Salem's Mist

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Mayla,a young home schooled girl living in Oregon, has developed a passion for reading books and has even gotten to the point where she prefers the imaginary land in books instead of reality itself until the day she literally falls into her favorite story, Salem's Mist(a story that takes place in the 17th century), and must find her way out while in the process she stars to question her living methods and reading her addiction. This is part 1 of the miniseries

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My love for books is quite the scandalous affair. So many stories so many worlds, so many people growing in a time so different from my own reality. I envy the girls in these books sometimes; envy the fact that they can run away from home or run off with the man they love. Kill their enemies. I could never have that gull to do such things. I never have the gull to do anything but drag myself to the library every other day to exchange a novel for another novel. Sometimes several at a time. I never liked the world I live in. Too much violence, death. So many awful things I would never want to see in my life.

I never go out except to the library. I am home schooled, and it has been that way ever since I can remember. I would say it is something of a pros and cons deal.

Pros: A lot of free time.

Cons: No friends, enhanced fears, no love life. No special memories.

Okay so there are definitely more pros than cons but I deal with it.

I have friends in these books.

My best friend, her name is Salem's Mist, she was written by a woman named Becca Fitzz. She is my all time favorite classic.

The story is about a girl named Salem, she is trapped in a kingdom where she feels as if she does not belong. She runs away from her mother and soon after that she meets her lover (who is the king's son) Demetris. The king forbids their relationship but neither lover cares about the forbiddeness of their love affair. They only care about each other. The king finds out about their taboo engagements and orders Salem's execution. Salem fights with all of her heart but her hard work fails when the king has his only son killed. She feels nothing. Hears nothing, and so she lets the king execute her and place her head on a wooden post, to teach his kingdom what happens when you cross him.

I never liked the ending but the story as a whole reminds me of what I wish I was brave enough to do.

I am sitting on a window seat in my room staring out the window into the world caressed by Autumn. This is my favorite time of the year, when there are so many colors they make you dizzy with pleasure and joy. I have my favorite book in my lap. Reading it again for the hundredth time. My mother calls me down for dinner but I tell her I am not hungry and she says that is fine with her. Sometimes I wonder if she even cares that I am afraid. She has never asked me about why I never go anywhere except the library, why I am seventeen years old and refuse to get a job. Why I cringe every time I hear her arguing with her fiance. I wonder if it will work out better for them than it did for Salem and Demetris. A broken heart wouldn't be that much different than a decapitated head. It is interesting though, my mother doesn't even worry much about my education; which college I should go to, majors, careers. Nothing. She just sits there and lets me read my life away. I wonder if she cares.

It is starting to rain and the colors turn dull with the dismal gray skies. I hear thunder and it rocks the house as if a mini earthquake has just rushed through. I see a bright flash of lightening and it blinds me for a moment before I can see the sky again. Water is falling heavily from the sky like water leaping from the rocks of a tall waterfall. It is peaceful in its own disturbing way. Dangerous and beautiful all at once. A thunderstorm is its own contradiction. Beautifully deadly.

I start to read my book again starting from the beginning when Salem realizes she does not belong there reveals it to her mother.

â Mother! Do you not understand what I am saying to you?â Salem cries, her tears have stained her rosy cheeks and her golden eyes are drowned in sorrow, â I cannot be here! This is not me!â

â This will always be you, Salem!â her mother shouts, â this is your home, your birthplace, your right! You will always belong here!â

Salem shakes her head so fiercely it aches as she continues to plead her case to the woman.

â No. You don't know what I am feeling, mother, if you did you would never say such things to me. I do not belong here, I can feel it in my skin. There is no freedom here. No love. I shall never fall in love with a man from this kingdom. They are heartless and cruel and you know this! Look at father! He has gone and married another and you do not say anything? I thought you loved him, but you only pretend. Lied to make yourself a lovechild. There is no love here, mother, and you never have shown me an inkling of any-â

â I have!â mother cuts in, â you know I have done nothing but sacrifice for you! You ungrateful, bitch! You know that's what you are? Nothing but a lovechild? If I did not love you I would not still be sitting in this pathetic shack raising you! I do what I do because I have to make a living! Why cannot you understand this simple explanation?â

Salem continues to shake her head, her vision grows uneven and her balance is off. She does not care that her mother is the towns woman.

â You are a whore, mother,â

Her mouth falls open in an angry O and she slaps Salem hard on her cheek and proceeds to smack her in various places.

