

From The Witch's Princess

by Don Zolidis

ALESSANDRA, a princess on a quest

GRENDEL'S MOTHER, the mother of a terrifying monster

The night before Alessandra prepares to attack the evil bog witch, she has a heart-to-heart with her friend.

Alessandra sits alone by the fire.

Grendel's Mother approaches.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

You should get some sleep. Always important to get a good night's rest.

ALESSANDRA

I can't sleep.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Big day tomorrow, huh?

ALESSANDRA

Yeah.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

It won't bring your mother back, you know. The cycle of violence. That's what you said to me when you met me.

ALESSANDRA

The Bog Witch has cursed the entire kingdom. She needs to die.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

What's the curse?

ALESSANDRA

Hm?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

You said the kingdom was cursed. What's the curse?

ALESSANDRA

People are unhappy. People get sick and die. The rich have all the money and the poor have nothing.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

The witch caused that?

ALESSANDRA

Yeah. And once she's dead we'll be free – things will go back to the way they were. With everyone happy and...

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Will you be happy?

ALESSANDRA

I'll be happy because I won't be married.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Why is that so terrible?

ALESSANDRA

Because love is a lie. The only person I can count on is myself.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Ah. Because you think you can't get hurt that way.

Alessandra doesn't say anything.

Right?

ALESSANDRA

I've been hurt plenty.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

And you don't want to get hurt again.

ALESSANDRA

After my mother died, it was like the world ended. I couldn't even breathe – everywhere I looked I could see her, and I could feel that she wasn't there. It was like being suffocated in a black fog that never lifted. Every night I had a nurse or handmaid or some other person try to comfort me, but all I wanted was my father. He never showed up. He didn't talk to me for a year. That's what happens when you love someone too much.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

My son was my whole life. My whole identity before I met you. And I used to think that if he died, I might as well die too. But being on this trip with you... I think it's important to keep living.

ALESSANDRA

Yeah.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

I think of it this way: Yes it's devastating to have someone you love die. But you feel the pain because you felt the love. You only get hurt if you're open to the world. The more open, the more hurt. But it's worth it.

ALESSANDRA

Is it?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Definitely.

ALESSANDRA

I don't know that I believe that.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Well – hopefully you will. All right sweetie I'm going to bed. Good night.

ALESSANDRA

Good night, Barb.

Grendel's Mother exits.

Alessandra sits for a minute.