

Belle gazed down at the spot on the stone floor, the tiny shards of broken glass shimmering up at her from where the vial jar had fallen. A minor hazard while dusting that morning, but she knew he'd notice it instantly before she could go get a broom. And knowing Rumpelstiltskin, he might've known already even if he wasn't there.

Belle could hear the shuffling of his cane and the noise of his boot coming closer with each second as she tended to the mess. Her eyes blinking, suddenly growing heavy.

"How was Corona?" Belle asked, eyes still focused on the floor.

" Depends on who you ask, dearie" Rumple replied, his voice never losing its signature lilt. " For me, I'd say it went quite well. For them, well, I consider it a lesson." He paused, giving her a little half smile. " Am I to assume nothing happened while I was away? Not snoozing through my things again, are we?" He tutted.

Belle felt a sudden cloud of exhaustion begin to wash over her. "Sorry." She blinked. " I just- I don't feel well all of a sudden."

Rumple frowned. " Perhaps, if you spent less time with your nose in those books and more time on your work, you'd feel better." He giggled.

"No it isn't that at all" Belle tried to explain, before letting out a series of coughs and nearly collapsing to the floor. "It feels like I'm..." This time, she didn't catch herself.

Before her eyes closed, the last thing the little maid heard was a cry of " Belle!" as everything went dark.

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Belle could feel something soft and warm wrapped around her. Stirring ever so slightly, she could see sunlight streaming in out of the corner of her eye.

Turning her head slightly to the the right, she noticed on the table a small cup of water and her book from last night. And something else. She could smell it in the air... tea?

"How?" she asked, her voice almost coming out like a croak as her mind was still swimming.