

*Alvara and the Legend of
the Sword*

Emma's Books

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ISBN: 9789465314969

Imprint: Brave New Books

Emma's Books emmasbooks.be

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Alvara

Emma Van Damme

For those who love to curl up with a book, dance in
the rain and lose their minds in the stories...



WARKINLESS

ESMERAY

CASSEOPEA

OKEANOS

ALTHEA WOODS

STARWOODS

DRADEVOWES

CRESSIDIA SEA

JERO

Chapter I

An evening ball



The chilly wind blew through the trees and the fresh cut grass. Animals were looking for shelter to survive the cold, dark night which laid ahead. The sun was going down slowly behind the mountains, and I was in my bedroom, preparing for the evening ball.

This one was for my birthday. I was turning twenty one and would be ready to take over the throne to my father's kingdom! Not that I wanted to take over the entire land which belonged to him. I didn't see myself

ruling a whole kingdom, but even though I felt this way, I did not have a choice.

My father thought it was good to let our kingdom enjoy a ball, especially for an occasion such as my birthday. He loved balls and he decided it was good for the people! And for me. I highly disagreed. I didn't really care about the money it raised or the dancing or even the many gifts I would receive. My only true wish was to live outside these walls. To be free for just one moment.

Ever since my mother passed away, my father had been very protective of me. He didn't want to lose me to our still existing enemies. He already lost his wife, which is why he kept me locked up in our castle. As if I were some prisoner of higher class! I did understand why he was so protective, but I couldn't even go to the bathroom without guards on every corner. I hoped this would all be over soon. Father said he is thinking of a plan to rid the world of the one who stole our queen.

So, there I was, standing on a platform, dressed in the most beautiful ball gown I owned... well, one of the many! It was a soft milky white gown with a combination of ocean blue and golden details on the end, waist, and sleeves. I wore almost a thousand layers of fabric to make the dress look all princessy and puffy. My handmaiden, Aryan, was making sure the gown was fitting perfectly to my body. She tied the corset I wore so tightly I could barely breathe!

Even though I was used to wearing these kinds of dresses, I sometimes dreamt of wearing simple outfits... I couldn't even remember the last time I wore a simple pair of pants! I used to wear them on my horseback riding trips with my mother... Since she died, father had decided riding was too dangerous. So, he let one of his main guards, Joshua, ride Aimilios, my horse.

Anyway, I was almost ready. I only needed my very shiny tiara, which fitted perfectly on my head. My long brown hair fell as if it were silk, and the blue of my dress

matched my ocean blue eyes perfectly! Even though I didn't like it much, I did look good! Like the princess my father wanted me to be... Now I was ready! My dress was perfect, my heels were too high, and my tiara was as shiny as ever! Like always, I looked like the *perfect piece of art*.

My guards accompanied me to the closed doors which would lead to the ballroom. I walked past the portraits of all the members of the royal family who had ever reigned here. The last painting I saw was my mother's. By the sight of her strawberry lips and dark brown hair, I felt a sadness burn inside me.

I really wished she could've been here today.

I could hear a lot of people talking in the room behind the doors. Then suddenly there was only silence. It was almost time for me to enter.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to this ball in honor of my lovely daughter, who is turning twenty one," I heard my father say.

Then one of the guards started speaking: "May I present to you, daughter of King Erick and Queen Ava."

He stopped talking just for a moment so the people could say: "Queen Ava, may she rest in peace!" It was a sign of respect to the late queen. After the silence returned, the guard continued:

"I now present: her majesty, princess Alvara Achlys Selene Livana, the seventh of the kingdom Cassiopeia!"

The doors slid open, I took the deepest breath my tight corset would allow. I was standing above all these people, on a platform on top of the stairs. All the people stared at me, waiting for me to make my move.

"Remind me again why I need to do this every time again?" I whispered to one of the caterers, who handed me a crystal glass, with a golden touch of detail, full of champagne, served on a silver sterling platter.

I raised my glass high in the sky as I started my toast: "Thank you all indeed for coming to my twenty-first

birthday evening ball! I hope you are all having a wonderful time... and here's to me!"

"To the princess!" Everyone said simultaneously, raising their glasses high towards me. Just when I walked down the stairs in my beautiful gown, the music started playing again. People started dancing and I was searching my way into the crowd, looking for my father.

