

# **Ransacked**

**from AddyNick**

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# Chapter 1

A village stands, silent, in the middle of nowhere. It is peaceful. Only the rustling of leaves to break the quiet. In the morning, the inhabitants will wake up. They will fetch water from the well, take care of the crops, fix all that need be fixed, and cook. That is the way of it. They are prosperous; they have peace and harmony with all. Until one day, when "visitors" came.

Jane rushed through the village, her purple dress billowing, calling: "Look! Look! Everyone! To the southeast! Many men and women! Coming this way! From the southeast!" The villagers loved visitors, and so they scrambled out of their humble abodes and gazed towards the southeast. "They don't look like anyone we know," muttered Darren, a man in his twenties. He was right. They were off in the distance, so detail was hard to make out; but they wore the colors of the forest, and the villagers caught glimpses of silver too.

"You're prone to distrust! Lighten up, Darren." Jane admonished. He gave no answer, as he was straining to see better.

"It looks as though there are less of them now," he observed. Jane peered closer.

"You are right. I think I should go and greet them," she declared.

"Wait--" Darren said. But she was already racing away. She slowed a little when she neared, for the distance had been longer than she thought.

"Hello!" She said. "I am of Aveanne Village, which you are headed towards. Who might you be?" The one in front, a heavysset man in a pine-green and mud-brown hood, stepped forward.

"None of your business." He said. Jane, who was quite used to dealing with grumpy peoples, was unfazed.

"Are you perchance headed for a place other than Aveanne Village?" She inquired.

"We are headed for the place you come from." He grabbed her and shoved her, and she landed hard on the ground.

"Well, EXCUSE ME!" She yelled. "Who ARE you!"

"We are called many things." The man grinned wolfishly. "Vandals. Barbarians. But we prefer the term self-reliant."

## Chapter 2

Jane stood up.

"Well, you should know we have fallen onto hard times of late," she lied. "There is hardly a thing of value here--"

"I know you are lying!" The man, who was called Dallben, roared. Jane decided she should go and warn the rest of the village. She flew, until the man smacked her down.

"You shall not go!" He snarled. He grabbed her and shoved her to a sharp-eyed woman and a teenager who looked rather similar to her. "Tie her up." And she fought wildly, thrashing and kicking, but the were trained and brought a board of wood they tied her to, and gagged her. They put a blindfold on her and took her somewhere. Jane did not know what happened.

Back at the village, most of the people had dispersed. It had been a while and the strangers still did not approach. Darren knew that Jane could talk a while, but it had been almost three quarters of an hour past. He was growing highly suspicious, but as he was known for such things, no one paid him much here except for two--his cousin Marian and a man called Samuel.

"I don't like it," Darren muttered.

"I know you don't, but Jane has probably gone talking their ears off and maybe scared them away," Marian replied with a hint of humor in her voice. Darren nodded, though he would not be convinced.

## Chapter 3

Everyone but Darren and Marian were in their houses. When the strangers came from all sides, Darren gave a shout.

"The strangers! The--" An arrow pierced his throat.

"Darren!" Marian gasped. She caught him just before he hit the ground. Villagers were looking out their doors now, then starting at the sight of Darren's limp body in Marian's arms. The strangers had filed into the village by now. "You! Who are you! You killed him!" Marian screeched.

"That we did!" One of them laughed, as if he was having a jolly good time. He punched her. As Aveanne Village had no defensive force (which the villagers now regretted terribly) the strangers could do whatever they wanted.

"Take their valuables! Torch the rest!" Dallben yelled. Three strangers ran into a house. Nobody seemed to be in it. They were probably hiding, the strangers thought. They ran to the kitchen and began helping themselves. Once they had all they could carry, they started rubbing branches together. A little girl of about ten years walked up to the strangers.

"Why are you taking our food?" She queried.

"Helen! No!" The girl's father ran out. The stranger who had just lit the branches threw one into the wood of the house, the other into the father's face. He picked up Helen and carried her out.

"No! Stop it!" She cried. "I don't want to go with you!"

"Too bad!" The man replied. He slung her over his shoulder and walked out the door, throwing another fiery stick behind him.

"Stop burning my house!" Helen said. By now the majority of the village was alight with a blazing inferno, the most terrible thing that had ever befallen Aveanne Village. The villagers who weren't still cowering in their homes were running through the chaos, trying to find others they recognized in the ashes of their uprooted lives.