**SAMPLE OF SCENES FROM THE COLLECTOR**

*Rowan walks on and sits down. Naria sneaks on and watches him. He sighs and stretches out and stares at the sky.*

Rowan There you are.

*Naria jumps thinking he’s talking to her, but he’s really talking to the stars.*

Rowan I’ve not seen your bright lights in weeks. I don’t suppose stars can miss people, but I’ve missed you.

*Naria listens, gradually getting curious and moving closer to Rowan.*

Rowan My life is so different now. I never thought I’d miss home, but I do. Hayden’s changed so much too, believing so much what the hunters believe, but I still wonder something. I saw the dragon with my own eyes, I’ve heard the stories about what they can do and I know we have to find it, but I’ve never heard of the creature we caught today and to me it just looked like a frightened child. Maybe I’m too soft or Hayden’s right, I’m just too trusting.

*Rowan senses something is behind him. Naria is now very close.*

Rowan Or maybe I’m more like them than I think.

*Rowan turns and catches Naria by the arm. Instead of running she fights back. There is a struggle but Rowan wins in the end and he takes her prisoner.*

Rowan Looks like my hunting senses are improving after all. I don’t know what you are, but Ravenel will.

Naria I am not afraid of you or your Ravenel.

Rowan You should be. I’m surprised you dared to come so close to the ship. You must have known we were here and what we were doing. Unless, that’s why you came? You’re spying on us, aren’t you? Well, it’s a good thing you won’t be taking back your information to whoever else you’re with.

Naria You might as well kill me now or I swear one day I will kill you for what you have done.

Rowan Until that day you belong to Ravenel and you’ll always remember that I caught you. Time to turn in my prize.

*Naria holds her head high stubbornly as Rowan leads her off. Scene changes to Ravenel’s room. Vaughn enters. He looks around, then his eyes settle on the desk. He picks up the diary and begins to read it.*

Vaughn ‘The twenty fifth day of the rain season. For three seasons we have been chasing the dragon, but still it eludes me!’... A dragon. Could it be possible…. ‘We were so close the day I took on Rowan and Hayden. They lead me right to it, but it managed to escape from our trap and now it taunts me ever more. We have crossed the mountains and the jewelled sea and are now flying over the Emerald Forest….

*Vaughn hears someone coming. He throws the cloak back over his head and puts the diary back. Ravenel enters with Garin.*

Garin ….then we could go through the mountain pass and back to the city.

Ravenel And give up on our search?

Garin I didn’t mean give up, master. I just thought that if we rested in a city for a season or two we could do all the repairs we need to do to the ship and stock up on good supplies.

Ravenel And in that time the dragon could have travelled to the other side of the world. No, Garin. I will have that dragon and until I do I will never rest.

Garin But master…

Ravenel That dragon is everything. If it gets away we might never find it again.

Garin But I thought you said the Korrigan fairy would be able to lead you to other magical monsters as she gets more powerful.

Ravenel Yes, but she would also become extremely dangerous. DO you know how difficult it would be to keep her prisoner. A creature that can foresee your every move. No. I need to find the dragon and any of the remaining creatures before she has complete control of her powers. She will still be able to help me hunt them.

Garin And if she won’t?

Ravenel Don’t worry. I have plans. Now, she may be young, but she could still be a danger so I want you to place the collection under guard at all times. A hunter by the door and set the traps. If anything tries to get in to her I want to make sure it doesn’t get back out again.

Garin Understood.

*Ravenel suddenly turns and looks at Vaughn who has been creeping towards the door during the dialogue.*

Garin Master?

Ravenel I thought… I had a feeling we were being watched.

Garin Not you too. Rowan was jumpy out on deck tonight. I think it must be this forest. It’s making people edgy.

Ravenel Perhaps.

*Vaughn exits.*

Garin I’ll go and get those traps set and I’ll get Marik to watch the collection.

Ravenel No. Get one of our new recruits to watch it. I think it’s time they got to see what I have down there. I might even give them a tour myself.

Garin As you wish.

*Jensen enters.*

Jensen You won’t believe it! Rowan caught something.

Ravenel Where is it?

Jensen Up on deck.

Ravenel Have him bring it straight to the collection room.

Jensen Yes sir.

*Jensen exits.*

Ravenel It seems our new recruits are going to be a very welcome addition to the crew and an asset after all.

*Ravenel and Garin exit. Scene changes to the Collection room. Rowan stands with Naria. Hayden stands next to him proudly. Ravenel enters.*

Ravenel Well, Rowan. I heard you caught something for me.

Rowan It was near the ship. I think she was spying on us.

Ravenel Really? That was a very brave or maybe stupid thing to do.

Rowan What is she?

Ravenel A woodland nymph by the looks of things.

Hayden Is she dangerous?

Ravenel Her magic is connected to the woodlands. As long as she is aboard the ship she can’t do anything to hurt us.

Naria You speak about me as if I wasn’t standing here.

Ravenel Of course I know you’re here. You’re about to become part of my collection. I think Hayden and Rowan, you might like to see this too. On this deck, I keep all of the creatures that I have collected. Come, let me show you.

