

When Freya Beauchamp woke up that morning, she realized something was wrong the minute she opened her eyes. For one, she wasn't in her own bed. Granted, that had happened from time to time, but her days of falling into a stranger's arms at the end of the night were long behind her. Except the man lying next to her wasn't a stranger. It was Killian Gardiner, the love of her life, her eternal soul mate, the man she had loved and lost through time immortal. She took a moment to admire his broad, strong back, his thick dark hair, his long, muscled arms curled around the blankets.

Killian stirred, sensing she was awake. "Hey, babe," he murmured, reaching for her and pulling her into his arms. He tucked her head against his chin.

Freya sighed happily, wrapped in his warmth, pressing her body closer to his so that he moaned in her ear. "Minx," he whispered. After centuries of searching for each other, it was wonderful to know they would never be apart ever again. Still, it was odd to wake up with Killian in her childhood bedroom. She didn't remember coming back here the night before. And Killian was supposed to be away, taking yet another trip around the world on that boat of his. What was he doing back? When did he return exactly?

Now Freya was certainly confused. Her memory was fuzzy, but she was sure that last night she had gone to sleep in her own bed, in her own house, alone. The Beauchamp homestead was Ingrid's home now, with her family.

And as much as Freya enjoyed lying in Killian's arms, she was too agitated to remain there. She slid away from his embrace and tied a robe around her nightgown. Padding out to the hallway, she bumped into Ingrid, who jumped in fright at the sight of her.

"Ingrid?" she asked. "Is that you?" She wondered why she was having trouble recognizing her sister, then realized that it was because the Ingrid she knew was a tall, Nordic blonde who usually wore her hair in a bun, and the woman in front of her had long, flowing chestnut locks, a more youthful glow in her cheeks, and less of Ingrid's prim countenance.

But it *was* Ingrid. Freya was sure it was her sister, she'd know her anywhere . . . so what was going on?

"Follow me," Ingrid whispered, taking Freya's hand and leading her to a quiet corner where they could talk.

"I don't understand," Freya insisted. "You're you, but you're not you."

“Believe me, I know,” said Ingrid. “I woke up this morning alone—and wanted to scream—where is Matt? Where are my children?” Ingrid had been happily married to the town police chief, Matt Noble, for several years now. They had two extremely adorable children.

“They’re not here?” asked Freya. “No—as far as I can tell—they don’t even exist!” Ingrid pulled at her hair and worried her bottom lip. “I don’t know what’s happened. Is it a spell? We’re in some kind of spell, aren’t we? Have we been cursed? Oh, I knew I shouldn’t have trusted that insurance agent who came to visit the other day. He was so shady I’m sure he was a warlock!”

Freya cast a glance at a mirror. It wasn’t only Ingrid who looked different—she did too. Better, she would say, raising an eyebrow. She had lush, dark hair instead of her strawberry waves. She decided she’d wear it that way from now on. “I don’t think it’s a spell,” said Freya.

“I think . . . I think we woke up in an alternate universe.”

“Not again!” said Ingrid, smacking her forehead. “The last time we did that we ended up trapped in Ancient Rome for years! *The smell!*”

“So we need to figure out why we’re here and what’s going on.”

“Well, here’s one,” Ingrid said, opening her robe.

“Oh God,” Freya said, staring at Ingrid’s protruding belly.

“Uh-huh.”

“You’re pregnant!”

“Bingo.”

“But if Matt isn’t in this universe . . . then who’s the . . . ?”

This time they both jumped. Ingrid pulled her robe tightly over her stomach.

“Hi, ladies,” Killian said, appearing suddenly in the hallway and giving Ingrid a curious smile. He was bare chested, his pajama bottoms hanging low on his hips. “I came out to find you. You know I don’t like to wake up alone, Freya.”

“Hi, baby, why don’t you get back in bed, and I’ll be right with you.”

“Don’t keep me waiting!” he said, sauntering back into the bedroom.

When he was gone, Freya and Ingrid exchanged a glance. “Is it just me, or is there something different about him too?” Ingrid asked. She’d felt something spark between them when Killian had smiled at her. Something that made her terribly uncomfortable. Killian was

Freya's, and always had been. Ingrid had never been attracted to him in her life. Of course, one could not help but find him attractive, but that wasn't the point.

"I know, right?" said Freya. "I felt it too. I'm not sure what's going on, but something tells me he's not from our universe. He's from here. But he's . . . different for sure." She looked at Ingrid's belly. "So . . . any idea who the father is?"

"This is going to sound so strange, but last night I had dreams of this weird blue guy. You know, like a Mandragora? A sex demon?" Ingrid shivered. "With all those tentacles? Eww."

"Blue baby?" Freya laughed. "No way. Mandragoras can't reproduce."

"Really?"

"Trust me on that one," said Freya, whose turn it was to look uncomfortable.

"There's more," Ingrid said. "I got up early this morning, thinking I had to give Henry his bottle, but instead, I found someone else in the kitchen."

"Who?"

"Girls!" rang a familiar voice from the first floor.

"Mom?" Freya asked, her eyes shining with sudden tears. In their universe, Joanna had died, giving up her life so Freya could have hers. But in *this* universe . . .