

Held Captive Deleted Scenes and Cut-Outs

* * *

Please note, what you are about to read has not be edited. Like, ever. And, I mean, there's a reason why these scenes never made it into the finished book. So please proceed with caution. I will not be held liable for any disappointment, amusement, or eyebrow-raising moments that may arise from the viewing of the content below. Thank you.

* * *

Scene One – outtake from Chapter 8:

Jonathan, on the other hand, remained in the room for a moment longer, his laughter having finally dissipated. "You two are the most hilarious people I have ever met," he mumbled with a soft yawn that he covered with a hand to his mouth.

Hilarious? That was the best adjective to describe us that he could come up with? "And at each other's throats half the time," I muttered, lowering myself back down onto the bed with a weary moan as an idea, random and appealing, popped into my mind.

Jonathan shook his head, starting towards the door, but I stopped him with a hand. "I want to see you in here at dawn on the morrow," I told him, having to hid the mischievous grin that pushed its way onto my lips.

The man cocked a brow, but nodded his consent. "Very well, then, milady."

Only after he stepped from the room and shut the door did I fall against by bed with a smile. I had a plan. A splendid one, at that. And for the first time, one that didn't pertain to my survival. But where it came from so all the a sudden, I didn't know. Though I couldn't help but like it.

Scene Two – outtake from Chapter 9:

I must have been awfully tired last night to request Jonathan's presence this morning, as it was probably the most fool idea I had ever come up with. But I had a chance that I hadn't necessarily had back on the *Rina*, and I was going to take it. Despite the personal humiliation it might bring. Because, really, what twenty-eight year old woman in her right mind asked, out of the blue, to be taught how to read by a man she barely knew? I did, obviously. But it was much safer to have Jonathan quench my thirst for knowledge than having Bennet do it. I could just imagine him, sitting on the bed beside me, leaning over my shoulder as he tried to make me understand how four letters created the word *good*. Yes, Jonathan was much, much safer.

But also less appealing of a teacher.

The door creaked open then, a tall and lanky figure following. "I'm here. What can I do for you, milady?" Jonathan shut the door and came to stand in the middle of the room before me.

To be honest, I had much more tolerance when it came to Jonathan or David referring to me as lady, but there was always something mocking in Bennet's tone whenever he used the title. Which was why the twins didn't walk around calling me their dear. I really needed to find something else for Bennet to call me. Captain would always do, I supposed.

I tugged myself away from those thoughts and focused on my hare-brained idea. "I want you to teach me how to read."

I expected Jonathan to stumble back in surprise, or at least to look at me as though I had lost my mind. But he remained still, obviously much better at controlling his emotions than a certain brother of his, as the most he did was nod, then stride over the shelf above the desk and grabbed a worn leather book.

"Do you know your alphabet?"

"Aye. I am rather rusty with that particular part, but my quartermaster back on the *Rina* once tried — and failed — to teach me how to read around six years ago. I know each letter and can distinguish it, but don't ask me to spell out a word," I admitted, remembering that day when Keaton had attempted to teach me how to read. We had managed to get through the letter recognition part before I had given up.

"Good. Then we shan't be here all day." Jonathan pulled out the desk chair and plopped down in it, obviously not bothering with manners. Not that I gave a fig for such.

So I sat on the edge of the desk behind him and leaned over his shoulder as he flipped the book open. I recognized a few letters, though most of the writing blurred in my sight, becoming naught but a smearing of black ink. Which was just splendid.

"All right. Tell me the letters that make up the first word." Jonathan handed me the book.

I blinked several times, squinted at the simple two letter word, then finally found my vision clearing. The first letter was written in a fancy font that swirled across the corner of the page, but I was able to make out the normally simple and tall figure. The second one, though, was naught but a hump. Or was that a circle? I shut my eye for a split second then glance at it again. Yes, 'twas a hump. "*I* and *n*."

Jonathan nodded at that. "Now, what sound does each letter make by itself?"

I could only raise an eyebrow at his question. Sounds? I'd said letters. No one had said anything about sounds. Not that I was giving up so easily over.

