him. Avalionis studied the painting carefully. The day he arrived, he overheard some villagers talking about an event that was coming up. Supposedly they all lit lanterns up and set them adrift. These lanterns would float through the sky, in hopes of guiding the missing princess home once again. “Those...lights are floating lanterns. They’re launched every year on the princess’s birthday. From what I’ve gathered she was kidnapped at a young age, and has been missing ever since.” She looks at the painting, her mind racing “I see them every year from the window, and it always occurs of my birthday.” As soon as she said those words, Avalionis thought intently. If what she says is true...could she be the missing princess?

“Tell you what. If you take me to see the glowing lanterns, and bring me back home, I’ll give you was back your satchel.” Avalionis looked at his side. Sure enough, the satchel was missing. Apparently, when she knocked him out, she took the satchel and hid it somewhere. He looked at the girl, as if suspicious of her intentions. If she wanted to go see these lights, why didn’t she before. “Why would you need me to take you there?” he asked. “Because...well...mother won’t let me leave the tower. She told me there’s dangers out there...and since you’re an explorer...you’re familiar with these dangers, and you’ll be able to protect me from them.” “And how do I know, you won’t go back on your word...?” At this, she leapt down, and walk towards him. Inches away from his face, as she stared him dead in the eye. “Because I never go back on my word...EVER.” Avalionis glances at the chameleon, who simply nods in agreement at these words. Looking back at the young girl, he decides that the best course of action is to believe her. Her words held the ring of truth. “If that’s what you want. I’ll take you to these lights then.” “You will?! YES!!” She decided to untie Avalionis, and went about making preparations for her journey forth. “Oh! Before I forget...my name’s Rapunzel!” she extended her hand. But when he shook hers, a strange feeling came over him. Was it his gut telling him something? Or did his past come back to haunt him once more. “Is...something wrong?” “No.” He replied, smiling. “Just...you reminded me of someone I met once.” He simply shook the feeling off, and figured it may have just been a coinendce.

Chapter 3

Avalionis was sitting by the window ledge, as Rapunzel got ready to leave. Her chameleon, whose name was Pascal as she told him was sitting on his shoulder...as if to keep a close watch on him. She returned the satchel to him, and although he didn’t look through it, he knew full well that she hid the tiara somewhere. Soon enough she was ready to embark. Avalionis thought how he was going to get down, but Rapunzel simply tied a strand of her hair to a pulley, and fashioned it as a foothold for him and Pascal to get down. Once they finally reached the ground level, he thought how she was going to get down. She did manage to get down. In the same manner...but she was a bit afraid at first of hitting ground level. She embraced the fresh air, the feel of the grass, the feel of the brook, and the warmth of the sun. Avalionis was even more perplexed. How on earth did someone remain cooped up in a tower for so long, yet remain sane.

During their travels, Rapunzel often had second thoughts of going on the quest. Often wanting to return, lest her mother be furious, then seconds later, not caring if her mother found out or not. Her behaviour was strange to say the least...but if she hadn’t left the safety of her tower, like she claimed, that would explain a lot of things. “When I first left home...” Avalionis started to tell Rapunzel as they walked near a stream, “I often had second thoughts about leaving home.” “Yeah...? And what happened” she sniffled here and there. She was still reeling from the aspect that she may end up breaking her mother’s heart, and it bothered her deeply. He looked at her, standing there with Pascal on her shoulder, looking at him. He then smiled softly at her and stated “I realized, if I didn’t leave in the first place, I never would’ve experienced the sights that I’ve seen.” At these words, she calmed down somewhat. As they walked down the path, she asked Avalionis where he came from, but all he could tell her, was that he hailed from a small island that wasn’t even on the map. She asked him what he saw, and he explained numerous things. Various kingdoms, villages, but what caught her attention were the perils. “Mother told me there were dangers outside the tower...that’s why she never wanted me to leave.” She told him. “Well...there are dangers out there...but if you know what to do, it won’t be a problem.” “Yeah but...I don’t know what to do!” she cried out, as they stopped along the trail. Avalionis simply looked at her and stated in a clear, yet calm tone. “That’s why you’ve got me by your side.” She didn’t quite know him well enough, but she could tell by his tone, that he was experienced somewhat...perhaps he could protect her. They finally reached a small quaint tavern called ‘The Snuggly Duckling’ Rapunzel wasn’t quite sure what this place was, but heard joyous singing coming from within. She wanted to find out more about this place, and immediately ran in. Following her, Avalionis looked at Pascal with a ‘How do you put up with her’ look on his face, to which Pascal simply grinned. Once inside, they took a seat at a nearby table. But as soon as the door closed, the room went dead silent. Everyone was looking at Avalionis. He was used to the looks...but something else bothered him. That’s when he noticed the wanted poster. The same one he saw earlier in the day, but there was a new one next to it. And his face was pictured on it. “Word travels fast in this region” he thought. He knew then, that the two thugs that he had encountered earlier that day, had told the guards that he was their partner in crime, and that he betrayed them.

