Save Me a Bed of Roses

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Dante has met the girl of his dreams only to be taken aback by her deadly illness. The girl he loves has the spirit of a child but her disease has given her a short time to live. Dante then has to make the difficult descison on whether or not he will be able to be with a girl with a grusome disorder.
This story was inspired by the song "if I die young". And is dedicated to whenpencilmeetspapers contest .

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Save Me a Bed of Roses

The beginning

Never had I seen such an angel as she.
Giggling along in her little white tee.
Her long thick hair the dye of delicious chocolate.
Her skin the smooth caramel of candy and the suns kisses.
Her big violet eyes...so deep-so knowing-so free, wrinkled with laughter as she smiles at me.
No I have never met her, until today- she was as foreign to me as dog to a deer, and yet, she smiled at me- as if knowing full well what my wishes were.
She had been standing in a cluster of strangers- or maybe friends,but strangers to me- at a fair I had been dragged to by my brother and his buddies to attend, but they were not the best company at all; all they ever did was hoot at pretty females and shout obscene slang. I did not envy the young lady who had to listen to â Yo baby can I ha ya digits!?!â and then strut away without so much as flipping them off. Apparently girls don't kick assholes in the junk unless they are provoked.
The girl didn't seem to notice the language misdemeanor that was being preformed before her. She only watched me, reading my gaze as I return it to her.
I hoped that I wouldn't be so mistakenly misread to the point where she wouldn't come talk to me. Or should I go to her?
She answered my question and walked away-just walked off without saying a word to one of her persons...she looked back at me expectantly as if she wanted me to follow. She was walking in the direction of an abandoned farm. She seemed giddy and mysterious and shrewd at the same time... I wondered if I should follow her would she pounce on me?
That actually wasn't a bad thought but I am not that kind of guy.
She disappeared into the farm and I followed hastily after her.
â Do you always stare at girls as if they are mans candy?â I hear her say as I walk into the old farmhouse.
I looked around the farm for her but it was fairly dark, although it was only sunset, I assumed she was hiding herself.
â No...you just seemed interesting to look at.â was all I could say.
I suddenly felt very lame and quickly added, â Uh- where are you?â and felt instantly just as stupid as before.
I heard her giggling and decided to keep my mouth shut until she answered me.
â You're quite interesting yourself, dude.â she finally said in between giggles. â Do you have a name?â
â I'd feel obliged to tell you if I could see you. â I laughed.
She 'tisk tisked' and said:
â Gosh! Men always have to see what they're getting into, huh?â her remark seemed as if it were meant to have more than one meaning, but I let it go and told her my name.
â My name is Dante.â I said plainly. Still looking for her wondrous shape in the shadows.
â Very nice!â she said enthusiastically. â Arabelle is my name. Belle for short.â
And with that she dropped from a platform landing about 6 inches away from me.
She smiled at what must have been a surprised or terrified look on my face.
â Nice to meet you.â she said with a short laugh.
â Same here.â
She shook my hand but didn't let go...she only stared at me, her pouty lips in a kind smile. She squeezed my hand and came closer to me.
â I should let you know now that I am not like other girls...â she whispered .

I knew that was true the moment I saw her. I just didn't know what made her so different.
â I know.â I assured her with a smile.
â No you don't.â she said darkly.
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The middle

Three months have past and I have never been more in love with anyone than I am with Arabelle. Her heart is so wild as if there is not enough time in the world to do anything...and maybe there isn't, but I love her for it. The way she looked deep into me when she spoke to, the way she touched me- I'd feel a spark of fire in her fingertips, magic to my skin making me long for more.
But sometimes she would lose it- and I mean lose it- like she would suddenly start shaking and yelling odd things at me...she would get so angry it would seem as if she were possessed.
That being the reason why I'll never forget the first time I went to her house.
She called me at around seven.
â Hey, can you come over, babe?â she said shyly. â My parents aren't here and I get scared when I'm alone.â
What else was I supposed to say?
â Yeah, sure- I'll see you in a bit.â
She gave me her address and hung up. She didn't live too far away, only a ten-minute walk. It felt fantastic to be out doors in this town during the summer, the heat and the wind were the most incredible mix...it felt perfect.
Her house was a small two-story yellow brick structure with a red roof...not very pretty architecture but it was livable.
The door to her house swung open and there she was...standing there in her denim shorts and a black tank, her hair tousled and messy. She looked...different...she looked pissed.
â Where have you been!?â she yelled at me.
Nothing but shock on my face.
She looked horrible, and so tired.
She was scowling at me as if I had spilled soda on her clean white rug.
â WHO IS SHE, HUH? Am I not good enough?! Where the HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?!â
â Belle...â
She was breaking into a drenching sweat and her shakes where fantastic.
I was scared for her. I wanted to hug her but I felt as if she would push me away or cringe with enmity. And her eyes practically bulged out of there eye sockets.
And who was â sheâ supposed to be?
â GET OUT!â she shouted. Her veins pulsing as her blood rushed through them as they tried to find a cool place to settle.
â Belle, what is wrong with you?â I said calmly, taking a few tentative steps toward her. â Tell me what's wrong... please.â
She stepped back as I progressed...her eyes red with anger and hurt.
What did she think I had done?
â Get. Out. Now, Dante.â she warned me, darkness now clouding her eyes.
I stared at her- plainly and deeply.
And to my shock and horror she rushed into the kitchen and pulled a knife!
â GET OUT!!!â she screamed, shakily point the blade at me.
She was breaking my heart. And I think she knew it too. But all she had said to me was this:
â Gather up your tears, keep 'em in your pocket, save them for a time when you're really gonna need them.â
I didn't even realize I had beencrying until she said so.
A girl had never made me cry before...and I knew it would never happen again.

