

MIDDLE Beneath the Surface 1

Beneath the Surface

Middle School Entry

Once upon a time, there was a baby who was cursed from the beginning. King Johann and Queen Aliese did not know this, of course, but fairy magic has its price. The baby, Princess Estefania, had been something both they and the kingdom had wanted for years. A big celebration, one day after the baby was born, was arranged. The kingdom's four fairies flew in as guests of honor, and everyone (even the villagers) were invited. Everyone except me. The stupid villagers liked to call me an old, evil witch who lives all alone in an abandoned manor (which I have tastefully decorated with candy), but the truth is, I'm just shy. Also, I'm not that old, and I do have a name, Ivy.

Witches and kingdoms don't have a great history in the Kingdom of Regency, but I was still offended. On the day of the Birthday Banquet, I did the only thing I could do. I crashed. Disguising myself as a Royal Baker, I snuck into the huge brick palace. There were excited people everywhere, and no one noticed me. The fairies arrived next to the King and Queen, and everyone tried to catch a glimpse. Fairies have the kind of beauty that is so unattainable, you can only stand back and admire it. Today, they were wearing iridescent dresses that gently swayed as they flew, and their hair rested on their shoulders in curls, framing their picture-perfect faces.

"Attention!" the King yelled.

The whole room fell silent at once, eagerly waiting for his next words.

"The fairies will each give the princess a special gift," he proclaimed.

The crowd erupted into cheers, and the fairies basked in the spotlight.

Lilith, the youngest and prettiest, waved her crystal wand. “I grant beauty,” she announced in her high, sweet voice. A cloud of pink enveloped the princess, shimmering and buzzing.

Edna, the plumpest, granted wisdom. This time, pale yellow dust fell.

Lena granted kindness, a tornado of blue erupting. I saw a devious look pass between Edna and Lena. It wasn’t like the fairies to give the gifts out of the goodness of their hearts.

“And now, the final, best gift,” Delia, the wickedest fairy, announced. I didn’t like the gleam in her steely blue eyes.

“Stop!” I cried, unmasking myself. Some people stared, shocked, while others murmured nastily.

“The fairies are turning her into a monster,” I warned the King and Queen. “There will be a heavy price to pay.”

The King haughtily said, “These fairies are our friends, Witch. Unlike you, they were invited.”

A shiver ran down my spine, and a tear threatened to leak out of my eye.

“Fine. Then here’s my gift. When she grows up, the princess shall prick her finger on a needle and die!”

I heard a collective gasp. Too angry to stop myself, I performed the intricate spell, a black cloud swirling around me and Princess Estefania. When it dissolved, I cloaked myself with an Invisibility Spell and made my way to the back of the palace.

Thinking I was gone, the Queen began to sob.

“I cannot take away the spell,” Delia announced dramatically, “but I can change it.”

Certain spells, like Death spells, are called Irreversibles. Only a very powerful being could change one.

“Instead of death, the needle will bring on one hundred years of sleep. The princess will be awakened by a prince’s kiss,” Delia said, her voice thundering with passion.

I left, wanting to cry. Delia had been very clever to combat Death with another Irreversible, Love. For everyone knows a prince can only kiss a princess if he loves her.

The following week, King Johann made eccentric new laws. They banned needles of every kind, and those in existence were to be destroyed. The people obeyed, terrified of the consequences.

Over the next few years, Princess Estefania grew into a beautiful, cunning young woman. Her beauty was said to turn men crazy, her cleverness luring them to death, and her kindness really hypnotism in disguise. The fairies had the King and Queen under their thumb, convincing them Estefania would not be safe without them. I'm surprised they didn't realize what their daughter had turned into, but perhaps they *wanted* to be blissfully ignorant.

The night before Estefania's 16th birthday, I had a Dream. Dreams, for witches, predict the future, and only happen once in a lifetime. In my Dream, the kingdom was covered in a thick, gray fog. The people looked weary, as if they had given up on life and happiness. A blonde figure stood in the center, her cold blue eyes reminding me of Delia's. I recognized Princess Estefania, although she looked a few years older.

"All hail the Queen!" a tired chant broke out from the people. "Or else?" Estefania demanded, her plush lips curling up. "Death!"