No doubt, they would assist in finding him...perhaps for freedom, or for a lighter sentence. The barkeep walked up towards him and simply stated, “Says here, you’re wanted. And they don’t care if you’re dead or alive either.” Avalionis simply smirked and replied “They’re not the first ones, and I doubt they’ll be the last either. But may I ask, what it is, that I did to warrant such attention?” “Word is you stole an important item from the castle the other day.” Avalionis simply chuckled at this. So those two were trying to frame him after all. He knew Rapunzel had it hidden somewhere in the tower, and for the time being, he was glad it wasn’t on his person. “And what proof do you have of such an accusation?” leaning back against the wall, Rapunzel looking on nervously. “Palace guards caught two thugs, who claimed you were in league with them.” Avalionis raises an eyebrow questionly at the barkeep as several patrons surround the table. “If Palace Guards believe the word of lowly thieves, then I question the word of a Palace Guard. What about you...Barkeep?”

The barkeep looked at him briefly. For a moment there was silence...no one dared breathe or even blink, then with a grunt and a nod to his patrons, that obiviously signalled for them to leave them be, he took a seat with them. “So...if you’re innocent like you say, then why is the entire Royal Guard after you?” Rapunzel looks at Avalionis with a slightly worried look...wondering if she made the right decision. “I encountered one, while the other slipped the tiara into my satchel. Afterwards, the guards showed up, and they didn’t look too pleased. They had their weapons drawn at me. I had no choice but to run.” “Hmm...you seem to be speaking the truth lad.” The barkeep stated. “Running away may not have been the wisest of choices, but then again, getting arrested isn’t either. So long as you’re here...you and your friend are safe.” With that he removed the wanted poster, and everyone resumed their usual business, treating Avalionis like any other patron. Rapunzel even joined in on the singing at one point.

This gave Avalionis time to ponder as Pascal slept peacefully on his shoulder. “So...now I’m a wanted criminal...if the old man could see me now. Heh...he’d probably laugh at my misfortune...” He watched Rapunzel dance and sing entertaining the patrons, and he remembered what he said, when he shook her hand. “you remind me of someone.” It was true...only then had he fully realized it. Rapunzel did remind him of someone he knew...someone he cared about. He pulled out a small locket and opened it. In it, was a small picture of a beautiful woman with blonde hair. Avalionis didn’t notice anyone, or anything going on, as he was lost in thought. Nor did he hear the commotion outside. “Open this door right now!!” And he knew then, the familiar voice of the Captain of the Palace Guard.

Chapter 4

The Barkeep ushered Rapunzel and Avalionis with Pascal in tow behind the bar and kept them hidden. “We’re looking for this man.” He holds up another Wanted Poster of Avalionis, giving details of his last known whereabouts, and why he’s wanted. The patrons do their job, of buying time as the Barkeep reveals a secret passageway for the two. Thanking the Barkeep, Rapunzel and Avalionis make their escape as quickly as they could. “I saw you looking at something earlier. You didn’t respond when I called to you...you seemed to be in your own little world for a while back there.” Avalionis looked at Rapunzel, and informed her, that he would tell her more, when they got to a safe location. “How can I trust you though...?” she asked...a tone of uncertainty in her voice. “You don’t.” Avalionis stated. With those words, Rapunzel stood frozen on the spot, elicting a slight gasp “But I spoke the truth to the Barkeep back there.

I didn’t steal anything.” Suddenly, they noticed the pebbles starting to vibrate. Avalionis heard the sound of running feet, and realized that the guards either stumbled upon the secret passage...or worse. “We shouldn’t be here...let’s go.” Grabbing her hand, they both started running. They eventually reached the end of the tunnel, but it was a dead-end. “Great...only way down, is a rough looking ladder...” Suddenly, the two thugs that Avalionis had encountered earlier came out of a lower passageway, and looked right at him. “Who’re they?” Rapunzel asked. “Trouble.” He simply stated. “Who’re they?” she asked regarding the Royal Guard. “More trouble” he replied. When Maximus arrived, Rapunzel asked “Who’s THAT?” “I’m obliviously worth more than I thought.” “Why’s that?” she asked. “Well why else send the welcoming committee in such a grand manner for little old me?” “Your days are numbered Thief” The Captain replied, drawing his sword. Avalionis knew he would have to resort to his hidden powers to get out of this one. It was a choice he didn’t like one bit...but he was backed into a corner, with no way out.

