

Mama Bird

By Olivia Ikenberry – Silver Spring, Maryland

The plan was simple. Galvine's unearthly beauty, part of the curse, made this seemingly easy to execute. It proved more difficult. Though her curse had an enchantment element, her hostile and often violent behavior overshadowed any sorcery. She often enraged or insulted potential suitors. Occasionally, they would flee for personal safety. One such young man lost two fingers when she "flirtatiously" bit them off. Exasperated with his daughter, he took her to the forest for a walk. He told her the truth about his family and her curse. She realized she would never be free of her wickedness and flew into a rage, lunging at her father. He bashed her head with a large rock, rendering her unconscious. When she awoke, she found herself at the bottom of a well. Her head was ringing and spinning. She could feel the crusted, dry blood of the wound on the side of her head. She struggled to get her bearing when she heard a shout from above.

"Hello, below!!" the voice of a young man rang with enthusiasm. The sun was too bright for her to get a good look. Frankly, she didn't care to. His voice hurt her head. She was content with this well as her tomb. She said softly, "Please go away, Sir. Your assistance is not needed nor is it wanted here.", hoping to deter further interest in her plight. "Your father sent me here to fetch you and paid me handsomely to do so. I am an honest man of my word. Having promised your father that I would fetch you and you will be indeed be fetched. I have fallen into this very same well several times. Thrice as a child and once this past spring. I am more than capable of fetching you." Galvine, in a last effort, pleaded, "I am not fit for society. I beg you to leave and don't look back. I am not what you suppose I am. Leave me in peace." He did not. He jumped into the well, tied her to his back, and scaled the wall brick by brick with no hesitation. On land, he untied her from himself. He looked at her and was instantly enchanted.

Funny enough, Galvine felt a hint of enchantment too. How could someone be such a fool, she wondered. She wanted to follow him and see his world. Her curiosity about this man almost took the stinging throb out of her head wound. “ You surely are the most beautiful and rare woman in all the world, as your father promised. He also promised your hand in marriage. You are too special to take...” He stood up to walk away. “Sir, you do not take. I give.” she surprised herself with these words. “I cannot. I am not worthy.” “You can, and you will.” she grasped his hand. With his hand holding her hand, there was a stillness in her, at least for the moment. They were married at dawn the next day.