â You get out!â she orders as she shoves her daughter out the door. â Leave with your uselessness! I don't need it! Never come here for anything, anyone! I don't care you ungrateful dirt!.

Salem was shoved out of the house into the mud that is the road.

â Die!â she shouts as her final curse.â

Mother slams the old wooden door making the whole shack rattle warily in its eery frame. There is a storm coming this evening, threatening to wash away the trails and the streets.

Salem stands up and wipes the tears from her eyes and cheeks, she smooths down the wrinkles in her skirts and swipes at the mud that began to dry on them.

On that cold gloomy night Salem of Duke's kingdom starts the most valiant journey any man has ever dreamed to receive. She holds her head high despite the tears and dirt that stain her face and marches down the muddy wet roads into the storm that has yet to come preparing herself with nothing but internal strength and wisdom she had always know was inside of her. She did not belong in this horrible kingdom ruled by a man that named death before justice. She could not, and so she marches on without looking back- never once regretting the ugly things she said to her mother. Her mother was the highest bid in the brothel in town and she was proud of such a degrading title. Salem was not surprised her father left that hideous woman. Her mother was a proud whore and full of too much pride to be loved so dearly by a man like her father. She

thought about going to him but decided against it and instead kept to her trail. She did not know yet where she would end up but she did know she would no longer be known as Salem of Duke's Kingdom.

I breathe for what seems like the first time since I started reading the chapter and I wonder if I have been holding my breath the entire time.

I wonder how one could hold their breath and not realize they are not breathing. That sounds exceptionally dangerous for the ones who lost themselves in a story so easily. Imagine!- death by novel!

I laugh curtly before setting the book down and fishing out my journal. It is empty as usual and I wonder why Peter even bought the thing for me in the first place. I have nothing to say nor would I write it in this silly thing if I did! I toss it in my trash basket and start to reach for my book, but...it is gone.

â Where has it gone?â I ask myself.

I look under the pillows and that blankets and such but there is no book. I look in my bag and it is full of yesterdays checkouts but no Salem.

My heart picks up an unusual tempo and I feel myself begin to hyperventilate.

â Where. Could. It be?â I puff. I need that book, it is the closest thing I have to a bible. Though probably not the best substitute I look at it that way because I can.

I turn my room upside down but there is no book anywhere. Not under my bed, under the mattress, inside the mattress, inside the night table. Nothing!

I let out a mousy squeak and fall to my knees, face in hands, my hair covers my face and my shoulders shake. I cannot believe the book just disappeared.

I feel something soft brush my shoulder and then another on my other should. I remove my hands from my face, eyes still closed, and I feel petals under my palms. My eyes shoot open and I see that daisies falling from an emerald cloud hanging over my room. There are so many different colors it's dizzying and I have a sudden urge to reach out and catch one. A blue petaled daisy falls into my hands and it smells so green and so sweet I want its fragrance on me. I place it in my hair and stand up to catch more but as I stand up I am lifted gently off my feet as if gravity decided to change the rules. And then I see it. The book. It is stuck to the ceiling open on the page I ended on. The emerald clouds are drifting from the book and gravity is carrying me up to it. The clouds thicken and I can no longer see the book only emerald clouds and little flashes of blue lightening and a daisy here and there floating down past me to a ground I can no longer see. I am carried higher and faster and it is starting to feel cold and mucky.

My breath catches when I am thrown up into the sky and I land in a large puddle of mud sprinkled with old dead leaves. I look around and see that I am in a forest. It is dark with threatening clouds and thunder roaring in the distance. I smell several different and very unpleasant scent. One of them being fecal matter. I gag and hardly keep my lunch down from the strong whiff I have just gulped down. I get up and see that my jeans and blouse are covered in wet mud and leaves. I sneeze and see that mud is also caked in my hair.

â Oh! I'm filthy!â I screech.

I hear a laugh echo near by and I remember that I am not where I am supposed to be.

The laughter continues and I hear gasping.

â Do you think this is funny?â is my haughty reply.

â Very much so yes, madam.â she laughs. â Please, wipe the mud from your face or I shall die from excessive laughter.â

I use my shirt to wipe away the excess dirt and find that there is a lot I have cleaned off.

The laughing only grows.

â Oh dear Goddess help this girl!â she cries. I hear a thump and assume that the woman has fallen out with laughter.

â You could help me instead of standing there laughing like a wild buffoon!â I snap at her.