“Here!” Rapunzel, thrusted the frying pan into his hands, she used her hair as a rope, and swung to safety. “Really must learn how that’s physically possible...” Avalionis muttered, before being forced to defend himself against the attackers. One by one, they fell prey to the frying pan. “Frying pans have more uses than I originally thought...” Just then another sword was thrusted at him. This time...it was the horse. Avalionis looked at Maximus with a confused look, but Maximus simply started attacking him. Avalionis parried every thrust made at him, not wanting to hurt the horse, but realizing, one would have to go down eventually. Before he could make a decision, he was disarmed. The frying pan made a dull thud on the ground, as they looked at each other. “Great...get knocked out by a frying pan, lose said frying pan, and lost a duel to a horse. Good swordsmanship though, I must say.” Maximus made a slight gesture of thanks, before cornering Avalionis once more.

“Avalionis!” Rapunzel yelled as she, threw a strand of hair around Avalionis’s hand. He took the hint and leapt off the ledge, swinging to safety. He then noticed the two thugs coming his way, so he dug into his pockets, and threw some smoke pellets at them. It only worked to stun them for a few moments, but that was all he needed to climb to safety. “Guess I owe you one now.” He told Rapunzel, as he removed the harness from his hand. He didn’t have time to look back, as they made their getaway, further into the canyon. Once out of sight, they took a side path, hoping it would lead them to safety.

Meanwhile, back at the tower, Rapunzel’s mother had returned earlier from her quest than usual. She called out to the tower window. “Rapunzel! Let down your hair.” No one responded. “Rapunzel?” Still no answer. She was getting worried now. She heard the guards were looking for a strange man, and woman, but her worse fears weren’t confirmed until she got back to the tower. Rushing to the side, she removed some boulders, and entered a secret passageway of the tower. Finally reaching the top, she searched franticly for Rapunzel, only to stumble across the satchel that was hidden. Reaching in, she drew out the jewelled tiara inside, and realized the horror of the situation. Rapunzel was gone...and with her, the mysterious powers that enabled Mother Gothel to look so young.

Chapter 5

It was nightfall. Avalionis and Rapunzel had made camp in a small clearing, and decided to rest until morning. He set up a barrier that was invisible to the naked eye, and even to those, who excel in the arts of the arcane, it was invisible. The barrier would protect them from being harmed, or even noticed. He didn’t know how far away...or close the guards were...but he knew, that they had some time to rest...and after all the running they did, they needed the rest. Rapunzel was sleeping soundly, with Pascal snoozing nearby. Avalionis with his back against a tree, nearby kept a close eye out for whatever might be out in the forest. He didn’t detect any presence...but he still didn’t know much about this place. And what he didn’t know bothered him somewhat. Finally, even sleep had taken over, and he too drifted off into sleep. As he drifted off, he softly whispered a prayer to the heavens...that he would have the same nightmares that have plagued him for so long.

Daybreak had finally broken, but something was amiss. Avalionis woke up...and was staring face to face with Maximus. How he found them, within his barrier bothered him more than anything else. Luckily Rapunzel was coaxing the horse to leave him be. “He’s innocent! He didn’t steal anything!” she kept telling the horse, but Maximus would hear nothing of it. When he tried to get closer, she’d block his path even more. “Look...why don’t you come with us? He can prove his innocence.” Avalionis thought if this was a wise idea...but then figured, the horse seems to have more authority than the Royal Guard...he also seems to have more sense. And having a horse would give Rapunzel a mode of transportation.

Maximus reluctantly agreed...though Avalionis could see a look in his eyes that stated he didn’t trust him one bit. Despite this, they shook on the agreement of a truce...for how long it would last, no one knew. But Rapunzel was happy, and that’s all Avalionis needed. Maximus didn’t seem too thrilled with letting Avalionis ride, and Avalionis insisted that Rapunzel be the one. Maximus almost instantly agreed with him. This was a sign that perhaps the two could get along...though he kept glancing at him, as if half expecting him to pull some crazy stunt. Avalionis didn’t pay this any mind, as they continued off towards their goal.

Elsewhere, Mother Gothel had reached a small clearing. Keeping the satchel at bay, she noticed the two thugs arguing about the mysterious figure who took their prized tiara. She knew they must be talking about the tiara she found at the tower. So wherever this mysterious figure was, that’s where she’d find Rapunzel. “I heard you boys had an encounter with someone.” She said as she stepped forward. “Yeah? What’s it to ya?” The one-eyed one said. “Well as it just so happens...he made a brief stop at my tower.” She pulled the tiara out, and continuing as the two thugs eyed it intently, “my daughter is missing as well, and I fear the worse for her well-being. I have no use for this...thing. But if you can help me get my daughter back, it’s yours.” The thugs looked at each other, smiled and nodded at Mother Gothel, as they gave her the details of their encounter with Avalionis.