*The lights change and a group of magical creatures can now be seen. They are a pathetic looking group. Chained and sad. Naria looks on horrified. Hayden is impressed and amazed. Rowan isn’t sure what to make of it. Ravenel moves from creature to creature.*

Hayden Incredible.

Ravenel It is, isn’t it. I can tell you exactly where I acquired each one of these monsters. The first one was the troll. It was stealing food from farms on the Golden plains. Next was the leprechaun. Of course back then I travelled by wagons until the day I heard about this.

Ravenel points to a very tired looking creature.

Rowan What is it?

Ravenel A windcharmer. An air sprite. It can control the breezes and that has proved to be very useful to be. Windcharmers have a weakness for anything sweet. I discovered that I could train it to fly a ship in exchange for sweet food as a reward.

Naria And I suppose you starved her first.

Ravenel Of course. How else could I ensure that she would do as I wished. Now, she is so much under my control I can get her to do anything I want and fly us anywhere we need to go. Then, once we had the ship I could catch even more. That was when I found this. The phoenix. Beautiful, isn’t it. It is one of the most impressive creatures I own.

Hayden Are they dangerous?

Ravenel Could be, but as long as I keep it cold and damp it’s feathers never manage to flame strongly enough to do any real damage. No. There is only one creature that is really dangerous and I keep it locked behind bars.

*Hayden looks at the bars and creeps closer.*

Hayden What’s in there?

*Suddenly the Manticore rushes to the front of the bars roaring. Hayden leaps back. Naria tries to run, Rowan stops her and looks on horrified.*

Ravenel Behold, the great Manticore. The last of its kind.

Naria You’re crazy. You have no idea how dangerous a Manticore can be.

Ravenel On the contrary I lost four hunters catching that monster.

Naria You should let it go.

Ravenel Never. I am its master and it obeys me.

Naria No. The Manticore obeys no one. It will kill you one day.

Ravenel Do you possess the ability to see in to the future?

Naria No, but I don’t need to. It is a dangerous creature and it will destroy you.

Ravenel I assure you it is perfectly well contained and I hold the only key. That creature will spend eternity locked in that cage. Now, I have one more creature to show you.

*They move away, but Rowan notices Naria is frightened of the Manticore and watching it as they go.*

Ravenel This is Celeste.

Hayden A mermaid? I’ve heard stories about them.

Ravenel Yes. Beautiful singing voices that can lure a man to his death in the sea. I often have her sing for me. Perhaps one night you would like to hear it. As there is no water here we are perfectly safe from her evil magic.

*Seren has been asleep in the corner. She wakes up and sees Naria.*

Seren Naria!

Naria Seren.

*Seren runs over to Naria who hugs her. Seren is almost crying.*

Naria It’s alright. I’m here now. It’s going to be ok.

Seren I knew you’d come for me.

Ravenel Well, well, well. It seems you were right Rowan. She was spying on us and now we know why.

Naria Let her go. She’s no use to you. She’s only a child.

Ravenel Wrong. She is a magical monster just like the rest of you and far too valuable and potentially dangerous to let wander around out there.

Naria She isn’t old enough to hurt anyone.

Ravenel I disagree, little nymph, but now I know how to make her do as she’s told. Seren, wasn’t it? This is how it is going to work. Naria here is going to become my personal slave and she will do everything I say or else I might let the Manticore take a piece out of Seren. And Seren is going to tell me the answers to any questions I have or else Naria will be fed to the Manticore piece by piece. Do you understand me?

Seren Yes.

Ravenel Outside this room are traps that will only harm a creature with magic so no-one will be coming in or out unless I say so. Rowan will stand guard outside the door tonight and Naria, you will be chained and kept in my quarters where I know you cannot cause any trouble. Hayden, bring the woodland nymph. Rowan, stand guard, Hayden will take over from you in a few hours.

*Hayden grabs Naria. Seren and Naria try to stay together, but Ravenel pulls Seren back. Hayden and Naria exit. Ravenel follows them off and Rowan exits to stand guard. Seren sits in the middle of the floor crying.*

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*Scene changes to the deck of the ship. Celeste is on deck. The hunters, including Hayden are tormenting her by throwing the shell between them while she struggles to try to catch it. They laugh as she pleads with them.*

Celeste Please. Give it back.

Zakir What’s the matter. Can’t you run for it?

Jensen She can’t even flop for it.

Garin Reach little mermaid. Reach higher!

Celeste Please.

Marik (*mimicking her cruelly*) Please… please… I need to hear the sea…

Celeste Give it back.

Hayden No.

Zakir Maybe you should think twice before you try to drown someone again in your precious sea.

Celeste I never drowned anyone.

Garin Stop lying. We know what mermaids did and we know that all magical creatures lie.

Marik This one lies so much she’s lying down!

*They all laugh at the bad joke. Rowan enters and watches them horrified. He joins the circle and Hayden throws the shell to him. He drops it in Celeste’s hands.*

Jensen Rowan.

Rowan Sorry. It slipped. I’ve never been very good at catching.