â Oh!- my I am very sorry. Please accept my apology,â she pleads, â It's just... I have never seen such a funny sight before in my life.â

â Yeah...â I say still wiping at the mud that seems to be permanently stained on my jeans and blouse.

â Well-anyhow, I shall help you then.â she says.

She steps out of the bushes and I nearly scream with and excitement and terror. Her eyes are a bright gold the same shade as her hair. She is beautiful in the most obvious way. Her skirts are also stained with old dried mud and her blouse suffered the same fate but her hair is so shiny and wavy and long I feel as if I could swim in her curls.

She stops short and tilts her head.

â You dress like a man yet you have the female's chest.â she says matter-of-factually. â I do not understand.â

We stare at each other for what seems like hours before she decides to break whatever clashing thoughts had stopped her approaching.

â My name is Salem, Salem of Duke's Kingdom.â she says.

I say nothing but my body buckles and I hear a faint shout before my vision goes black.

I open my eyes to see that I am lying on a scratchy cot. I look around and see nothing but darkness and the shapes of tall trees. I try to sit up but my head throbs and I groan before I gently lower myself back down.

â Oh!- good you are awake.â says Salem. â I was worried I had frightened you dead. I am very sorry if I shocked you miss...â

I shake my head, attempting to clear my thoughts.

â Mayla.â I say so faintly I could hardly hear myself.

â Well, miss Mayla, I apologize yet again for my behavior.â

â It's fine...I was just sick is all. No problem.â

She cocks her head to the side.

â You are a very strange woman,â she says, â wearing the men's trousers and such an...interesting blouse? I can only assume you are not from here.

â I'm not actually, I'm from Oregon.â

â Is-is that another Kingdom?â she looks so confused and sad.

I almost forgot where I was. The time line is different and Oregon has not been discovered yet.

I nod.

â Yes. It's actually very far from here.â

â I saw you fly out of the ground. Are you a witch, miss Mayla?â

â I don't think so but I do know that I was sent here against my will.â

â Oh I see. So a witch captured you and sent you to my forest! How exciting! But I must ask, why on earth are you wearing those dismal trousers? They look so uncomfortable.â

They were in fact uncomfortable at the moment.

â They are very popular where I come from.â I explain. â They are called blue-jeans.â

â Blue...jeans.â

She shakes her head.

â I do not understand why a woman would wear such hard and hideous attire. I do not think I would like your Kingdom very much if I was to be forced to wear such things.â

I blink at her.

â Oh!- but no offense to you, miss Mayla.â she says solemnly.

â Please, just call me Mayla and none taken.â I smile at her reassuringly and she grins so big it brightens her eyes.

â Did I hit something when I fell?â

She nods and points to a rather large rock sticking up out of the ground in the most mocking way a rock could. I swear I heard the clump of soot laughing at me.

â Mayla, I am sorry but I cannot stay here. You see, I have runaway from home and I have started a quest to find a better one. You are free to come with me if you are able but otherwise you will have to stay here and mend yourself.â

She made something so cruel sound so natural.

â I would like to come with you. But please can we just stay here for a little while longer? My head aches.â

â I see...â

She looks around as if she is looking for something then she jumps up and rushes into the forest.

â Sa-Salem?â I call pathetically.

Nothing.

It has gotten too quiet for comfort and I could feel myself becoming hot with panic.

Snap!

I scream and there she is holding a leaf in my face.

She laughs.

â Calm down! I have only gone to find you a peppermint root. Chew this and the mint will sooth your aching head.â She hands me the mint and I chew on the bitter herb. It feels like I'm sucking on bitter toothpaste.

â Alright,â she says, â let us be off.â

After we set off on our unclear quest it started to rain large pink drops of soft satiny water. It looked so beautiful; like pink diamonds raining down upon our heads. It did not stain us though, which I thought was quite a miracle.

â You can wash your clothes in this rain, Mayla.â she had said to me. So I stripped down to my underclothes and rubbed the mud stains out of my jeans. They would be hard later from lack of detergent but I didn't care.

We traveled on on the mucky mud road for several nights. We would stop after several hours have past to nap for a moment then start off again.

Then it hit me so hard; like some evil child throwing a rock at my face, I have just realized where I am and who I am with.

I am in Salem's Mist!

Why am I here though? Is the silent question I could ask to no one. It occurs to me that Salem is very much like her character in the story and is following the scripted path precisely. I close my eyes and try to think of what happens next in chronological order. The story is told only from Salem's side so that should be easy but what will happen to me in the end?

I know that part all too well and it frightens me.