Chapter 6

Rapunzel, Avalionis, Pascal and Maximus had finally reached their destination. The sun had risen, people were bustling about, doing their usual work. Avalionis felt a bit uneasy however...he couldn’t put his finger on it, but something didn’t feel right. Rapunzel however was having a grand time, seeing the sights of the kingdom. She noticed that several banners had the same insignia has her scarf. But what caught her attention was the memorial to the lost princess. The painting of the King and Queen seemed a tad familiar to her...but it was the picture of the princess that seemed even more so. Avalionis noticed that she was having trouble with the length of her hair, so he convinced some children to help her by braiding it into a ponytail. It wasn’t until after they put the finishing touches in it, by adding flowers that Avalionis was reminded once again...of what he once had...but lost. So lost in thought was he, that he didn’t even notice Maximus and Pascal giving him knowing glances.

“She really does remind me of her...” he said in a trembling voice. Maximus and Pascal looked at each other, than back at Avalionis, who at that moment closed his eyes. But even that wasn’t enough. He could still hear the anguished screams from that fateful day. “Avalionis?” Rapunzel was heading in his direction, and the screams died down once more. For how long though, he didn’t know. He simply shrugged it off, and met up with Rapunzel. He remembered the promise had made. Tonight was the night she’d see the lights...and tonight would also be the night, he told her about his beloved...the woman he cared about so long ago. Tonight, Rapunzel would learn about Minako. Avalionis’s lost love. He felt that perhaps he could trust her enough, to reveal a bit more about his past...but he didn’t know how much to reveal. Avalionis had an uneasy feeling all day. He purchased some apples for Maximus, whom seemed reluctant to eat them...until he was told they were payed for, that is. Maximus still didn’t trust Avalionis much...but a bond of friendship was starting to form. Throughout the day, the feeling of uneasiness didn’t wear off. Something was bothering Avalionis...he didn’t know what, but he was preparing himself for whatever may occur. He too noticed the memorial, and after placing a small offering, saying a quick prayer he felt that perhaps his instinct was correct. Rapunzel was dancing along to a festival with the others, when Avalionis returned. She quickly took his hand, and he too got involved in the fun and festivities. Everyone was amazed at Rapunzel’s dancing skills, and even more amazed at her singing voice. All Avalionis could do was admire the beauty around him. Despite the princess being missing for so long, the kingdom seemed to be at peace. He never felt anything like this in so long. Not since that time. “No” he thought. “I mustn’t think about that...” He pushed away those thoughts. This kingdom seemed truly wonderful. He felt like he was at home. Maybe after this is all said and done, he can find a place to live, and officially retire from his trade. He continued to watch Rapunzel dance and sing as the sun shone brightly, and the birds chirped happily. For once...he truly felt at peace.

Chapter 7

Night had finally fallen on the kingdom, and it was soon time for the festival of lights as the villagers called it. Rapunzel was getting more and more excited. She was finally going to witness the lights in person, rather than watch it from afar. Avalionis had rented a boat for the two of them, and they drifted out on the lake. The sky was clear, the stars were shining brightly, as the lanterns floated through the air. An eerie glow about them, illuminated the night sky. “It’s so beautiful...” Rapunzel replied. “It is...” was all Avalionis could say. If he thought Rapunzel looked beautiful in the sunlight, she looked even more so, under the starlit night. And the lanterns made her glow even more so. She noticed him gazing, and simply placed a hand on top of his. “Avalionis...is there something you wanted to tell me?” she asked. Looking into her eyes, he smiled...but it was something of a sad smile. “Yes.” He responded. He reached into his pocket, and pulled out the locket that he looked at, when they were at the ‘Snugly Duckling’.

