

Moonlight and Shadow.

Through the moonlight shadows of ancient trees, the prince and the girl frolicked. Palace celebrations faded off behind them to a dull rumble.

“Won’t they miss you?” she asked, eyes rolling through several glasses of wine.

“They are here for my brother. I’m just the spare. I’m practically a phantom when he’s around.” He whirled her around by both hands, “I wouldn’t have it any other way.” She squealed, her feet lifting from the grass. One shoe flew off, tumbling into the fallen leaves.

“Oh! I’ll fetch it for you.”

“Just leave it behind.” She hopped and slipped off the other. “Leave all this pomp and pageantry behind.” She heaved the slipper deeper into the forest with a grunt of effort. It struck the trunk of an ancient oak and rolled between its thick roots.

Upon a branch, cloaked in black, crouched and patient, a figure gripped a coil of rope.

“Shed this skin they force upon you.” She stepped away a few places and lifted the hem of her dress. In a single ripple of silk, it flowed up over her head. With magician’s quickness, she undid her silver hair clasp, letting her black locks curl wild about her shoulders. She cast a beguiling look at the young prince over one shoulder, and stepped away on pointed toes. One step, two steps, until moonlight kissed every inch of her. The prince longed to do the same. “Come dance with me. Dance under the moon who shines for lovers.” Her eyes now keen and hungry.

He kicked off his boots and tore away his shirt. With a stumble, his trousers were pulled away and tossed between the roots of the ancient oak.

Above them a cowl fluttered with silent excited exhalations. A black wraith, amongst dark leaves, holding a noose of inky rope. It watched the naked prince twirl her out to the end of his arm. Black fingernails slowly drew hot red scores down his forearm. Her hair spun out in a hypnotising streak of shimmering midnight. She paused at the end of the spin, her grip tight and her breasts heaving. A surprised chirp escaped her lips as he reeled her in. She spun past him to find the bark with her fingertips. He followed without missing a beat. A sigh of satisfaction drifted through the leaves as he ravished up her neck. She bit her lip, then his.

A loop of shadow crept down the besotted prince’s hair. It caught the moon, full and watching, in a black frame.

All four smiled.

Her fingers clawed over his chest then drew nails up his back. She looped her wrists through the noose and pushed her fingers through his hair. He let his head fall back in ecstasy as teeth grazed his throat.

She yanked his hair through the rope.

A shade of robes fluttered from the branches.

His eyes flashed open, as the coarse bite gripped about this throat. Bare feet flailed, finding only moonlight and shadow.