After a while, I finally found my lovely father. I saw him talking to one of the dukes. As always, he was dressed in one of his dark blue uniforms. His gray hair matched his shoes very well and his brown, almost black eyes twinkled in the chandelier lights. I went up to him and as he saw me, he reached out his arm to give me a small, appropriate hug and said far too loud: "There's my beautiful birthday girl! How are you, sweetheart?"

I returned the hug and first greeted the duke he was talking to.

"Happy birthday, Princess Alvara," he said politely when he saw me looking at him. I thanked him with a

bow and he left me and my father alone. Now I could return to my father's question.

"I'm well father, the ball is absolutely delightful." I lied a little, I didn't like it at all. I would rather be in my room, or better, outside. But even though I lied, he smiled, something I hadn't seen him do in a long time. Since my mother had passed away he was scared. He was terrified I would get lost, or hurt or that our enemies, the people of Esmeray, with their king Aldrich the Third, would invade our kingdom. But he had a plan. I wasn't certain what this plan included, but I trust my father.

"That's good to hear, my darling. Don't forget it's almost time to dance with them."

I did, to my great sadness, not forget I had to dance with all the available men in the land. It was a tradition they have in every kingdom. I made a small bow to accept my father's wish and left him where I had found him. I still had some time left before I had to dance so

I looked for something to eat. The nerves made me a little hungry.

Luckily, I found the table with my birthday cake very quickly. The table was stuffed with all kinds of delicious looking things. The champagne stood at the first end of the table, while the raw vegetables and chocolates were at the other end. The cake stood right in the middle. It was the most beautiful cake in world's history. I was sure of that. It looked a lot like the ballgown I wore tonight. It was a three layer custard cake with a creamy, milky white layer all over it. It was covered in blue roses, my favorite flowers! And my name and new age were written in paper gold alongside of it. It looked amazingly perfect, but it tasted even better! After I ate a piece of cake, I couldn't eat any more due to the corset I was wearing, so I returned to the dancefloor.

The music stopped the moment I arrived. The guard, who introduced me before at the beginning of this ball, started speaking once again as he came standing next to me.

"Good evening again, tonight the lovely princess Alvara will dance with every available man in the land.

First I present to you, Son of King George and Queen Thea, Prince Fergus the fourth of the kingdom Jero."

A tall man came walking up towards me. He looked kind, you could see it in his deep, brown, mysterious eyes which shone brightly lit by the moonlight, shining through the windows. He wore a blue suit with red and silver details. He was rather tall and his brown, short hair matched his eyes perfectly. We both made a very deep bow and he said, with a voice which suited him perfectly:

"May I have this dance, your highness?"

"I would be delighted, sir" I replied very politely.

We took our position to dance and we waited for the music to start playing so the head of the orchestra gave the order. The music was incredibly beautiful as was the decoration of the room. It had this calm, yet energetic ambiance. The room was decorated with blue roses, as

I made clear before, my favorites. I laid my hand on his shoulder as he laid his on my waist. We started to dance to the song of new adventures.

Chapter II

A mother's tale



I danced, as promised, with every available man in the kingdom. Except for one. After two hours I took a small break because dancing made me hungry again. I went back to the table, but my beautiful birthday cake was already gone. I looked for any other food, but to my great despair, there was none left. I had no more time to go and look around in the kitchen, because the orchestra stopped playing once again. I returned to the dance floor to have my last dance of the evening. The man with the loud voice introduced my final dance partner.

"For this last dance, our beloved princess will dance with his highness Prince Adonis of the kingdom Warkinles. May the dance begin!"

A very handsome man stepped right in front of me, took my hand, and kissed it.

"Enchanté," he said.

I believe that's French. He truly looked handsome in his white suit, but his ego was bigger than his muscles. I could see it by the way he moved on the dancefloor. He wanted to lead me and didn't let me have my way of dancing. He was so annoying! We didn't say much during the dance. Luckily the crowd filled up the silence. To my relief, the dance ended just before I wanted to punch him in his pretty face. I bowed deeply, thanked him for the very bad dance, which I, of course, didn't tell him, and walked away.

Now I could finally look for some food. After such a dance anyone would be starving. I ran through the halls, down the stairs, to the kitchen door and pushed it open.