I woke up shaking, Estefania's cackling ringing in my ears. I knew I had to stop her. Rifling through my pantry for inspiration, I came across an old potion. "Aphrodite-Approximately 2 hours" the label read. I wasted no time, weaving a plan in my head. I would go to the palace, pretending to be a florist for the party. Then, I would sneak into the party and drink the potion. Finally, I would lure Estefania and prick her.

The first part of my plan went smoothly. The palace guards were so busy they gave me no trouble. Sneaking to the party was a little harder. After I dropped off a dozen red roses (fresh from my garden), one maid wouldn't stop complaining to me about how much cleaning she had to do. I managed to evict myself though, and drink the overly sweet potion. I was transformed into a stunning young woman, with brown curls, jade green eyes, and an olive complexion. At least, that's what I looked like to me. The Aphrodite potion makes everyone see the Drinker as the most beautiful girl in the world, but it's different for everyone.

I found the princess dancing with a smitten looking man. Quickly, I found her lady-in-waiting, Mia, and convinced her to take me to the princess's bedroom. "Mia, darling, bring Princess Estefania up here as quickly as you can. Tell her it's Snow White," I begged, batting my eyelashes. The giggling girl promised she would, and left. Snow White and Estefania have a small, petty rivalry in the looks department, so I knew she would come immediately. Indeed, the princess came quickly and alone, swathed in yards of pink tulle.

“You’re not Snow,” she spat out, her voice sweeter than honey.

“No,” I agreed. “In fact, I’m prettier than her *and* you.”

Her eyes narrowed as she examined me. “Impossible!” she scoffed. Confusion seeped into Estefania’s voice. “You look just like... me.”

I pounced, pricking her finger with the needle hidden behind my back. Estefania crumpled, her chest gently rising and falling. I Transported myself back home, celebrating with Fried Newt on a Stick and, for dessert, Essence of Frog Ice Cream.

The next day, the gossipy girl who did my laundry told me what happened after I left. “When the King and Queen found out, they were so sad, they called off the party and cried for ten hours. Then, they ordered a bed of roses for the princess to sleep on.” Cady may exaggerate, but she’s a pretty good source of information. “I heard the fairies are helping the King and Queen. They’re flying in today from their palace in Atlantis,” Cady added. The fairies? They were sure to ruin everything!

Hastily bidding Cady farewell, I Transported myself to the Palace. The air was heavy with magic, almost suffocatingly so. As I looked around, it soon became clear why. Everything had been suspended, frozen in time. Even the King and Queen, who I found upstairs, were frozen. It was eerie being in the big palace all alone with silent

figures. I soon left, drowsy from the spell. The King or Queen must have asked if there was a way for the palace to remain exactly as it was for a hundred years. They would have been easy prey for the fairies.

News spread around the kingdom of the Sleeping Palace. Everyone moved from Regency, for there was no one to govern them. Soon, nature reclaimed the kingdom, and a bristly forest bloomed. I spent the next hundred years focusing on my Witchcraft, free to do it in the open once again.

One day, as I was practicing a Heat spell, I saw a young man riding on a horse towards the palace. Intrigued, I followed him. His caramel-colored hair shone in the sun, and his velvet breeches and magnificent white horse could only mean one thing.

“Greetings, Prince,” I called.

He turned in surprise, his green eyes widening. “Greetings, Witch,” he replied, his nose twitching ever so slightly in disgust. “I’m Prince Heath, from the Kingdom of Utopia.”

I self-consciously twisted my black hair into a bun, adjusting a few hairpins, before answering. “I’m Ivy. What do you seek?”

He grinned, his smile brighter than a thousand suns. “There is a rumor of a Sleeping Beauty trapped in these Enchanted Woods. I am on a quest to rescue her.”

Prince Heath kicked his horse, spurring it on. “Farewell,” he called, galloping towards the palace.

For a while, I just stood there, day-dreaming of Heath’s grass-green eyes. As the sky grew darker, a realization dawned on me. Heath was trying to wake Princess Estefania. Estefania, a truly evil monster with the deceptive face of an angel, was going to be woken up. I had to stop him. A Transportation spell would not work well this late. I grabbed my “Eat Me!” potion, in the form of a cake this time, and ate it as quickly as possible. The sugary taste in my mouth and lighter-than-air feeling in my chest was all I could think of as I grew higher and higher. I stretched my long arms, secured my brown bag that held my potions, and ran through the forest. My legs were so big, it almost felt like flying, and I got to the palace in minutes. I was surprised to see a tiny boy, also running towards the palace.

