Angela Rolph

1448 South Nolan Trace

Florien, LA 71429

318-581-5774

angelarolph@gmail.com

Bonita The Elite

The year was 2023. Fall hung crisply in the air. The woods were filled with an unearthly deep and dark magic. The trees oozed the magic from the earth within these haunted woods. Bruce Pierre’s castle was haunted. It was perched in the woods on the outskirts of the village of Conques in the Averyon in southern France. The creatures turn into unsightly beings on Halloween. Rumors told of visitors to the castle going off the radar and were never heard from again. The kids in the village heard rumors about the noises and spooky creatures that lived there. They knew of a boy five years ago who thought he could explore the castle on his own on Halloween night; his father went to fetch him the next day and vanished without a trace. Bonita was a little blonde girl.

Bonita didn’t believe it was haunted, so they sent her to find out. She had to come back and tell them what she saw. They all waited for her to vanish, too. They knew it was just a matter of time. That was always the curse on Halloween night. No one was safe from it. Everyone feared it.

Gargoyles had come to life on their outside stoops. They were unpleasant the most on Halloween. One of their names was Grimley. He was the most unpleasant one. He patrolled the interior of the castle and the grounds constantly for intruders. He was always on guard. Another creature that wasn’t a gargoyle was a werewolf named Lucifer. He transformed himself at will to scare Bonita. His transformation was always hideously gruesome. There was a vampire named Fang who would terrorize anyone. He acted like he would bite Bonita and then run away. These creatures were child monsters and had a strange playfulness about them.

Unless someone broke the castle's spell, they were cursed to be child monsters for life. An enchantress had cursed them and Bruce to be this way forever unless the beast had found true love. The house had been haunted for 300 years, and everyone in it had remained frozen in time. Bruce’s birthday was coming up again, and if he couldn’t find true love on his 321st birthday, he would be doomed to remain a monster forever.

The haunted castle was full of creatures, including ghosts, ghouls, trolls, fairies, vampires, werewolves, and goblins. Bonita was exploring the castle grounds and was immediately spooked when she heard menacing howling coming from the castle. She decided to explore the castle. She wasn’t prepared for what she would find. She walked up each step to the top floor of the castle. Every step creaked like a rickety piece of wood. Dust gathered on every surface of the castle. She thought to herself that the castle needed some serious cleaning.

She was exploring a hallway upstairs when she saw a prominent dark, hooded figure at the end of the hall. She was curious. She slowly stepped closer, inch by inch. She finally reached the end and shined her flashlight in the creature's face. A small creature stepped forward. He was her size but looked like a bear cub with a giant horn on his forehead. He had feet like a platypus. His tail was that of a lizard. She jumped back in fear.

“What are you?” she spoke.

He growled, “I am a monster and nothing more. Take no pity on me.”

“I’ve never seen anyone like you before, she said.

“Let me take you on a tour of the castle, and you can see what hellish beings live here. Maybe then you’ll know who you’re dealing with,” he said.

“These creatures have a bark worse than their bite,” said Bruce.

Bonita was afraid of them. She didn’t know what to expect. A short, thin woman tried to bite Bonita on the neck with her razor-sharp fangs. Bruce stopped her just in time.

“Graciela, you know that’s not allowed in this castle. What would Ramon think of you? Ramon is her favorite vampire friend. When we were adult humans, they were married,” said Bruce.

“Ramon doesn’t tell me what to do, Bruce. I run the show, not him. He’s too lazy now, always eating too many bonbons.”

Bruce rolled his eyes at her. Bonita was fascinated with all that she saw. She saw a cluster of dark and light fairies. Her eyes widened, and the reflection from the light of the glowing fairies could be seen lighting up her enlarged pupils. Bonita was stunned. She’d never seen anything as magical as this place in her short life.

“Bruce, you must love it here,” said Bonita.

“Love is a strong word,” said Bruce.

“I could stay here forever,” said Bonita.

“That just proved you don’t know how long forever can be,” said Bruce.

