

Chapter One

A STRUGGLING FAMILY

A LONG TIME AGO, in a far-off land, lived an impoverished couple. They lived a simple life, but often, they were left wanting for more. Food was scarce in their neck of the woods; somehow, they always made it work, until now. They stared across the clearing at an old witch's cottage. Across the way was a bountiful garden on her land with fruit trees, vegetables, grains, and the works.

"She wouldn't notice if we only took a few things, would she," he whispered to his wife.

"She's a witch; do you *really* want to risk it," she cautioned him.

"For you, I would do anything," he embraced her, kissing her head.

"I am famished," his wife admitted.

They had not eaten in three days. The couple was struggling to make ends meet. They always wanted a child to call their own, but they could not fathom bringing a child onto this earth in their current situation.

Neither of them had the strength to make it into Sapphire City, just a few miles away. They had been sick for some time, although their throaty coughs seemed to be finally clearing up.

“Adam, those peaches do look divine,” Eve said, ogling at the fruit trees.

“That’s it; I can’t take it anymore,” Adam sighed.

Eve watched as he walked out the door into the warm spring sun. The way the light illuminated his skin always took her breath away. She remembered when they were married, looking him in the eyes as the sun’s rays touched them. The way he looked at her still hangs in her mind. He looks at her that way every day, but her wedding day was the most memorable.

He promised to always take care of her, no matter what. This is what he was trying to do. She watched Adam creep across the pasture toward the witch’s cottage. Stopping only to cough in his sleeve.

Adam climbed the fence into the witch’s lavish garden. Soon, he disappeared into the greenery and the lines of fruit trees. Eve was nervous that something might happen to him, and she watched in anticipation. She hoped he would make it back un-hexed.

Just when she began to lose hope, she watched her husband emerge from the garden holding armfuls of fruit and a few vegetables. He even grabbed wheat to mill into flour. Adam always loved his wife’s homemade bread.

Adam jogged for the house, waving for his wife to meet him at the door. His wife swung the door open so he could step into the safety of their home. Eve grabbed as many fruits as she could, helping her husband to avoid bruising the fruit by dropping it on the ground.

She placed them into an old fruit bowl she had received from her grandmother for a wedding gift. Nostalgia tugged at her heartstrings as she remembered Sundays with her grandmother. She would sit in her lap for story

time, always listening close to the fairytales her grandmother spun for her. They would then nap together on the floor in the living room.

This was Eve's favorite day of the week.

Oh, how she missed her grandmother now.

"Eve," Adam called, snapping her out of her reverie. "What do you want me to make for dinner tonight?"

"I always did love your green bean medley," she swooned.

"For you, my love, I would set fire to the world," he whisked away, singing.

Adam went straight to work chopping vegetables and throwing them into a pan. Eve could smell the herbs and spices filling the air of their home. The smell had both of their mouths watering and their stomachs growling.

Eve went to work, preparing and milling the wheat. It took her some time to grind it down into the fine powder for bread. It always amazed her what her hands could do with wheat and other grains. By the time she was finished pouring the flour into its container, her husband was setting food on the table. "Eve," he sang to her. "Tonight, we dine like royalty."

"I love the sound of that," Eve stood up, headed for the table.

Eve always loved when her husband was happy. His smile took every worry from her mind and filled her heart with unconditional love. The married couple sat and supped together, enjoying the flavor of the food and the warmth of each other's company. Eve grabbed the dishes and silverware as they finished eating and

headed to the sink. She washed the plates, Adam dried them, and they put them away together.

When Eve stepped into the living room, Adam hugged her from behind, his erection pressing into her backside. The happiness he felt from being able to feed his small family was evident.

"I want all of you tonight," he whispered to her.

Eve felt a shiver run up her spine as he said this. Tingles were starting to take over her bits. She found it unfair how he could make her melt with a few short words. She was trapped under his spell, and nothing made her happier.

She pushed herself back into him, enjoying the sensation of his erection against her backside.

"Mmm," she said. "I love the hold you have on me."

Adam spun his beautiful red-haired wife around and kissed her deeply. His hands gravitated toward her breasts to find her nipples fully erect. He loved the delicious feeling of her body responding to his touch.

Adam took his wife's hand and led her to the bedroom. Once there, he tugged his shirt over his head and removed hers. The lustful look in her eyes made his dick throb even more. The two quickly undressed and lay in the bed.

Adam held her in his arms for a few minutes before he turned her face with his hand.

"Kiss me," he said to her.

Eve pressed her lips into his, forcing his mouth open with her dainty tongue. Adam returned the kiss, groaning into her mouth. Adam sat up on the bed as Eve

climbed on top of him. She pushed her bits onto his throbbing erection. She grabbed his hair and tugged at it as he thrust deeper into her.

When she threw her head back in pleasure, he sucked on her nipples. He reached down and used his thumb to gently circle her clit. After an hour of moans and screams, the two of them climaxed in unison. Eve's juices poured down her thighs and all over her husband.

"You are the most beautiful woman I know," Adam told her as he kissed her gently.

Eve climbed off her husband and headed for the shower, where Adam joined her. He turned her back toward the water and tilted her head back as he washed her hair. He continued washing her body, ensuring she was clean before he cleaned himself. Once they were both clean, he grabbed a towel, dried his wife off, then dried himself.

They climbed into bed with full stomachs and clean bodies and drifted off to sleep. Adam tossed and turned that night; he dreamt of going hungry and being unable to care for his wife.