“Hello!” I called, and my voice echoed “lo-lo-lo!” He looked up, startled.

“G-g-giant!” he stuttered. I laughed, rustling the leaves on the trees. I had forgotten about the potion. Quickly downing the “Drink Me!” potion, I felt a terrible squeezing feeling as I shrank. I stretched, my arms back to normal.

“Hello,” I tried again. “Sorry about that. I’m Ivy.” The boy, who on closer inspection was actually a young man, said, “Greetings. I’m Prince Denton, from the Kingdom of Dystopia.”

I studied him, observing the silk clothes and well-groomed manner of royalty I had not noticed before.

“Where’s your horse?” I asked. Smiling sheepishly, he told me his horse had run off. “It’s like the palace is cursed or something,” Prince Denton said, shrugging. Cursed. Princess Estefania. Heath!

I ran into the palace, and Denton followed me.

“Heath?” I called. “Ivy?” Denton whispered. He pointed towards the staircase. Two shadowy figures walked down, hands intertwined.

“Heath!” I cried, his face becoming clear as he came closer. Then I saw the other face, and the gorgeous, cold smile plastered across it.

“Princess Estefania!” I blurted out, shocked. My hand instinctively went to my brown bag.

“Heath!” Princess Estefania commanded. One word, one syrupy sweet word, and Heath’s hands were around my throat. His hold tightened, and I gasped for air.

“Ivy!” Denton yelled, his sword raised high.

“Don’t,” Estefania ordered, a dangerous undertone to the word.

“Heath,” she cooed, and his grip loosened. I let out a huge gasp, re-inflating my lungs. I examined Heath, trying to find out how she controlled him, and stopped at his eyes. They were glassed over, a cold emptiness in them. *Her gifts.*

Estefania beamed at Denton, slowly batting her eyelashes. “Why are you helping a witch? She’s evil. Haven’t you seen the horrible things they can do?” she asked, manipulating him like dough. His brown eyes began to look glazed, and I knew it was now or never. I grabbed what was left of my prized Aphrodite potion, guzzling it down.

“Heath!” Estefania shrieked, but the potion was already taking effect. I was swept away in a horrible pressure from all around me. “Oh no!” I choked out, realizing what had happened. In my hurry, I had grabbed the “Drink Me!” potion. I was now only six inches tall, but to me it seemed as if everything else had just expanded.

“Where is she?” I heard Estefania shriek, her voice amplified to my tiny ears. I clapped my hands over my ears, knocking a hair pin loose. A hair pin, I realized, that was very similar to a needle. I murmured the Enlarging spell (it only worked on metals),

and almost buckled under the weight. The hair pin was five times bigger than usual. Using all my strength, I lifted it high in the air and quickly brought it down on Estefania's leg. She only had time to let out a yelp of surprise before the magic began to work.

Estefania was the product of so much evil magic, fire had begun to build up in her blood. The needle, which held Symbolic magic, sped up the fire's growth. Basically, the minute the needle hit her skin, Estefania burst into flames. Soon, all that was left of her was a pile of ashes. I stuffed the "Eat Me!" potion in my mouth, rapidly expanding. Heath looked at me like I was a ghost.

"What happened?" he gasped. I summed it up as simply as I could for him. "Estefania was cursed. A needle would activate the curse. The curse was altered so instead of death, sleep would come. Still, Death can't be changed so much as put off. Now, she's, well, you know..." I trailed off uncomfortably.

Heath looked ready to puke. "I'm out of here," he muttered, running out of the palace. Helplessly, I watched him leave.

"Thanks for saving my life," Denton said quietly. I turned, taking in his sincere brown eyes and auburn hair. "It was nothing," I mumbled, suddenly shy.

We walked out of the palace, past the sleeping figures who had begun to awaken, like a museum coming to life. The moon threw a soft light on Denton's earnest face, making my stomach flip-flop.

"Denton, it's getting really dark. Do you want to stay in my house for the night? It's made of gingerbread and candy," I offered. Smiling shyly, he said he did, and ended up staying for the rest of his life, alternating between his palace and my house. We lived blissfully together, our life always full of surprises. The only downside was our house attracted lost brats wandering around in the woods. But that's another story.