I could not believe my eyes... There was food everywhere! There were delicious looking berries and apples and other kinds of exotic fruits. There were vegetables such as carrots and broccoli, more than I even knew existed! Bread in all kinds of flavors. There was so much to see! I usually never come into this room. It was more for servants and of course the cooks. I think it was one of the first times I was in here. I looked around and enjoyed the most wonderful color palette ever made. Yes, it really looked like a painting, it was so beautiful to see. It was like an artist painted all this delicious looking food and you could just reach your hand out into it. Truly magic! I chose a beautiful pure red apple and took a bite. The taste was incredible! The sensation of flavors was indescribable! They tasted like stars shining in my mouth and having a party in the big blue sky!

Right when I wanted to take a second bite of this wonderful masterpiece, I heard someone knock on the kitchen door, which had closed itself after I entered.

"Honey, are you in there?" It was the voice of my dear father.

"Yes, father, you can come in." He entered and before he could say a word, he saw all the wonders I had been admiring for so long.

"I'm sorry...", I said when I saw him looking at me with the apple, "...I was simply hungry, father! After all the dancing I was so desperate for food, and I couldn't find any servants in time so I went looking for it myself."

My poor father was still staring at all the food with a hungry look in his eyes. "It's quite alright dear," he said at last. "I can believe you were hungry after meeting and dancing with all those gentlemen."

I nodded while continuing eating my tasty apple.

"Darling, what did you think of the last man?" He looked at me with a little hope in his eyes.

"Oh, I thought he was very charming and handsome, but I'm sorry to say I do not see him as a potential husband! Not at all actually!" I looked confident and

strong, at least that's how I imagined myself sitting there.

He looked relieved... which I thought was rather strange. "It is great, it is even fantastic that you don't see him as a potential I-"

"And may I ask why I needed to dance with him if he wasn't even supposed to be on the list?" I interrupted my father, something I rarely do.

He didn't seem to mind because he came over nervous. "Well, you see sweetheart..., you know since your mother passed away, I've been very lonely and even scared."

I looked at him without moving, anxious for what he would tell me. I felt like I lost the ability to move any part of my body. My mother had always been a hard subject to discuss.

"You see, Prince Adonis, that man, is the son of Queen Cira of Warkinles. Her husband died seven years ago, and we met last summer... I started seeing her more

often and now, it appears we have fallen in love. I think it would be time for us to open a new chapter in our book of life and announce it to the people!” He now looked at me waiting for a reply.

“You... you want to... m-marry her?” I was shocked.

He simply nodded.

I didn’t know what to say. I was so *furious* with him! I felt all these feelings and thoughts rumbled up inside of me waiting to burst out. All I was capable of, was leaving the room, so that’s exactly what I did. I took all the energy I had left, stood up, dropped the apple and walked past my father. I heard him trying to say something but I decided not to listen to him this once.

I walked through the heavy door I came in through and stormed through the hallway. I walked up the stairs holding back my tears, which had been falling out of the corners of my eyes one by one. I walked past the many doors until I came to mine. I grabbed myself together to

ask my guard kindly not to let in my father in any circumstances!

"Yes, princess," my guard replied. As I entered my dorm the guard grabbed my arm softly. "Are you alright, my dear princess Alvara?"

I tried my best not to start crying again. "I'm fine Josh, thank you for asking." Joshua, my guard, had always been more to me than a guard. He was like the older brother who looked over me. I considered him as a part of our small, broken family! He started working here in the castle when I was only a child. I couldn't even remember him not being around here.

The moment I stepped through the door and closed it, I was alone with my inner voice again. I threw myself on the bed and started crying until my eyes could not make tears anymore. *How could he do this to me? How could he just marry another woman? How could he do that to mother? He promised her he would take his revenge on the kingdom of Esmeray! All this time I thought he was planning to invade their*

kingdom, but instead he was meeting this Cora person or whatever her name may be! I wasn't even interested in spending much attention to her, I thought in the deepest depths of my broken soul. She would mean nothing more to me than a woman my father knew.

My reddish eyes felt tired and painful. I fell asleep still thinking about why he didn't take his revenge. I never realized I had fallen asleep and when I woke up it was already night. The stars were shining in the sky like a glass which had been broken.

Slowly I lifted myself from my bed and walked closer to the blanket of stars. I remembered standing here with my mother. By this very window, where I would count the stars whenever I couldn't fall asleep. My mother would tell me the story of the queen whose love was so massive, her heart wasn't big enough. So she collected all her love and created the stars, to share her love with the whole kingdom. I used to love that story! I still did. Only now it's a memory of my late mother. She would

carry me back to my bed when I had fallen asleep in her arms.