He opened it up and placed it in her hands. It played a melody as she gazed at the picture “Who...who is this, Avalionis?” she looked at the picture, listening to every word that Avalionis said. “This...is Minako. She was...someone very important to me...but one day she was...killed. Before my very eyes, I watched her die...I couldn’t...I couldn’t do anything to save her.” Tears started to form in his eyes, as Rapunzel listened to the sad story unfold. All she could do, was grasp his hand, and listen with an open mind and heart. “I wasn’t strong enough to save her. Her eyes were lifeless and empty as she layed there...her friends assured me, it wasn’t my fault...but for the longest time I felt it was.” At those words, Rapunzel embraced him in, and hugged him tightly. The screams, that haunted Avalionis returned once more... that’s when Rapunzel did something different. Something she never did before...and something Avalionis would never forget. She kissed him ever so softly. For that brief moment, there was no anguished screams of the dead, seeking respite or vengance. There was no pain or heart ache. There was only that moment...that one peaceful moment, when time itself, seemed to freeze still for the two. She broke the kiss, and simply pressed her forehead against his, and started to sing. “Flower, gleam and glow. Let your power shine. Make the clock reverse. Bring back what once was mine. Heal what has been hurt. Change the Fates' design. Save what has been lost. Bring back what once was mine. What once was mine.” As she sang her hair began to glow brightly, and Avalionis knew at that point, the magical powers he sensed when he first met Rapunzel. He knew how she was able to do everything up to this point. She had received the powers of the mystical Phoenix Tear Flower. It was named after a legendary remedy that could cure nearly anything, and even rumoured to prevent aging. For nearly 10,000 years, he felt nothing but anguish, grief, self-hatred and sorrow. For nearly 10,000 years, Avalionis’ had cast aside his emotions to soldier on. He believed it, to be the only way. On this fateful night however, Rapunzel succeed in doing something, no one had managed to do. Cure his broken heart. She gazed into his eyes, as if knowing what he was about to say, and simply whispered “I know...and I love you too.”

Chapter 8

Rapunzel layed in the boat, her back against Avalionis, as they watched the lanterns float by. She held his arms wrapped around her waist, as she sighed blissfully Neither one wanted this moment to end. The only sound was the water lapping against the boat. The only light was the lanterns floating in the sky. They finally got back to shore, and were greeted...by an unwelcome guest. “Oh, my dear Rapunzel! What did this fiend do to you?” She embraced Rapunzel, stroking her hair, as it glowed slightly. Avalionis noticed a few grey hairs in Mother Gothel’s head turn black as the rest of her hair. She locked eyes with him, and was about to confront him for taking off with her daughter...when she heard a voice speak directly to her mind.

“It was you. You kidnapped Rapunzel...all those years ago. All to obtain eternal youth...” She looked around, with a terrified look in her eyes. Who was talking to her...? And what was going on. Then...the voice chuckled. She looked at Avalionis...and realized who it was that spoke to her. It was him. Gothel froze in pure terror...how on earth was he doing this? And how did he know the truth? She looked around. No one was moving...not Rapunzel...not the water...not the lights...not even the wind. She looked at Avalionis with pure terror. Just who was he? He simply continued “I know you sought the Phoenix Tear Flower for its powers to maintain youth...Gothel.” She was starting to panic a bit now. “S...silence!” she ordered him. All Avalionis could do was chuckle again, and with a simple wave of his hand, time resumed as normal...as if it was never frozen in the first place. “Mother? What are you doing here?” Rapunzel asked. But before anyone could say another word, several guards jumped Avalionis. “Wait! Leave him alone!” Rapunzel cried. “Shh...it’s alright now dear.” Gothel replied. “He’ll pay for his crimes. We must hurry home now.” She dragged her through the dense forest, as Rapunzel cried to be let go. “No...Rapunzel! Let her go...!” But it was no use. She was gone...he was heading for prison...or worse. He knew the truth now...but he also knew, no one was willing to listen. He was branded a thief...and now a kidnapper. Not 5 minutes ago, he was at peace with the most beautiful and wonderful person in his life...now she was lost to him forever.

Chapter 9

Avalionis was being led down a dark hallway. His heart once again sunk. The guards stopped for brief moment to ask about his holding cell...when he heard a familiar voice. “Hey brother...look who it is.” “Heh...knew it was only a matter of time before...” It happened in the blink of an eye. The guards were frozen in place. The only people that moved were the thugs and Avalionis. He knocked the one-eyed thug to the ground, with a swift movement of his hand, and grasped the other thug with his other hand. Holding him by the scruff of his neck, his eyes glowed a pale light. “You...you destroyed my chance at peace...and for that, I should end your miserable life...but I will grant you one chance...” The thug didn’t say a word...barely breathed...he simply nodded. He was frozen in absolute fear. “You tell the guards everything. You tell them I was not involved in the theft...and I will spare you and your brothers lives.” He simply nodded. Sweat beading down his forehead. He didn’t dare blink, as Avalionis started at him, speaking these words. He dropped the thug on the floor, and walked out of the cell. Once he was gone, time was restored. The guards looked around for Avalionis, but before they could alert the others, the thugs told them the truth.

Avalionis had reappeared on the outskirts of the palace. He looked to the sky. The moon was starting to set, which meant the sun would rise soon. Before he could move forward, he heard a voice. “Lad! You’re alright!” It was the barkeep from the ‘Snuggly Duckling’ along with his usual patrons...and Maximus. “We heard you were order to be executed without a trial!” “Hmm...word does indeed travel fast in this kingdom” Avalionis thought. He looked at Maximus, who simply nodded at him. He mounted up and spoke one last time to the patrons and their leader. “I know you weren’t responsible for the guards finding the passageway.” They all froze in place. The barkeep’s jaw hit the ground. “How did...?” Avalionis looks at him and smiles. “I didn’t...you just admitted it.” With a clicking noise, Maximus rode off towards the Tower.