So I sucked in a breath and guessed.

Which awarded me a smile from my teacher. "Right. Whenever it comes to pronouncing the letter, just think of how you would use it in a word."

I continued testing out the letters until I had the word itself on the tip of my tongue. Then we moved on the next word, and the word after that, until I had figured out the entire sentence. Father had always said I was a quick learner, after all.

"Now read it to me all together," Jonathan said, his chin resting in his palm as a bright grin blossomed on his face that match the sparkle in his emerald eyes.

“‘In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.’”

“Exactly!” Jonathan jumped out of his chair, throwing his arms into the air.

“You’ve got it! You’ve read the very first verse of the Bible! Ha! Well, I’ll be.”

I could only try – and fail – to not laugh at his exuberance. He was pacing around the room, muttering something about a verse a day when I glanced back down at the book in my hands. What had he called this thing? The Bible? My laughter vanished. ‘Twas Bennet’s little religion book I held in my hands, ‘twas it not? But what did it matter? I was learning to read, blast it all, and that was an accomplishment that I was to be proud of. Unlike a good bit of my other accomplishments.

“Well, what are you doing sitting there?” Jonathan said. “Read some more, why don’t you?”

From the author’s POV: Y’all, I was originally going to have Jonathan teach Rina to read. Actually, way back in The Lady Pirate, Xavier was going to teach her, but when I was writing Held Captive, I knew I wanted Xavier to be surprised by Rina’s acquisition of literacy – and I wanted to showcase more of Jon’s personality. As you can tell, none of that ever occurred. I felt like it put too much on top of an already full storyline. I had a plot to focus on – teaching Rina to read was unnecessary. I think it worked out in the long run.

Scene Three – outtake from Chapter 12:

A soft moan escaped my lips, and I rolled over in my bed, nestling deeper into the comfort of feathery mattress beneath me.

Wait! What was I doing in a bed? I was supposed to be outside on the ground, preparing to jump up and run. I wasn’t supposed to be wrapped up in a thick quilt or buried in warmth. Someone had moved me during the night. Someone with a very good reason to drag me away from my hiding spot. Someone that made awful lot of noise when he flipped the pages of his Bible.

Slowly I lifted up my head and sought out the familiar figure of my captor. Captor. He never ceased to fulfill that job description, did he? And that fact never ceased to grate on my very last nerve.

How had he found me? I had been miles away from the city, had covered my tracks perfectly. And, for pity’s sake, how had the man known in which direction I was headed? He had to be some sort of mind-reader or something.

Said mind-reader lifted his head from his book and glanced up at me, a roguish grin forming on his lips. “Ah, good morning, my dear. Did you sleep well?”

Odious man. “Sleep? How can I sleep with you flapping your pages like a sail in the wind?”

Bennet rose from his chair beside me, and only then did I realize our compromising situation.

*From the author's POV: I actually had a difficult time with Chapter 12. This is only one of three cut-outs, as the whole transition from Rina sleeping outside the inn to her waking up inside the inn was surprisingly difficult to manage. *shrugs**

Scene Four – outtake from Chapter 13:

Something twinkled in that suddenly bright green eye of hers as Rina bent down to examine Beth's collection of rocks, her mouth pulled no longer in a grim line but in a wide, blossoming smile. Now where had this Catherina, bright and happy, been all this time?

"Let's see here..." Rina took one of the stones from Beth's little fingers and lifted it up. "This is quite the rare specimen, Miss Bennet. Quite rare indeed. 'Twould bring in a nice pence, I'd say." She cut her eye to me, a thin dark brown eyebrow raised above the glittering green. "What about you, sir? What do you think of this fine pebble?"

I snatched the rock from her hand and glared at it. "Good, good. Very fine for certain." I handed the smooth brown rock back to Beth, who stared at Rina and I with wide blue eyes and a smile.

"You're so funny, Uncle Zay," she stated matter-of-factly, a giggle escaping her lips to join in with the rest of the family's chuckles as she jumped up onto the parlor settee in between Rina and myself.