Bruce’s gaze was on the floor as they came to the top of the staircase. The gargoyles hadn’t woken up yet. They were still napping. They were very destructive when they woke up from their naps. They swung their ball and chains through everything. When they slept, it was all fixed again. The beauty and curse of the castle ran deep, and it could be seen in anything and everything on the castle grounds. Bonita was getting her first taste of what awaited her there.

“Do you have family in town?” said Bruce.

“My mother lives in a cottage near town. I know she will look for me tomorrow if I don’t return. Her name is Lucinda Dubois, and mine is Bonita Dubois,” said Bonita.

“My full name is Bruce Pierre. I’ve been a slave to this curse and castle for over three hundred years. I’ve remained a child beast, as have all my friends and family. A wicked witch cursed me and everyone I love. If I don’t find someone to teach me to become a better boy and to show me love, I’ll be doomed to stay a boy monster forever and never know what true love is,” said Bruce.

Bruce hung his head low and shuffled his feet slowly before him. He never looked up at Bonita. Bonita reached out and held his hand, but he didn’t say anything. What could she say at that moment? Bruce flopped his platypus feet up and down, and they sounded like falling fish hitting cement. His tail swayed back and forth, and Bonita noticed the beautiful colored scales that decorated it. She grinned broadly. Bonita planned to help Bruce but wouldn’t reveal it to him yet.

“We should have a Halloween party here tonight,” said Bonita.

“A what?” said Bruce.

“You do know what Halloween is, don’t you?” said Bonita.

“It’s something they celebrate in the United States, not France,” said Bruce.

“You’re way behind in the times. Our village is more modern now, and we have picked up customs from visitors from other countries,” said Bonita.

“Attention all scary creatures. We’re going to have a party here tonight. I will return to the village to bring all my friends here. I’m going to show them that this place is magical, and there’s nothing to be afraid of here,” said Bonita.

“They won’t come. No one ever does. They are too scared,” said Bruce.

“Give me this evening to change their minds,” said Bonita.

“These woods aren’t safe, Bonita. There is truly evil magic that the witch created to guard the castle. You came here before the sunset. All the magic happens at night in the woods, especially on Halloween. It’s also a blood moon tonight, and the other witches come out to claim their next victims. No one would be safe in those woods. I can’t let you go,” said Bruce.

“Very well, I will remain here for a month. I’ve got some surprises in store for you, Bruce. After the month ends, you shall never see me again,” said Bonita.

“First, let’s get to know each other, Bonita. You never told me how old you are or your grade. I’m ten years old,” said Bruce.

“So am I,” said Bonita.”

“If you break the curse, do you think the witch will give you a second chance at being a kid? Do you think that might be something you want? Would you want to start from scratch again?” said Bonita.

“I haven’t thought about if I’d have that option. It would be something to think about. I loved my childhood, and I wouldn’t mind having a re-do of it. A child’s life is so innocent and pure. I would love to have the option to remain a child but not a monster,” said Bruce.  
“I would, too. A monster’s life is so lonesome, and I wouldn’t like to be feared by others. Bruce, I don’t fear you. I hope you know that.” said Bonita.

Bruce smiled a toothy grin that stretched from ear to ear. His lizard tail swayed with wild passion on the old floorboards. His platypus feet started to do a little tap dance and sounded pretty good as if set to music. If you listened closely enough, they might have said like they were mimicking his heartbeat. The rhythmic thuds echoed cheerfully on the ancient floorboards. The hairs on his chest stuck out like a bear freshly awoken from hibernation.

Bonita giggled and clapped her hand tightly over her mouth. All the air was released out of Bruce like a deflated tire. His head hung low, and giant teardrops washed in droves through the cracks of the floorboard to the corridor below them. He turned around and began walking back to his room.

“What have I done? Have I offended you? Whatever I did, I’m sorry,” said Bonita.

Bruce slowly shifted back around and stared at her blankly.

“You’re making fun of me. You’re just the same as all the others. There’s no hope for me. There never was,” said Bruce.

Bonita took a step back.

“I can’t believe that. I will prove to you just how valuable you are and worthy of being loved,” said Bonita.