It is sad how I know every detail of her fate yet I cannot tell her anything about it.

How do I get out of here?

Do I run through the story until it ends?

Or do I die along with Salem?

The sun is high in the sky signaling noon and the heat is almost unbearable in these clothes. My blouse is too heavy and my jeans are starting to stick to my legs making them itchy and irritated. I wonder if I will have a rash on my legs from the dye.

â Isn't it a wonderful day, Mayla?â Salem says to me. She looks completely undisturbed from this hot weather, in fact, she seems to be skipping.

Oh my how times have changed.

â Glorious.â is my only answers. She glances at me and see how red my face must look and decides right away to take a break and rest under a large shady tree.

â Thank you so much.â I say as I plant myself down on the soft green grass. We are still in the very thick forest and I wonder when we will come out of it. It is as if nothing has changed with these many days of travel.

I wonder...

â How long have we been traveling, Salem?â

â A month I suppose.â

My mouth falls open.

A month!

She must be mistaken. Time does not fly that fast.

â Are you sure?â I half yell.

She stares at me with a hard and final look.

â I am never wrong about my days and nights, miss Mayla.â

I feel a shiver crawl through me at that moment. I almost forgot how dark her mind goes.

â Let us be going.â she says.

And we are off again as the sun sets low behind the distant mountains and we walk on into the forest passing several ancient trees and glorious rose bushes. We met a tangerine tree and picked ourselves a few pecks of the sweet fruit. We chat occasionally while we walk but it is mostly silence between us, and I don't mind. It gives me more time to think to myself. I still have no idea how I am going to get back home and I wonder if my Mom is wondering where I am. Oh Mommy, I am sorry for causing you so much trouble.

I should not have been wasting my life on such trite things.

Tears slowly well my eyes as I think of my mother. I have always thought she never cared for my but what if there was a good reason for that?

Maybe...

â Look, Mayla!- you see the lake there?â she cries, â Isn't it lovely? Oh! It is making me awfully parch let us have a sip and a soak.â

She grabs my wrist and drags me to the edge of the fairly large lake. It is very beautiful as she said, though that may have been an understatement. The lake is a bright blue that seems to illuminate as we gather closer. There are little splashes of pink and green and red and it sparkles as if the stars have fallen out of the sky and into the lake.

Salem has already stripped down to her slip and is now running for the sparkling water. I don't remember this part in the book and I hope I am not throwing her off the path.

â Come on, Mayla!â she squeals, â the water feels wonderful! Do not be bashful!â

I can't help but laugh.

It seems that she knows me quite well herself.

I slip off my blouse and jeans and rush into the water. The coolness of the lake relaxes me instantly.

â Who was the witch that brought you here?â she asks right out of the blue.

â I-I don't know, she seemed to just appear out of nowhere...â

She stares tentatively at me.

â Why are you lying to me?â

I accidentally swallow too much water and cough for a moment.

â I..I am not!â I splutter, â how could you accuse me of such things?â

She raises an eyebrow and smiles slyly.

â You are not a difficult person to read, Mayla.â

â Well! In that case you tell me what I'm apparently not telling you.â I cross my arms even though it is a bit useless to do in water.

â Well... you look awfully confused most of the time, I can see it on your face as we travel these roads. You are lost- unsure about something. Maybe about me? Maybe about why you are here. But I do know that something is worrying you and it gives me this foreboding feeling in my chest that something is going to happen.â

Okay so she has the gift for reading people.

â I'm impressed.â

She nods her head once and smiles.

â Would it be too much trouble if I ask what it is that is bothering you so?â

â She does not belong here...â says a quiet slithery voice.

We both look frantically about for the speak but only found little ripples in water here and there.

â She lies to you...â it says again.

â Show yourself!â Salem bellows.

The voice giggles but does not show.

â Silly... So silly...â it laughs.

â Who are you?â I ask.

â Why should I tell you!â it screeches.

â Answer her you coward!â Salem shouts. She looks so strong now, she stopped looking for the creature and is now only standing in waist high waters with a look of pure royalty on her face.

â She is an Outworlder...run child.â it warns.

Was it talking about me?

â What is an Outworlder?â Salem ask.

No answer.

â Answer me.â

â She comes from another World... She is a traitor and will be your death soon.â

The speak pokes its eyes out of the water. It's head is blue with luminous violet hair, the eyes were nothing but darkness.

It seemed to be scaly.

â What are you?â I ask.

The eyes shift to me and narrow into thin slits.

â I am Sublime.â it hisses at me.