Rapunzel sat in her room, in the dark weeping. Her mother was beyond upset that she left the tower without her permission...and now she’d never see him again. Then...she too heard his voice. At first, she played it off as her heart’s desire to see him once more. She heard the voice again...this time clearer...and more precise. She looked around...no one was in the room...other than herself, Pascal, and her beloved’s reflection in the mirror.

Chapter 10

“Avalionis!?” Rapunzel gasped as she leapt from her bed towards her mirror. Pascal couldn’t believe his eyes either...sure enough, there was Avalionis in the mirror. They both looked behind them, but there was nothing but the opposite wall. “It is me Rapunzel...this isn’t a dream. I’m contacting you in a unique way. There’s something you probably already know...it’s about Mother Gothel.” “Wh...what...are you saying?” Rapunzel asked...she took a seat nearby and listened just as she did last night. “Many years ago, the princess of this kingdom was kidnapped...and every year on her birthday, the kingdom launches lighted lanterns, in hopes of guiding her home...in hopes of guiding...you home.” “W...w...what?” She stammered. “You...mean...?” “Yes...” He continued. You are the princess of this kingdom. Gothel kidnapped you, because of your unique power. The Phoenix Tear Flower is a rare flower that has miraculous healing powers, of which can reverse the aging process...your mother was gravely ill prior to your birth, so your father sent out a search party for this unique flower. Gothel wanted it’s power all for herself. When she realized, that you held its powers, she took you and kept you in the tower.” Rapunzel was now silent...everything that was told to her just now...her dreams...the painting of the princess...it all began to make sense. Suddenly, there was a knock on her bedroom door. “Rapunzel? Everything alright in there?” Rapunzel gasped. Avalionis simply smirked and vanished. For a brief moment Rapunzel’s heart sank...then she heard his voice in her mind. “I’ll be there soon...my love.” She smiled as she whispered one last time. “I know...” She walked out to find Mother Gothel standing at her doorway. “Now dear...I know you’re upset...but I only did it because I...” she went to reach for her hair, but Rapunzel stopped her. “Because you ‘love me’ Mother...?” Gothel froze...Rapunzel’s tone was icy...she too...knew the truth. And she could only blame one person...and she knew she’d have her chance to repay the favour.

Maximus was speeding towards the tower, as Avalionis’s mind returned to him. He felt weak at first. Using his unique ability to speak to minds was draining him, and he needed everything he had to stop Gothel. For the first time, he didn’t have a plan. All that mattered was rescuing Rapunzel, and stopping Gothel before anything bad happened. They finally reached the tower, and Avalionis thought how to get into the tower. With no entrance he resolved to climb the only fashioned way...then Rapunzel’s hair came flying down. He glanced at Maximus, who gave him a look of concern...as if to say he could be walking into a trap. Avalionis somehow knew...but he didn’t care at this point...so long as Rapunzel was safe...nothing else mattered. He climbed the tower wall as carefully as he could, and once he reached the tower window, he glanced in very carefully...it was dark...and quiet.

“Too quiet.” He thought as he stepped through the window. He saw what his worse fears confirmed. Rapunzel was there alright...but she was chained down...and she was gagged...she muffled a warning to Avalionis, but it was too late. He felt a sharp pain...Gothel had stabbed him with a dagger...but not just any ordinary dagger...and that...was what confirmed his worse fears.

Chapter 11

Avalionis slumped on the ground, holding his wound. He just now realized that the dagger Gothel used was indeed made of iron...but it never should’ve affected him. Then he realized that the abilities he used in succession weakened him enough to make the iron dagger effective. “No...” Rapunzel cried. “It’s for the best dear...” Gothel replied icily. “He knew too much” As tears streamed down Rapunzel’s cheek, they heard a chuckle. Gothel spun around and saw that Avalionis had posted himself against the wall. And he was smiling...and laughing. “Heh...eter...nal youth...what a fool...you are...Gothel.” All Rapunzel could do was gasp. “It’s nothing...but a prison...an eternal...prison. I’ve seen many wanting to es...cape the...curse...” Avalionis coughed...rasping for air. Gothel simply gloated at the pain she caused. “At least...let me heal him...! Then you can do whatever you want...!” Rapunzel pleaded. “Why...he ruined my dreams...” was all she could reply. “But...I suppose you should say...your final goodbyes.”