He woke up a few times to watch her sleep.

Eve awoke first the following day. She headed to the kitchen to prepare breakfast. Adam had even found eggs in the coop near the witch's garden. Eve began cooking eggs and cutting up fruit for breakfast. Adam woke up to the smell of breakfast and left the bedroom to sit at the table.

"Good morning, my love," he told Eve.

"Hello, babe," she replied.

She served her husband with a plate of eggs and fruit. When done, she hiked back to the kitchen and made her plate. All Eve wanted was fruit. She grabbed peaches, oranges, and apples from the bowl of fruit she had sliced. She continued to make herself a fruit salad to eat for breakfast. They ate breakfast together in peace.

"I have to go out and find work today," Adam mentioned.

"I wish we never had to work," Eve said hopefully.

"Wouldn't that be a dream," Adam chuckled.

Adam rose from the table and kissed his wife goodbye. On his way out of the house, he placed his dish and utensils in the sink. Once the door shut, he walked down a path to Sapphire City. He had not been to town in weeks due to being sick for so long.

Winter had snuck up on him, and the cold winter air took his breath away. He looked at the lines of tall buildings, wondering which he should start his job search. He saw a woman with raven-black hair and rosy cheeks as he wandered. She was with a little man, and they were headed into a pub.

He continued past the pub and walked into a department store. The store was decorated with garland and lights to bring the holiday cheer. Adam approached the counter.

"I'd like to apply for a job, please," he said to the blonde behind the counter.

The girl took one look at his disheveled appearance and rolled her eyes. Adam was confused by her lack of compassion.

"We aren't hiring," she told him with an attitude.

"Thank you, anyway," Adam tipped his hat to her and walked away.

He knew a job would not be easy to find, but he was still disappointed she would not let him apply. He opened the large glass doors to the department store, wondering where to try next.

His mind wandered back to the woman and the small man he saw. Next, he thought to gain employment at the pub across town. He walked a few blocks in the other direction and peeked into the pub window. When he stepped from the window, the wind blew his hat away before he could catch it. He chased after it but had no luck in getting it back. When he returned to the pub, he pushed the oak door open and was assaulted with the smell of greasy food. His stomach growled in response.

Adam walked up to the bar and flagged down the bartender.

He found himself nervous as he did so.

"How can I help you," the bartender asked as he looked him up and down.

Adam's disheveled appearance took the man behind the counter by surprise. He knew instantly that his life was difficult.

"I'd like to apply for a job, please," Adam replied.

The bartender looked at the other end of the room. He did not want to disappoint Adam but could tell he was not fit to work in a pub.

"The owner isn't here today," he lied. "You can try back next week when he returns from vacation." "Thank you," Adam responded.

Adam left the pub disgruntled. He could not care for his wife if he could not find a job. This left him with feelings of incompetence.



Three Months Later

Despite not finding a job, Adam's time with his wife had been beautiful. Spring was approaching, and the weather was warming up. The first of the flowers had started to sprout from the ground. The two were struggling to keep afloat. Both were thankful that they owned the cottage outright.

"Should I sneak back into the witch's garden," he asked his wife.

"I have been extra hungry lately," Eve admitted. "I am late." "You're what," Adam asked, unsure whether to smile or cry.

"Haven't you noticed," she asked, rubbing her stomach.

Adam hadn't noticed that her stomach had grown; he had always been focused on her beauty. He felt a sense of pride finding out that his wife was pregnant, but they were already stealing food as it was. Adam sighed.

"I'm headed to the garden. Wish me luck," he forced a laugh.

"Be careful, please," Eve cautioned him.

Eve waited in quiet anticipation as Adam went to the witch's garden. She hoped he would find more eggs this time, they had been her biggest craving over the past few months. Her mouth was watering, thinking of the delicious peaches on the trees on the witch's land.

After what seemed like hours, Adam emerged from the garden with a large basket full of food. He was wise enough to bring a basket to carry everything. He knew they would need plenty if it would last through the week.

"I felt like you needed a good source of protein to support our growing child," Adam smiled warmly at his wife.

"It's like you read my mind; I have been craving eggs every day for the past few months," Eve said gratefully.

Adam reached his arms out for Eve and pulled her into him. He kissed her on the forehead and looked into her bright green eyes. The sparkle in them never faded, even though they were struggling.

"I love you, Eve," he whispered to her.

"I love you, too, Adam," she gently kissed his lips as she said this.

The couple continued unpacking the basket of food Adam had foraged from the witch's garden. Adam placed the eggs in a bowl on the counter while Eve put the fruit away. She sauntered over to the bowl of eggs and picked up the bowl, smiling.

"Would you like some eggs," she asked her husband.

"I would love nothing more," he replied.

Eve cooked an omelet with vegetables and cut up some fruit for each of them. Adam and Eve enjoyed each other's company as they ate their breakfast. When Adam finished his omelet and fruit, he kissed his wife and donned his coat and gloves.

"Where are you going," Eve asked concernedly.

"I had no luck on the job front the other day, and I MUST find something if we are going to survive," he said. "The witch will start noticing that her food is missing from her garden, and who knows what she will do when she figures it out."

"You are right, Adam. Please be careful in town," she embraced her husband before he left.

Adam opened the door and slid outside. The fresh spring air gave him the confidence he needed to search for a source of income in town.