Bonita ran down the steps and through the downstairs corridor to the bitterly cold night outside. She planned on saving Bruce somehow. She found a discarded witch broomstick lying just beyond the castle’s gate.

Since the magic was still strong on Hollow’s Eve, the broom still had a flying spell attached to it. Bonita hopped on and zoomed far above the castle grounds. She knew she had to stay clear of all the dangers on the ground, so she soared high in the night sky. As she raced away into the night, she looked down on the woods and saw unspeakable nightmares unfolding. She cried out as she saw women and children being robbed and men being killed by Satan’s creatures. Bruce had warned her of all that she might encounter. She was not prepared. She couldn’t believe there could be so much evil in the world. She was still young and naive. She had much to learn and hoped she had many years ahead of her to learn. She found a setting on the broomstick to set it on autopilot. Bonita closed her eyes to the world around her and let the old broomstick fly above all that was ungodly. She would soon be in the arms of her loving mother.

Bonita had fallen asleep on the broom, but with her hands still firm around the broomstick. The broom was getting lower, and she spotted her cottage at last.

‘My home, my beloved cottage. My mother will have been so worried.’

She hopped off the broom as it descended. Bonita pushed her front door open, but it was already cracked.

“Are you here?” said Bonita.

The cottage was empty. She went to the village to ask around for her mother. She found her schoolmate Timmy by the toy shop.

“Timmy, have you seen my mother?” asked Bonita.

“You came back from that Castle alive?” Timmy asked her.

Bonita glared at him.

“Please tell me where she is,” said Bonita.

“She went looking for you. I think we gave her a good scare,” said Timmy.

He laughed like a hyena.

Bonita stormed off toward her cottage. She hopped on her broomstick and took off toward the forest. She flew low and scanned the woods for her mother. She saw steam coming from an old witch’s cauldron. Her mother was tied up against it. She zoomed down like a speeding bullet. A witch came out of her cottage. The witch wasn’t fast enough. Bonita had her mother’s ties cut, and she had her on the broomstick with her before the witch could think twice about it.

As Bonita and her mother return to their cottage, her mother pats her on the back and tells her she’s proud of her. Bonita smiles and feels a sense of pride swelling up inside her.

“Mom, what were you thinking about coming after me in the forest? It’s dangerous out here,” said Bonita.

“I’d fight off any monster day or night to save my baby,” said Lucinda.

“I love you very much, Mom,” said Bonita.

“I love you more,” said Lucinda.

Bonita told her mom why she didn’t come home and everything she was going through. She told her she was trying to break Bruce’s curse.

“It sounds like a lot to handle by yourself. I know you’ll try your best. Remember to try, try, and try again,” said Lucinda.

Bonita returned her mother to their cottage and hugged and kissed her. She bounced back onto the broomstick and rode on ahead. She was more determined than ever to succeed.

‘What happens if I don’t pull this off? All the poor souls in the castle are doomed for an eternity of hell.’

It took Bonita two hours to reach the castle.

Bonita came down by the gate. She ran to the front door and slowly pushed the solid frame open. It creaked like a squeaky hinge. She looked around the room and saw no one. She ran up the stairs to Bruce’s room and found him sitting on the side of the bed. He was holding his face in his hands. She touched him on his shoulder as gently as a feather. He looked up wide-eyed and startled. Bruce embraced her and spun her around the room.

“I thought something had happened to you,” said Bruce.

“I’m fit as a fiddle,” said Bonita.

“What took you so long to return?” said Bruce.

“My mother was in grave danger, and I had to save her life in the forest,” said Bonita.

“Neither one of you should have been there,” said Bruce.

“She was trying to save me; she came after me because she thought I was in danger. The school kids scared her,” said Bonita.

“Don’t scare me like that again,” said Bruce.

“I promise I won’t,” said Bonita.

Bonita walked outside near the frozen turquoise pond. She sat along a hard gray stone bench.

She fed the geese nearby while she pondered how she would save the castle.