Gothel released Rapunzel’s chains as she ran to Avalionis. She sobbed quietly as life escaped him. “I love you...” was all she could whisper. “I’m sorry...for not...” She was suddenly pulled back by Gothel who replied in a cold manner. “That’s enough goodbyes.” Avalionis chuckled as Gothel stood over him. She stared at him coldly, as he blinked. What once were bluish green eyes, were now pale white. He muttered a strange language, as his hands, trembling began to glow as well. Before Gothel could say a word, she noticed her hands had started to wrinkle. She quickly looked in the mirror, and noticed her hair was no longer black...but growing grayer by the second. She was aging rapidly. She attempted to make a mad dash for Rapunzel, but her feet were rooted in place. Avalionis was using the last of his powers to end Gothel’s reign once and for all. Gothel tried one last attempt to free herself, and she lunged at Avalionis, driving the dagger into his heart this time. It was enough to stun him for a brief moment, as she was finally free. She stumbled towards Rapunzel, but Pascal managed to grab the fallen curtain nearby and trip Gothel. Instead of heading towards her salvation, she stumbled towards the window, and fell to her doom. Rapunzel rushed forward to Avalionis, as he struggled to keep his eyes open. “Thank...you” he replied, as she removed the dagger. “Thank you...for freeing me...at last.” With that...his eyes shut...his arm slumped to the ground...and he was moving no more. Rapunzel wept over the loss of her love. The only thing she could do, was try to sing the song one last time for him. Try as she might, her sobs broke the song apart. As she wept, her tears glowed as they fell on his wound. Soon it too started to glow. She watched as the wound slowly sealed up. She tried once more... Flower, gleam and glow...Let your power shine...Make the clock reverse...Bring back what once was mine...Heal what has been hurt...Change the Fates' design...Save what has been lost...Bring back what once was mine...What once was mine...

Avalionis’s hand twitched slightly. She noticed this, and held his hand as she sang once again. Her hair glowed as it wrapped around his slowly moving body. Her voice matched her feelings for Avalionis, as he slowly groaned as his eyes opened once more. Rapunzel simply gasped...tears of happiness started swelling in her eyes. He grasped his head and muttered“Taken down...by a dagger...I’ll never hear the end of that one.” Rapunzel could only embrace him as she sobbed into his arms. All he could do was hold her. He was finally reunited with his beloved. “Here...” he said. He placed the tiara on her head. “This belongs...to you anyway. I was...merely keeping it safe.” She could only laugh, holding back her tears of happiness as she kissed him. Sometime later, after packing up the few things Rapunzel wanted to take with her, they finally reached the Palace. The guards stationed at the gates didn’t bother to arrest him this time...they simply saluted him. One guard even guided them to a balcony and told them to wait there. Rapunzel didn’t want Avalionis to leave her side...but she knew somehow...he would have to leave. Avalionis knew as well and wasn’t happy about it one bit. He finally found a place to call home...and he wasn’t ready to leave...ever. “I told you, he’d be alright.” A female voice said. “I never thought I’d see the day, when you finally matured...” said a male. The hairs on Avalionis’s neck stood on end. He knew those voices all too well. Rapunzel looked towards the doors...and standing there were two figures. The female draped in a silky dress, that seemed to have been woven from the stars with long silvery hair, was standing next to a man, who’s stern face almost seemed...unemotional. “Who...?” Rapunzel asked as she grasped Avalionis by his arm. “Rapunzel...meet Titania...and Oberon. My parents.”

Chapter 12

“You know why we’re here, don’t you Avalionis...” Oberon said in a tone that demanded silence. Avalionis only stared at his father. He knew what was going to happen...and he was ready to fight. He once defeated his father in combat...5,000 years ago, he tracked Avalionis down, and demanded he return to Avalion to become its leader. Avalionis of course refused, and the two fought bitterly. Despite Oberon’s mystical powers, he was no match for his son. 5,000 years was a long time to learn and train...and he didn’t waste one second of it. Oberon didn’t admit defeat, or accept Avalionis’s decision to leave Avalion all those years ago...and he doubted he ever would either.