I remembered everything about my mother. All the adventures we had. I missed her so much in times like these. My own father had betrayed me and her! In my anger, I fell asleep again.

I dreamt of my dear mother. But she didn't look like I remember her to be. She didn't wear a dress like a queen would do. No, she wore a suit made of iron and leather. She had a sword of her own which shone in the light of the setting sun! It looked beautiful! The sword was made of silver and had a shiny stone in the middle of the handle. Fascinating! She told me about a magical place called Dradevowes. The place where she hid her sword, guarded by the last few remaining dragons, far into the mountains of this lost city. I remembered reading about the Dragon mountains. No one had ever succeeded in returning from them.

I could hear a whisper in my dream which sounded so real: "You must go, find the sword." When I woke up again I knew I had only one intention: I would leave this castle, go find that sword and take revenge on that kingdom myself, for my mother!

Chapter III

The note



The warm, morning sun peeked over the mountains of a small village. If you were very silent, you could hear the water falling down the waterfall and the birds singing. Everything looked so peaceful. Suddenly, a fast shadow took away the sunlight for just a second. Then again and again. You could hear the sound of wings flying in the morning sky. I looked up and saw a black creature flying over my head. It was a beautiful being! It

had scales but still looked soft. Its wings were amazingly wide and dark with a little touch of dark blue when the sun rays hit them just right. I don't know how I came here but I was positively sure this was a dragon. I had never seen anything like it, except in the books my mother let me read. The dragon flew to a high mountain, where it probably landed inside a cave. I saw it disappear in a darkness which suited its color. I suddenly remembered why I was here. I was getting my mother's sword for my revenge on the kingdom of our enemies. I also figured that the sword must be in that cave!

There is no other place she could have hid it, I thought as I started my hike towards the mountain, but when I wanted to start climbing, I was unable to proceed. It was like there was some protective shield. But I needed to be sure. I walked up towards the mountain and reached my hand. For a second I thought it was all fake but then I hit what felt like a wall. I touched it and I saw a wave of purple shocks flowing over the mountain. There was absolutely no other

explanation, this was a witch's doing! If I wanted the sword, I would need a witch.

But witches have been no more than a faded memory since the beginning of our kingdom thousands of years ago. Where could I possibly find a witch? As I was thinking I heard a voice. It was a very familiar one.

"Princess Alvara?" This soothing voice softly repeated. I opened my eyes and realized it had all been a dream. I was in my bed where I had fallen asleep the night before. I saw the paintings in my room and the salmon color of my walls. It was Aryan, my handmaiden, who tried to wake me for my morning breakfast in bed. Today was, after all, my birthday. That's why the ball was the day before, because I didn't want to have all the stress on my actual birthday!

The breakfast was perfect! I ate a hot croissant and drank a glass of fresh orange juice. There was also a letter. It contained birthday wishes from all the people

who worked at the castle. The cooks, servants, gardeners, and of course my handmaiden.

"Happy birthday sweetheart!" Aryan said to me as she laid her hand on mine. Ever since my mother passed away she felt responsible to take over her job. She cared for me like I was her own child. It would be difficult to leave her in the castle. However, today I would find a way to escape and start the search for my mother's sword.

After breakfast, I went to have a bath. I enjoyed the warm water and how it felt against my bare skin. I had a memory of the nature I saw in my dream. It had the same energy as the water I was washing myself with now. So calm, so enjoyable! I couldn't stop thinking about this dream. It all seemed so real. Sometimes you have that with dreams, I thought while soaping my hair.

Anyway, after I was ready, Aryan had prepared an all day outfit for me. It was a simple cream colored dress with little red detail and beautiful blood red curls at the

bottom. She helped me put it on and she did my hair and makeup, with the help of my other handmaids.

My favorite guard, Joshua, came in and said: "Good morning Princess! I hope you slept well." He smiled at me.

I immediately replied "Thank you, Josh, for you as well a good morning! I indeed slept very well. I had an incredible dream!" I didn't say more about it of course. This would be my secret mission and mine only.

"Oh right, before I forget, your father wants to speak to you," he said as he left the room.

Oh no, I thought. After yesterday evening my father was the last person I wanted to see today. But I knew I had to go.

I walked through the hallway to the two heavy, golden doors which would bring me to his office. The guards opened the doors, once I had said I came to see my father. As I stood in the doorway, I saw him sitting in his chair looking through a pile of papers.