The following day, she thought she ought to get her creative juices flowing by cleaning the dust and cobwebs from the castle rooms. She washed the stairway railings and the corridor floor and finally found a magical mop to do the rest for her. She decided to go to the attic to clear out some junk. Bonita sorted through some old pictures and curtains when she saw something gleaming from the floor. It was halfway hidden under a moth-eaten blanket. She yanked the blanket back, and she saw a humongous sword. There was a button on its hilt. She pressed it, and a magical hologram appeared. A wizard was in the hologram.

“My dear, you’ve got your work cut out for you. If you want to save Bruce and this castle, you only have three days to do it. It would be best if you listened to everything I say. If you don’t, all is doomed,” said the wizard.

“Who are you?” said Bonita.

“I am the wizard of time, my dear; we have little left. My name is Ivan the Fateful,” said Ivan.

“I’ve never heard of you,” said Bonita.

“You never would. I’m only visible to those who truly need me,” said Ivan.

“What must I do to make Bruce be able to love again?” said Bonita.

“The first task is simple. It would be best to eliminate the dark magic surrounding this castle. It’s slowly seeping toward the castle. If it does, it will kill its inhabitants before the curse ends. Secondly, you must defeat the dark creatures in the forest. Thirdly, you must instill good magic where bad has roamed. There is a thousand-year-old evil dragon that you must slay with this sword. It lurks in a cave by the forest’s edge. Then, for the fourth task, you must tell Bruce what you have done to strengthen his love for you. My dear child, it would be best if you became like the knights of old,” said Ivan.

“I must do all this; I’m just ten years old. What are my weapons?” said Bonita.

“I am your only weapon, child. You’d be surprised as to what I can do,” said Ivan the Fated.

“Do you think I’m worthy enough to beat the curse?” asked Bonita.

“My dear, you were chosen centuries ago for this task. You are called the elite. You’re the only one who can break this curse,” said Ivan the Fated.

“He doesn’t think he’s able to be loved. He thinks he’s a monster. I don’t see a monster when I look at him. I see beauty and goodness. I see someone who’s pure and honest. Doesn’t he know beauty is not just on the skin’s surface? It goes deeper. It’s what drives us forward. I need to make him see that,” said Bonita.

“My child, he’ll come around. As soon as he sees the beautiful child you will become and all you will accomplish in the name of what is good, he’ll change his tune,” said Ivan the Fated.

“What if something happens to me? My mother will come to harm,” said Bonita.

“I shall put a magic shield around you. It will only protect you if you believe it will. You can’t second guess every decision you make,” said Ivan.

“I promise I won’t,” said Bonita.

“Enough with that old broomstick, my child; stand back as I create you a magical scooter. You didn’t think I was hip enough for that, did you? You can use it to fly just like a broomstick,” said Ivan.

A magical scooter appeared out of thin air. Bonita laughed as she couldn’t believe this was happening.

“There are stranger things in this world than me, my child. You may want to prepare for them now,” said Ivan the Great.

“Oui Monsieur, au revoir Ivan,” said Bonita.

“So, you can speak French too. A little girl of many talents, I see,” said Ivan.

“My mother didn’t teach me much French, Ivan. My father is Hispanic, and I learned Spanish from him. I speak three languages,” said Bonita.

Ivan smiled proudly at her.

“Go fight for your birthright, my child, and never give up. Remember what your mother taught you: Try, try, and try again. You’re not just saving the castle but everyone: the castle, your cottage, and the village. All of you are fated together and intertwined with one another,” said Ivan the Fated.

Bonita gulped. She ran down to the top of the castle staircase. She hopped on her magical scooter and raced toward the door. She forgot the door was closed. The scooter did a strange thing and magically morphed her through the doorway. She had the sensation of being stretched like taffy through the entrance crack.

‘This is awesome she screamed. It’s so much better than an old broom! Woohoo!’

Bonita soared far above the forest to scope out any wrongdoers. She first spotted a gang of ten witches gathered around a giant cauldron. It was enough to fit ten people in it. Bonita squinted. She recognized Timmy in the middle of the cauldron.

‘What is he doing out this far? I bet he decided to see what the castle was all about for himself. He’s so foolish. I’m glad I’m not that way. Mom always said I had a good head on my shoulders.’