I gazed at her one last- one very short- time and started for the door.
â Bye, Arabelle.â I said sorrowfully.
And I left... closing the door behind me.

I hadn't seen her in four days.
And I didn't have a care.
She hurt me deeply- more hurt than I could spare.
What made her think she had to make that say?
Would she have really killed me?
Stabbed my aching heart
In fear of what I might be?
And so pushing us apart.
I live for nothing of the sort.
I had been sitting outside on my steps thinking of her. She was in my mind all the time.
I was so deep in thought that I barely heard the little footsteps I knew so well.
â Hey, you!â she said playfully.
Yes it was her, all happy and giddy. And so very annoying at the moment.
â Where have you been? You haven't called in awhile.â
Did she not remember threatening to stab me the other day?
â What the hell is wrong with you?â I hissed at her.
She looked shocked and hurt at my response.
â What are you talking about?â she said in a small voice.
â You threatened to kill me with a fucking knife, Arabelle!â I barked at her.
I saw her jump at my outburst and I saw the tears welling in her eyes. Her lips were trembling, her whole body shaking...and not from the cry that was about to come.
â I never did that, Dante.â She whimpered. She looked so tired and frail now that I looked at her. As if she hadn't slept in days.
But one thing I was starting to see was this: She really did not remember what she did.
I looked at her; her body seemed so small, like she munched herself up as if she were tense. She wouldn't look at me but I didn't blame her.
I just accused her of trying to kill me and she didn't even know she did.
I stood up and pulled her up with me, carrying her inside my house, and closing the door behind me.

I took me half the day to explain my outburst to her, and my absents. She was shocked at first at what she'd done but soon understood what happened.
She told me why she did it and- though there was no excuse- she couldn't help it. And she really didn't remember.
I pulled her close to chest and held her there as we sat on the couch.
My mother was home but she didn't much disapprove of my having females in the house, or in my bedroom.
Though I never took advantage of that last bit.
It was quiet in the house so I assumed my mother was asleep.
Arabelle had been very quiet as well most of the time, and I saw a tear drop from her cheek occasionally.
I finally decided to break the silence.
â Belle, you're gonna have to tell me what's going on with you.â I told her. â I can't keep forgiving you every time you threaten to kill me.â
She chuckled a little and looked up at me. Her nose was red and as well as her eyes, and I felt a pang of guilt for hurting her so badly.
â I didn't mean too... I don't know where I was that day, honestly I don't.â she said sincerely.
I stroked her cheek and kissed her forehead. And we lay there together until early dawn.

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The end
Another three months later

â Babe, I want you to promise me something.â She said.
â Anything...â I said. Pulling her closer as we lie in a field of tall grass.
â If I die young, bury me in satin,
Lay me down in a bed of roses,
Sink me in the river at dawn,
And send me away with the words of a love song.â
The ending she said with a smile.
â Why do you want me to promise that?â I said warily.
She had told me of her illness, and that it's killing her and destroying her brain...and her sense. She knew how bad it was and she told me one day something might happen to her...something tragic that she wouldn't be able to stop.
She was talking about suicide.
â You're not doing that!â I told her firmly as I held her tighter.
â I'm not!â she said with a laugh as she jumping up and started to dance.
Her illness obviously hadn't caught her spirit.
As I watched her body move rigidly but beautifully to her own silent melody, her hair swinging in the air without care, here legs as shaky as they'll ever be moved along to a toneless song. I watched her with what I'm sure was passion in my gaze, I suddenly found myself saying...
â I love you, Arabelle.â
She stopped dancing and looked at me, frozen in her plain stance, her face just the same.
â What did you say?â she said her shakes visible with her general stillness.
â I. Love. You.â I said slowly getting to my feet, and entering her bubble.
â Dante...I'm not the best person to fall in love with-â
â I don't care,â I said, holding her face in my hands, â I already have.â
And kissed her full soft lips.
I breathed her in and pulled her closer, not caring who saw us in such a display of affection.
I pulled her down to the grass with me and we lay there, lips together, bodies close. The heat had made us both sweat little beads of salty liquid, but we didn't care. We only wanted to be closer.
I lifted her soft blue dress just a little so I could touch her skin, run my hand up her leg, feel her stomach rise and fall rapidly, holding on to her waist- never wanting to let go.
I pulled my face away from her, and looked into her eyes, asking a question I never thought I would ask.
â Yes.â was her breathless answer. And she pressed her lips to mine once again.
If I hadn't know better and wasn't so drunk with summer heat I would have kept going and given her what she wanted. But my mind soon-and reluctantly so- processed why she had wanted me to do it.
And I couldn't do it anymore.
â What's wrong?â
â I'm not doing this for that, Belle.â I said, pulling away from her love hold.
â For what!?â she said with a squeak and a whine.
â You know what...â
â No! I- Dante...Dante? Dante!â she called after me as I began to walk away. â You said you loved me!â
â That doesn't mean I'll take your virginity because your dying!â I snapped.
â Dante! Stop! Dante, Please!â she begged, but I kept walking, leaving her in the field.
â OK! You're right!â she shrieked, making me stop and turn to her.
â No, I'm not right. I know you don't want to go without experiencing as much as you can. But how can you ask me to do that to you, and not expect me to hurt more when you're gone?â
â I wasn't-â
â I know you weren't.â I cut in. slowly walking back to her. â I love you too much to do that to you,