It had taken hours for the tension to slip away from Rina's shoulders, and now that she sat relaxed in the parlor after Mother's delicious pot roast and biscuits, I could only grin to myself. After we had arrived and the introductions had been made, Rina had spent most of her time until dinner with Father, which was probably the most surprisingly expected thing she could've done. For an atheistic pirate to converse with a preacher for over an hour, I was surprised, but Father was the only person in the family she could actually connect with. Well, except for Beth, so it seemed.

I wrapped an arm around my niece's shoulders and sent David a teasing grin, which garnered me a glower in return. He rose from his chair across the room and reached for his daughter. "Come now, Beth. It's past your bedtime."

A frown appeared on the little girl's face, but she went into her father's arms willingly, and was carted off to her room upstairs, sending a little wave to the rest of her family.

Father stood from his seat beside Mother as well, pressing a kiss to the top of her head as he did. "Well, I believe Rina and I have a conversation to finish." He glanced at Rina, a conspirative glint in his blue eyes. "Do we not?"

The captain's smile vanished, and her eye turned a steel gray. 'Twas obviously a touchy conversation. "Aye, that we do."

The two disappeared into the kitchen, leaving Jon, Marjorie, Mother, and I in silence. Quite a group, indeed.

From the author's POV: I was originally going to have this scene in Xavier's point-of-view – you know, right after dinner with his family – but after several hit-and-misses, I changed my mind. I went with Rina's POV, which works so much better. Seeing Xavier in a different position – laughing and joking with his family – put him in a different place in her heart too.

Scene Five – outtake from Chapter 19:

I still found it much more comfortable to wear breeches while walking – or doing anything, for that matter – but I most assuredly did not want to be the cause of the greatest scandal in London by stepping out into town wearing tattered men’s clothing. I was a duke’s daughter, after all. Might as well act like one.

Today was my second day at Father’s townhouse, my second day as a lady, my second day trying to be something I wasn’t. And so far, the most interesting.

Yesterday had ended on a good note, the Duke of Mayshire having stayed well into the night to “enjoy our delightful company”, so he had said. And as soon as he had departed, I had retired, a headache creeping its way into my skull. I hadn’t had a drink in days, and the absence of my nightly bottle of rum was taking its toll.

And I woken up later than usual this morning to the sound of Delphie clattering about. Which meant I got stuffed into another one of those frilly dresses. Very well, so wearing a gown was not all bad. Except that it meant Bennet ogled at me all morning with those dark and devious black eyes of his. And now I was going to be the victim of his ogling for the rest of the day, seeing as how he was escorting Mother and I around town. Very well, Father was our escort, and Bennet was only coming along for the first part of our journey, as he had things to do to prepare for his next venture on board the *Jessica*.

I would miss him when he left, though never would I dare to admit it to anyone. After all that we had been through and come to know about each other over the last three weeks, I felt as though we had been friends for years. That I could come to him with whatever troubles or worries I had because he understood and would help me in any way he could. I still wanted to be mad at him, though, for all he had done to turn my world upside down, to vanquish my control like a knight did a dragon. But how could I hold anything against him when he had brought me to such a safe place filled with such love and forgiveness? It wouldn’t last long, this safety, for Wilde was still after me. But I would savor this just as something deep inside me longed to savor these last few days with Xavier. Of course, I could never actually let on about my feelings for the man, whether they be merely friendly or not. Just as I could never bestow a certain favor upon any of my crew, I could not give this man – this dangerously wonderful man – any sort of friendship that I would not give one of my men. For that was all he was, just another man that I had met along my journey through the world, one of the many I had scowled at and fought with. And the only one I had willingly kissed, had revealed my hurt to, had snuggled up next to and wished for the moment never to end.

But he would leave soon, and I would leave after. Perhaps. And all this between us would be nothing but a meaningless dalliance, a simple momentary friendship, that would abandon our memories before long.

Except as Xavier threw an arm around the carriage seat behind me, his rough hand grazing my bare shoulder, his body so near mine, I hoped I would never forget. Without a second thought, or even a first, I laid my head on his shoulder and clung to the bench as the carriage hit a rut. He chuckled softly in my ear, reminding me of the time I had mistaken him for an angel, and tightened his hold on me. If only Mother

didn't sit at my side with Father at her right. Then again, 'twas probably a good thing, for one could only wonder at what stupid thing I would do if I was in a carriage all alone with this highly dangerous man.