Bonita swooped down and knocked the chubbiest witch in the head with her scooter.

“What the devil is this? Who do you think you are? I could have you for breakfast with a one-word girl! Don’t be a fool,”

“The only fool here is you! What has this innocent boy done to you to deserve death? Did he even have a fair trial?” said Bonita.

“He deserves none! The little menace was caught stealing potions from my house! He doesn’t even know what to do with them,” said Hazel.

“I bet he knows better than you,” said Bonita.

Hazel took a step toward her and slowly went for her wand. Before she had her hand out of her pocket, Bonita withdrew her sword. The gang of witches screamed and ran far away. Ivan the Fated appeared before Bonita.

“It’s already noon on the first day. It would be best if you acted quickly to rid this forest of monsters in today’s time,” said Ivan.

Ivan disappeared, and Bonita sat on the nearest rock. She heard Timmy mumbling from the cauldron. She pulled him out and untied his bonds. She removed the gag from his mouth.

“What were you thinking, Timmy?” asked Bonita.

“I was worried about you, Bonita. The truth is, I like you. The other kids said you’d never come back, and I knew I had to rescue you,” said Timmy.

Bonita stepped back.

“You liked me all along, Timmy? Why did you tease me the whole time?” asked Bonita.

“Don’t good girls like bad boys?” asked Timmy.

“Not this one,” said Bonita.

“You can spend the day with me as I vanquish the villains of this forest, and after that, I have to take you back to the village,” said Bonita.

“So, I can be your friend now?” asked Timmy.

“More like frenemies, Timmy,” said Bonita.

Bonita and Timmy devised a plan to rid the evil magical creatures from the forest. They were running out of time. Bonita started a magical fire that would purge the magical creatures from their homes. It destroyed the magic from the centaurs, evil lions, goblins, trolls, vampires, witches, warlocks, dark fairies, werewolves, ghosts, and goblins. Ivan the Fated appeared before Bonita and Timmy.

“One creature is left. The dragon lurks at the edge of the woods. He lives down the mountain inside a cave by the ocean. You cannot destroy his magic with a spell. They call this dragon the Ancient one. This sword is the only thing that will kill him. It was forged ten thousand years before he was born. Bonita, once you have destroyed the curse, I have a special magical spell I want to bestow upon you and Bruce,” said Ivan the Fated.

Bonita nodded. She hopped on her magical scooter. She had created a ride-along for Timmy. Timmy enjoyed every moment of his mystical experiences.

“We’re going to slay a dragon. This is amazing, Bonita. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,’ said Timmy.

“This isn’t an opportunity, Timmy. It’s a quest to break a three-hundred-year-old curse. We may not even survive this,” said Bonita.

“Well then, let’s die fighting,” said Timmy.

They both laughed. Timmy leaned forward like he was controlling the magical driving. He had his steering wheel for kicks. Bonita thought it would amuse him. Over two hours had passed, and they smelled ocean water up ahead. They heard seagulls cawing and circling the beach. The scooter landed on the soft sand.

“He’ll detect our magic if we don’t make a swim for it from here. We can’t use magic until we’re right over his heart or neck,” said Bonita.

They took off their shoes and dove into the frigid waters. Luckily, the cave was not too far away. Before they reached the cave entrance, Bonita signaled Timmy to dive under the water’s surface. They swam under the water for about a minute. They slowly came to the surface. Bonita signaled to Timmy to stand back. Timmy backed up against the cave wall. He hit the wall too hard. An avalanche of rock came tumbling down. Timmy ducked out of the way just in time. It was too late. The monstrous beast awoke from its slumber. The Ancient One was so ugly and so old. His scales were peeling off. They had been scattered around the cave for a thousand years. The dragon’s feet pounded the water and the stone below it. It sounded like hundreds of trees collapsing at once. He was slow due to his weight and age. The dragon reared back its ugly head and breathed boiling fire toward her. She didn’t have time to shield herself. She remembered what the wizard said about having a magical shield around her if she believed it was true. She stood there, puffed out her chest, beat on it, and roared like a lion.