Belle. And I'll love you forever.â
â How can you love me so much, and not want to show me?â she said , confusion plastered all over her sweet face.
I have to admit she had a point, at that time it was more for me than for her that we stay apart. I didn't want to be hurt by her more than I already would be when she's gone.
A very selfish thing I know now.
And I regret it just as much as I regret refusing her.

We had gone our separate ways some time after our deluge. I had decided to stay out and walk a little while, enjoy the twilight sky and the stars. The wind kissing my hair and face, smelling of sweet honeysuckle grace.
I wished this walk would last forever, with Belle by my side.
I had just made it home when my mother rushes me, phone in hand.
â It's Arabelle.â she said. A rather large grin spreading on her face.
â ...Thanks, mom.â I said slowly, taking the phone out of her hand. â Hello?â
â Come over, baby, I have a surprise for you.â she said sensually. â Just come right in, the door is unlocked.â
She Hung up as soon as she was finished.
â I'll be right back, mom.â I said, giving the phone back to her.
â Alright, don't stay out too late.â she warned jokingly.
I smiled and gave her a hug the left.

When I got to her house the windows were dark, except for one on the upper left floor. Warm light spilled from that window, letting any untrustworthy person know that there was,indeed,someone home.
I opened the door and stepped inside. It was very dark and eery, and very cold for a house that is sitting in summer weather.
I assumed she wanted me to find her room, which wouldn't be too hard seeing as her room was the only one with the lights on.
I walked up the creaky stairs and down the short hall to Belle's bedroom.
When I opened the door I expected her to pounce on me, but she did nothing of the sort.
Instead I see her lying on the floor in a large crimson puddle.
She was dead.
Lying in a pool of her own blood, a very large knife lying next to her. And a long gash down the front of her body, as if she stabbed her heart then yanked the knife down.
â Belle?â I dumbly said to her dead corps.
I got down on my knees, kneeling in her blood, and held her bloody cold hand.
She had done it.
The very thing I was afraid she would do, even though I knew she would do it.
But not this soon!
And I wondered, if I had loved her like she wanted me to, would she still be here?
Tears welled in my eyes and I sobbed over her beautiful bloody body.
Wanting so much to take back what I had not done. I wanted to give her whatever she wanted, whenever she wanted, as long as it kept her alive.
But I was too late.
â Gather up your tears, keep 'em in your pocket, save them for a time when you're really gonna need them.â
She had said to me, after she threatened to kill me. I felt as if now was the time.
I knew I needed them now.
I saw a note on her bed folded perfectly in half, I got to my feet and picked up the note, reading it in silence and disbelief.
'Don't forget what I asked of you.
You shall make my dreams come true,

Give me the burial you promised to me,
Show me the love you refused me
In the simple task I ask:
Bury me in satin,
Lay me down in a bed of roses,
Sink me in the river at dawn,
And send me away with the words of a love song.
Do not do me wrong,
This is only a simple request...-'
I heard a car pull into the driveway, but I didn't care, I read and reread her note again. And again.
â Arabelle?â called who I assumed to be her mother. I heard her coming up stairs, down the hall and finally screaming in the doorway as she gazed down upon her daughters body.
â What have you done!?!â she screamed at me.
I swear it was Daja Vu all over again.
I quietly gave her the note, and stared down at Arabelle's bloody form:
Around her lovely neck she wore her pearls.
Her dress a soft sheer white-now bloodied- and so thin it was see-through,
and I could see her still chest and the rest of her naked skin, such beautiful skin now consumed with cold
She had been perfect. So alive and free- so knowing and loving.
My gift from the heavens.*
And my true love.
I looked down at the gash along her front, and the last lines in her note came to mind.
'I wasn't meant to live a long life,
The sharp knife of a short lived life,
Well, I've had just enough time
To live the life I had been given to live.'

*The name Arabelle is Italian for 'Blessing from the heavens' or ' answered prayer'

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