Garin You’d better work on that. Right. Come on. Let’s get back to work. I think we took a long enough break and there are more creatures out there still to find. I can feel it in my bones. Get geared up and we’ll meet in five minutes at the base of the ladder, apart from you, Marik. You’re on guard duty.

Marik Oh. Come on. I did a turn last night. I wanted to go hunting.

Rowan I’ll stay. I don’t mind.

Jensen I thought you’d want to be back out there again after the creature you managed to catch last night.

Rowan It seems only fair I give the rest of you a chance.

Marik If it means I get to go, I’m not complaining.

Garin Alright, Rowan, you stay on guard duty. The rest of you get sorted.

Zakir Whatever you say boss!

*The hunters exit apart from Hayden. Rowan crouches down next to Celeste.*

Rowan Are you hurt?

Celeste No. Thank you.

Rowan You’re welcome.

*Hayden pulls Rowan aside.*

Hayden Rowan. What are you doing?

Rowan The right thing. They were torturing her. It’s not right Hayden.

Hayden She’s a monster, Rowan.

Rowan From where I stood the only monsters I saw were them and you. I can’t believe you joined in with that. What’s happening to you?

Hayden Me? I’m not the one who’s acting strangely. What’s going through your head Rowan? They’re dangerous. We know the stories. We know what they can do.

Rowan We know stories, Hayden. What if they were wrong?

Hayden You’ve seen that Manticore and the dragon. Do you really think the stories aren’t right?

Rowan Maybe they were about them, but maybe they weren’t about everything.

Hayden You’ve let them charm you, Rowan. Wake up.

Rowan Just listen to me for a minute, Hayden.

Hayden No. You listen to me. They’re bad news, Rowan. You said it back at the village. We have to stop them to protect people like Maggie and all the others back home. You need to remember why we’re here and what has to be done.

Rowan And if what has to be done isn’t what we’ve been told?

Hayden But it is what we’ve been told. You can’t trust them. You can trust your friends. That’s what I thought we were.

Rowan We are.

Hayden Good. Maybe I should stay here with you and help you guard them.

Rowan No. It’s alright. I was just being silly. You’re right.

Hayden Good. I’ll see you tonight then.

Rowan Tonight.

*Hayden exits. Rowan looks at Celeste.*

Rowan Can woodland nymphs cast spells on people?

Celeste Why?

Rowan It’s not written in the books, but I need to know.

Celeste No. They only have magic over the trees and plants.

Rowan Then why can’t I get her out of my head?

Celeste Because there are some powers greater than magic. They come from inside your heart.

Rowan We should get you back to the collection. I have a job to do.

*Rowan goes to start to take Celeste off. Lights fade out. Scene changes to the ship again. Naria is washing the floors. Rowan enters. He sees her and tries to walk away, but changes his mind.*

Rowan Naria.

Naria What do you want?

Rowan To say I’m sorry about what I said earlier and for bringing you here. You were right. I could change my own fate if I was brave enough to do it.

Naria Thank you, Rowan.

Rowan I’ve spent my whole life being told that magical monsters are dangerous…

Naria I wish you’d stop calling us monsters. We’re not all monsters.

Rowan You see. Something that I’ve been taught which isn’t right. I look at Seren and Celeste and I don’t see evil monsters. I see beautiful creatures that have been turned in to slaves and when I look at you I see all that and I feel the guilt from what I have done to you, but I also feel something so strong I don’t know what it is or how to control it.

Naria What does it feel like?

Rowan I don’t know how to describe it. It’s like the warmth of the sunrise. That first glow that promises so much. The morning glow. A feeling of joy and hope and… so many good things.

Naria You were watching the sun rise this morning.

Rowan Yes. I watch it every day that I can.

Naria So do I. And I know the glow that you’re talking about. I hope every day that the warmth and light that comes with it will make this world safe again for us, but it never does.

Rowan Are there many of you?

Naria Not enough. We do what we can together to survive. We each have skills we can use and as a team we have managed up until now.

Rowan And now there’s one less in that team because you’re a prisoner.

Naria Yes.

Rowan You said there were two sides to every story. How do think this began?

Naria Prince Caragone wanted more land and power. He attacked the dragon, trying to gain immortality from its blood and then started a war so that no-one could stop him. Some of the other immortals could, did, but by then it was too late.

*Rowan takes a key from his belt and undoes her chains.*

Naria What are you doing?

Rowan Setting you free. You can’t leave until it’s dark or they could catch you again, but this way you’ll be able to get away.

Naria Thank you.

*She hugs him and runs to exit. Then she stops.*

Naria Why?

Rowan Because I have to do the right thing.

Naria If they find out what you did, won’t you be in big trouble.

Rowan Probably.

Naria Seren is with Ravenel. I can’t get her out.

Rowan Seren won’t be hurt as long as she’s looking for the dragon.

Naria But you could be. Rowan. Come with me.

Rowan I don’t know if I can.

Naria I don’t want anything to happen to you. Please.

Rowan I could be spying for Ravenel. How do you know you can trust me?

Naria I just know.

Rowan Then I’ll try to meet you at the base of the ladder once it gets dark. If I don’t make it, then good luck Naria.