It raises itself higher out of the water and I see that it is a female, her waist is a narrow hourglass and her skin has a dull scaly texture to it. Her torso all the way up to her neck are tattooed with glittering curls and stencil thin curves. A few markings look to be in another language; they are beautiful all the same, though, frighteningly dark. Like the markings are more blood than ink or dye.

â Well you most certainly are sublime are you not?â Salem says sarcastically.

Sublime shifts her glare to Salem and lowers her eyes and points in my direction.

â That girl does not belong here.â she says, her voice sounds more melodious and rich now, like a powerful speaker's when they give important speeches. â She will kill you in the end- in fact!- she even knows the fate of your future.â

Salem glances at me then back at Sublime.

â You have no proof for your accusation, creature.â Salem says darkly.

Sublime grins-eyes still lowered- and lowers her accusatory gesture as well.

â Has she told you truths?â she asks. I can see a tail poking out of the water and the word â Mermaidâ comes to mind. But why would a mermaid be in a lake? There are no streams leading in or out of it.

â That is none of your business!â Salem shouts.

â Why do you protect that traitor?â Sublime shouts back.

â Because you have no right to accuse one without proper proof, Sublime.â says an even richer voice.

We all turn our attention to a very large scaly woman. Unlike Sublime her scales are fuchsia but with the exact same markings. Give or take a few symbols.

Sublime's grin is gone and her color seems to have paled. She bows her head and lowers her tail in at arch-like angle.

Respect for the eldermaid.

â Mayla was sent here for a cause, Sublime,â says the eldermaid, â and you had best go now and learn the true ways of the maids. I shall deal your punishment later.â

â Yes , Goddess.â utters Sublime. She sunk slowly under the lake without so much as a bubble rising behind her.

â I apologize for my child's behavior, miss Mayla.â she says lowering her head in a graceful half quarter bow.

â It's alright.â

She looks at me plainly for a moment, sizing me up and reading every detail.

â You are from another world.â she says matter-of-factually.

I nod.

â You do not know why yet you stay with young Salem?â

â Yes but-â

â I know why you are here.â she cuts in with a smile. â You are here to protect Salem- to learn something valuable, something that will help you in the Outworld, help you grow internally and give you much courage. You will need very much courage in this quest, child. I am afraid you will not return unless you learn what ever it is you must learn.â

â Can't you tell me what it is I have to learn?â I ask with obvious impatience.

â No! I am not your cheat merely a hint to help you move forward. I wish you the best of luck. Follow the story truest to you and you will arise victoriously.â

â But-please, just tell me: why are you telling me this?â

She smiles down at me.

â Something will happen. To both of you, though, you, miss Mayla, must fight the bigger battle. I know you, you are afraid of many things. Your fears are not irrational but the degree is overstimulated. You need to learn the lesson and soon, my dear, because if you fail you fail Salem and the third who is to join your faction soon. You will be lost in this world forever. You will never see your family again.â

She looks at me solemnly and nods her head.

She starts to sink deeper into the water not unlike Sublime had done and leaves only the slightest hint of a water ring.

I stare at the now dissolving ring and then glance at Salem who is staring at me.

â Who was that?â I ask.

She continues to stare at me as if she has not seen me before now.

â Aquariana, Queen of the Eldermaids.â

She was not a character in the book...

â Oh.â is all I can say.

â Who are you?â she ask, her expression still dull and wondering.

â Mayla... from Oregon.â

â Well I know that! But who are you?â

â I-I don't know.â

â How did you get here?â

She is making her way out of the water and glaring at me concurrently.

I...floated up in a cloud and fell in the forest.â

Her eyes narrow into intimidating slits that make my blood run cold.

â Do you expect me to believe that?â

â No. But it is the truth.â I say quietly, â I'm sorry! But it really is the honest truth. That is what happened and I don't know why it happened besides what that lady just told me.â

â She is a Queen!- not just a â ladyâ .â

â The Queen- I'm sorry-â

â You need to go now.â

â I don't know how !- cant you see? I need help!â

â You most certainly do!â

â Not that kind of help!â

My head is starting to ache. I press my index finger to my temple.

â Please. Let me stay with you? I'll do anything.â

Why do I feel like that was a really bad thing to say?

She smiles slyly at me.

â Fine. You may be my maid.â She says this as if she has done me the greatest of favors, and in some ways she has.

â Um- yeah sure. Okay.â I stutter.

Her smile broadens.

â We must be going now. We still have a great distance to travel.

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