“You will not defeat me, Ancient One. I am Bonita, the Elite. I was sent to defeat you. I was destined to kill you. So, let’s get it over with swiftly. No muss, no fuss,” said Bonita.

They both laughed heartily.

“You are a puny child. What makes you think you can defeat me? I am mightier and stronger than you’ll ever be. I can wipe the floor with you, and you know it,” said the Ancient One.

“Fat chance!” said Bonita.

She took her sword out and quickly pressed its button. It made her feet fly forward, and she lunged straight into the heart of the Ancient One. Timmy pumped his fists into the air and cried out. The dragon tried to breathe fire again but was too weak. It fell forward into the water with a splash like a whale’s. Bonita withdrew the magical sword from the dragon’s chest. Light blood turned dark in the cave’s pools. It was time to go.

“You are amazing, Bonita. You keep slaying everything in sight. You’re better than a grown man. You could go to battle if you wanted to,” said Timmy.

“You’re giving me way too much credit, Timmy. I’m not ready for that yet. That’s a big task for a little girl,” said Bonita.

“Bonita, you’re not little at all. I was wrong to misjudge you before. You are destined for great adventures ahead of you,” said Timmy.

“First, I have to break this curse for the one I love,” said Bonita.

“So, you love him? Isn’t he a monster, too?” said Timmy.

“Timmy, he was never the monster. All the creatures in the woods were monsters. I’ve never known anyone like him,” said Bonita.

“Just be yourself. If he doesn’t love you for who you are, then he doesn’t deserve you,” said Timmy.

Bonita said goodbye to Timmy and rode the scooter off into the night. The sword glowed in its sheath. She heard Ivan’s voice before the sword was pulled out.

“You must remember, child, Timmy was right. You must be yourself and let Bruce see you for who you are and all the good you’ve accomplished. He must decide now or lose you forever. Remember that it’s okay to walk away if he doesn’t return equal love for you,” said Ivan.

“You mean I shouldn’t force my love on him,” said Bonita.

“Love is never forced, and love doesn’t insist on its way,” said Ivan the Fated.

“I’ll remember that. Thank you,” said Bonita.

“This is where we part ways, deary. You’re on your own from now on,” said Ivan.

The sound was as loud as fireworks, and the sword vanished into thin air. Bonita spun all around, and she couldn’t find it anymore. She chuckled to herself.

‘I know what I must do. I hope he loves me in return.’ said Bonita.

She once again pushed the ancient, solid wooden doors. She ran up the wooden staircase to Bruce’s room. She threw open the door. Bruce was sleeping in his bed. She slowly walked to his bedside. She leaned down and kissed him softly on the lips. His eyes slowly opened, and he pulled back his lips from hers. He sat up in the bed.

“Let me tell you all that I’ve accomplished, Bruce. I’ve restored the forest and slayed a dragon,” said Bonita.

“Bonita, I thought you were dead. I didn’t know what happened to you. I’ve been worried sick,” said Bruce.

“Don’t you care about my accomplishments?” said Bonita.

“Love doesn’t boast,” said Bruce.

Bruce leaned forward and planted a gentle kiss on her lips that she did not forget for many years to come.

“What are we to do, Bruce? If we break the curse, I will be a child, and you will be a human. It will not work,” said Bonita.

“I will choose to be a child with you than to be an adult any day of the week,” said Bruce.

“Oui?” said Bonita.

“You know it, baby,” said Bruce.

The sword materialized on the bed beside them.

“I have a surprise for you both. The curse is broken by the second day. You will both have a spell over you to live an eternity on Earth together forever. Bonita and Bruce will have many more adventures to come. Bonita smiled at Bruce.

“We’ll return home to Mother, Bruce. She’ll love you too,” said Bonita.

Ivan disappeared forever. The castle was restored. Its inhabitants were transformed into humans. Bonita’s Bruce was transformed from a monster to an ordinary, handsome ten-year-old boy with blonde hair. Bonita and Bruce kissed.

“You taste like Coca-Cola,” said Bonita.

“You taste like chocolate,” said Bruce.”

“We’re stronger together,” said Bonita.