

**FOURTH PRIZE
HONORABLE MENTION**

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Nevermore

By Emily Byrne

Prologue

Everything you had ever known about fairy tales was a lie.

It is common knowledge that history has been passed down and told by only the victors, which makes one question if these words are fact or fiction. True or false, real or fake, we only have what we've been told to be considered true.

For this tale, I fortunately have a full account of the truth and nothing but the truth. The truth that will erase the lies that you have been fed a mere child. These lies were in fact the "fairy tales" that one was read to by firelight. Stories that had been divided into the tales you now know. Now to begin with the one who had changed the split tales in your world.

The night was still and calm. Stars twinkled above a vast stretch of lush, green underbrush and mountainous trees. Critters big and small scurried around the black world. A

babbling brook could be heard not far off in the distance. All was still, all was calm and all was right.

In moments the peace was shattered. Clouds brimmed along the horizon. Lightning struck over and over, dancing across the sky. A bolt of immense power laid waste to the earth. The destruction was soon followed by a blinding light. Where the bolt had struck, a woman stood with hair as black as the night sky and skin as white as snow. She was accompanied by two men, both were tall and radiated a menacing aura. They adorned black armor, as dark as obsidian. The woman, features once beautiful, were now contorted in an indescribable rage. Her fists clenched, she hit the ground hard.

“That GIT!!! That SNIDE, REVOLTING, GIT!” the woman shrieked into the night.

The men shifted uncomfortably from foot to foot as the woman before them threw a fit. They knew better than to interfere in her path or to try to reason with her. They had already lost five of their brothers to her, the last thing either of them wanted was to lose the other. For the woman before them was a devil in disguise, evil if it had ever taken form in human flesh.

“MARK MY WORDS — I WILL KILL YOU!!!” The woman raged, breathing heavily. Her breathing hitched as she broke into a cruel laugh, startling the men.

“I see now. That’s what you’ve done.. huh! Think you can dispose of me that easily, yes?” She cackled as she spoke to the sky, “Oh sister,” she began to giggle, “You know nothing. Sending me to another world now? Tsk. Pathetic,”

“W-We’re in another world?” Theron, the man to the left with scars running down his face, questioned.

“Yes. What? Are you like my sister? A dolt?” She burst into a fit of giggles, her snowy cheeks now colored in a light dust of pink.

A bead of sweat rolled down Theron's forehead. His stomach turned, doing flips. He was already pushing it by talking to her while she was in such a state.

"N-No your majesty....," He answered.

"Good I don't wish to be surrounded by the likes of fools," She said now standing, she began rocking back and forth from her heel to her toes. Her crystal blue eyes shone in the moonlight. A twisted smile plastered on her face.

"Now my dear sister of mine has taken the courtesy to transport us to another world... one," she took a deep steady breath, "Without *wondrous* magic," the woman spat.

The men shared hopeful glances. The man on the right, Dabi adventured forward.

"Then...what does that make of the contract? The one—"

"That binds you and your brother? Oh that still exists. The universe makes sure things are set right, power controlled, and promises kept," the dark haired woman turned to the men, "And as far as I'm concerned our pact has not been fulfilled. The death of my sister has not come to pass."

The men's shoulders slumped in defeat. Their hopes, gone. Who knew how time worked in this world. For all they knew, they could both die before their mistress's sister did. Even if they did perish, then both men would still be stuck wandering this world for eternity as hopeless spirits. The contract they made forever binding them to their mistress.

The raven haired woman giggled again, no trace of sanity found. She watched with satisfaction as the hope drained from their eyes. She hadn't seen such misery in a while, at least none that she had inflicted directly. Oh what she would give to bring misfortune to others again like she had when she was only a mere *princess*. She bit her lip after thinking of such a disgusting title. Princess. So much better to be a queen.

“No matter, I have a new mission now that I am stuck here.” The fair skinned woman said as she reached into a satchel that she kept around on shoulder....