

Red, Briar-Rose, Cowardly Prince

There is a thrum, music and a lighting change, kind of like the one before, but backwards. Something is being undone. The Prince is no longer acting cowardly.

RED

(looking up and around) That's odd.

BRIAR-ROSE

You! I was dreaming of you!

THE COWARDLY PRINCE

You were?

BRIAR-ROSE

Yes. You've saved me! *(sighs)*

THE COWARDLY PRINCE

I have? *(then realizing)*. Oh! I have! Yes, I'm feeling much more like myself now.

She throws her arms around him and hugs him again.

BRIAR-ROSE

I was dreaming of a hero. I admit, I thought you'd be taller.

THE COWARDLY PRINCE

I admit, I always thought I would be too.

BRIAR-ROSE

But you are handsome, and so very brave. Tell me, how does it feel to save someone's life?

THE COWARDLY PRINCE

Princess. I couldn't have done it on my own. *(indicates Red)* This girl here helped me find my courage! *(confused)* Courage that seemed to disappear on my journey here . . .

Red curtsies.

BRIAR-ROSE

In that case, the entire kingdom is indebted to you too, Miss. You saved us. Please, if there is ever anything you need . . .

RED

Anything?

BRIAR-ROSE

Anything at all.

RED

Actually, there is something. I have some friends who've been captured by three evil witches.

BRIAR-ROSE

Oh, Heavens!

RED

It is quite upsetting. They're rewriting the endings to all of the stories in Happily Ever After. (*To the prince*) It's why you lost your courage.

THE COWARDLY PRINCE

Ah-ha. That would explain it. Is it also why I'm not taller?

RED

Um, no. I think that's probably just genetics.

THE COWARDLY PRINCE

Well, drat.

RED

Do you know where I could find these witches? Where they might be holding my friends?

BRIAR-ROSE

I've been sleeping for quite a while, but the last I remember, the witches have a castle in the woods.

RED

(*bemused, to herself*) So many castles in the woods. . .

BRIAR-ROSE

Houses, too!

RED

Ah.

BRIAR-ROSE

And my cousin Rapunzel might be your only way in.

RED

Rapunzel? The girl with the very long hair?

BRIAR-ROSE

That's her! But I have no idea where her tower is.

COWARDLY PRINCE

(*announcing this as if it's a huge revelation*) It's probably in the woods!

RED

That does seem like a safe bet.

BRIAR-ROSE

(*to the Prince*) Oh, you're so handsome! And smart!

RED

So, what now? Is there anything else that could help?

BRIAR-ROSE

We can start with the Gingerbread House. A witch used to live there, we might find a clue. I can take you.

RED

You'd do that?

BRIAR-ROSE

It's the least I can do! You brought me my prince! (*swoons*) Although if we find Rapunzel's tower, I'm not sure how you're going to get in. Rapunzel doesn't let down her hair for just *anyone*. We girls have to be cautious, you know. Are you coming, my Prince?

THE COWARDLY PRINCE

(*with bravado*) Certainly! I wouldn't miss another journey through the woods. Bunnies or no bunnies, it will be an adventure unlike any other.

BRIAR-ROSE

And we'll hurry back so we can get married and live happily ever after.

Briar-Rose places her hands in the Prince's and kicks up her leg as she says this with another pronounced sigh.

RED

People fall in love so quickly in these stories. I never realized it before.

BRIAR-ROSE

That's because time works differently here. And also because love is *wonderful*. Why, you could be in love right now and not even know it.

RED

(*pauses*) Me? Don't be silly. You can't be in love with someone you just met, and it's barely been a day.

COWARDLY PRINCE

(*looking at Red closely*) A day since you met who?

RED

Nobody! I mean. . .oh, good grief, do we have to talk about this?

BRIAR-ROSE

The rules of love are different here in Happily Ever After. People are always falling in love. You're not immune to its powerful effects.

RED

But I'm not from here.

BRIAR-ROSE

Pish-posh. That doesn't matter. Remind me, who are we saving again?

RED

The Fairy Godmother, Prince Charming. . .

THE COWARDLY PRINCE

My brother? And his Gallant Steed?

RED

You mean. . .his *bike*? Wendell, the 8th dwarf. And the. . .uh (*a slight pause*) the Frog Prince.

BRIAR-ROSE

Ah, yes. The Frog 'prince,' is it? Tell me, is he handsome?

RED

He's a frog.

BRIAR-ROSE

Hmm. I hear it's a phase. (*cheerily*) Come on, we better hurry. Your friends —and your frog—need you.

Red shoots her a look, then takes a deep breath. They exit.