“Rapunzel has saved your life Avalionis...as the Prince of the 3rd Race, it is your sworn duty to honour her...one wish.” Titania simply smiled at Rapunzel, and spoke to her, as father and son stared each other down. She explained everything regarding Avalionis’s position as Prince and the hostility between the two. “So...he’s not leaving...?” “If you wish for him to stay, then he will stay...” Titania looked at her smiling. “My home...is here now. My place...is at Rapunzel’s side. If she wishes for me to stay, and be a part of her life...than as the Prince of the 3rd Race, I am honour bond to fulfill that wish.” He said these words...not taking one eye off his father. He made his decision last night. He knew his place was here. And he wasn’t leaving no matter what his father said. “Avalionis...it isn’t right for me to keep you here...” was all Rapunzel could say, but Avalionis hushed her with a finger to her lip as he replied, “You freed my heart from the chains of torment...despair and sorrow. You taught me to love again...I don’t honour the wish because it’s my duty...I’m doing this because I desire to stay by your side...now and forever.” At these words she hugged him tight. She didn’t want to let go, as he stroked her hair softly. It began to glow, as Titania smiled approvingly, whereas Oberon could only nod. “So be it.” He simply said. As Titania walked towards him...Avalionis saw something that he never saw in his lifetime. His father...was smiling. “I think...you made the right choice...my son.” With those words, a flash of light illuminated the balcony. Oberon and Titania were gone, and no sooner had they vanished, then the doors had opened...and on the other side, was Rapunzel’s true parents...the King and Queen were stunned to see their daughter returned, and could only embrace their daughter, softly sobbing that after all these years they were finally together. The Queen looked at Avalionis, smiled softly and motioned him towards them. Avalionis walked forwards, and immeditaly was invited into the group hug.

“For a minute there...I didn’t know what to expect from your father...” Rapunzel replied during the banquet that evening. Everyone was invited to welcome the princess back home. The King and Queen were conversing with the Palace Guards. Avalionis had a tense history with his father. When his mother told her about his identity she could sense the strained relationship between father and son. “I’m sorry I wasn’t entirely honest with you...” “Don’t be.” She cut him off. She squeezed his hand slightly and continued. “You had your reasons for keeping your identity a secret.” She smiled warmly at him. “My father...never forgave me for running off all those years ago...but when we had a fight...” at those words Rapunzel gasped softly, her hands covering her mouth as Pascal looked on. “He refused to take ‘No’ for an answer...and I was forced to defend myself. When the dust settled and he was defeated...I think it was then that he realized my journey wasn’t as ‘foolish’ as he once thought. Very few had defeated him in a duel...maybe...after seeing how far I went to save you...how you saved me...and how happy we were together...” She smiled once more, placing a hand on his cheek and kissing him softly. “He accepted your decision.” Avalionis could only smile. Something that only recentely he hadn’t done too often.

“Everyone! May I have your attention please?” The King looked ready to make an announcement. “I’ve gathered you all here today, to make two announcements. As you all are well aware, my daughter has returned home recently.” The locals cheered loudly at this, as Rapunzel rose from her seat to wave at them. “But my second announcement...is in regards to this young man here” He said as he gestured towards Avalionis. “This young man...not only reunited us with our lost princess...but Rapunzel here has declared her love of him.” The crowd cheer at the two lovers. “Avalionis...should you desire...we would welcome you as part of the family.” The Queen simply smiled at him and nodded her approval. Rapunzel giggled softly as Avalionis stood up, but not before pulling out a small box from his pocket. “Your majesties...people of Corona...Rapunzel.” She looked up at him, smiling brightly. Since arriving here 4 days ago, you’ve treated me, a complete stranger, like a member of your family, whom you’ve seen for the first time in years. The crowd simply applauded at this. Rapunzel...as I said before, you’ve done so much for me in the short time I’ve known you. She stood up at this words, looking into his eyes, as he lifted her hand and kissed it softly. He opened the small box, and kneeling in front of her, revealed it’s contents. Not a word was uttered...not a sound was made, except for a few gasps here and there.

Inside was the most beautiful diamond ring anyone had ever seen. The King and Queen beamed at the sight before them. Their daughter was speechless, but she managed to find the words, choking back tears. The room erupted into massive cheers as Rapunzel and Avalionis embraced once more. Singing and dancing resumed as the two took their seats in between the King and Queen. Rapunzel had already properly introduced her future husband to her parents, and they gladly accepted him as part of the family almost immedatly. They even sat them down and told them everything, as the royal chefs were preparing the banquet. All they cared, was that he rescued their daughter, reunited them, and made her happy. This was enough for them to accept him as part of their family. The banquet was simply a way to announce the princess’s return home, and the newest addition to the royal family.

It had been one full year since their adventure...and Rapunzel and Avalionis still live at the Palace. Avalionis often tells tales of his adventures to the children, much to their delight. The barkeep and his patrons still hang out at the ‘Snuggly Duckling’ which the happy couple visit every so often. Maximus was appointed the Captain of the Guard for his bravery, and amazing swordsmanship, and Pascal still stands by Rapunzel’s side, and helps her with her artistic skills. Avalionis continued to stay by Rapunzel’s side as well, guarding her life...as well as the lives and peace of his new home. For the first time in years, he was truly happy...and truly at peace.