Said carriage pulled to a halt, followed by Scotch and Brandy's neighing. Within a moment, the door popped open and Father jumped out to assist Mother from the carriage. Xavier and I followed.

I gave into the urge to flash Edmond a grin, watching as the older man's gaze darted from mine to my hands and back up to my face as though he were waiting for me to draw a sword. He shut the carriage door, then rounded the contraption, disappearing from sight.

"You've certainly charmed him, Rina," Father said from ahead of me, tossing me a smile over his shoulder.

I hitched a shoulder, returning his grin. "What can I say? It's in my blood." I chuckled to myself, drawing my eye up to the building before us. A sign hung above the door, telling what sort of establishment this was. But seeing as how I couldn't read the words, glancing down at the large windows on either side of the door told me that we were entering a bakery. Odd, for we had no need of baked goods when Matilda, Mother's head cook, could easily whip up any sort of cake or pie.

Scene Six – outtake from Chapter 19:

The rush of the cool autumn air breezed past me, tossing to and fro the brown and orange leaves that covered the ground. I folded my arms over my chest in an attempt to ward off the chill that I was far from accustom to. Today was my second day at Father's townhouse, my second day as a lady, my second day trying to be something I wasn't. And still, I found it all hard to believe.

Yesterday had proved itself to be an interesting day. The Duke of Mayshire had joined us for dinner and stayed well on into the evening enjoying our "delightful company", as he had put it. I myself had to admit that I found the man to be delightful as well. With the jovial personality of Elliot and the slightly irritating – at least not in Mayshire's case – teasing that reminded me of Xavier, I had felt instantly as though I had known the man all my life. He regaled us with tales of his two sons, while I amazed the entire room with somewhat exaggerated stories of my sea-faring bravery in battle. Not that I had tooted my own horn, so to speak. All right, perhaps I had. But only a little bit. Which was beside the point.

By the time the duke had departed, night had fallen, and the inklings of a headache had crept its way into my skull. I hadn't had a drink in days, and the absence of my nightly bottle of rum was taking its toll. I had excused myself and retired to my room. Mother had slipped in just as I had snuggled into my sheets, and we had stayed up half the night just talking. Well, I had done the most talking, while Mother had listened. There had been a few laughs during our conversation, and several tears had been shed, but I had enjoyed getting to know my mother. If all mothers were as mine was, then all the blessing a person needed was a mother.

And I woken up later than usual this morning to the sound of Delphie clattering about. Which meant I got stuffed into another one of those frilly dresses. Very well, so wearing a gown was not all bad. Except that it meant Xavier ogled at me all morning with those dark and devious black eyes of his. And so I had escaped from the house and Xavier's gaze and found my way out into the courtyard, where only the sound of the wind whistling through the trees met my ears.

Until footsteps pounded into earshot. Very familiar footsteps, at that. Followed by the calling of my name in a tone so rich and deep that it sent a jolt of delight through me even as a sliver of anger took its place. I should have known he would come following after me, which meant the two of us would be alone. Together. Oh, but that was a tantalizing thought.

I would miss him when he left for the sea, though never would I dare to admit it to anyone. After all that we had been through and come to know about each other over the last three weeks, I felt as though we had been friends for years. That I could come to him with whatever troubles or worries I had because he understood and would help me in any way he could. I still wanted to be mad at him, though, for all he had done to turn my world upside down, to vanquish my control like a knight did a dragon. But how could I hold anything against him when he had brought me to this safe place filled with such love and forgiveness? It wouldn't last long, this safety, for Wilde was still after me. But I would savor this just as something deep inside me longed to savor these last few days with Xavier. Of course, I could never actually let on about my feelings for the man, whether they be merely friendly or not. Just as I could never bestow a certain favor upon any of my crew, I could not give this man — this dangerously wonderful man — any sort of friendship that I would not give one of my men. For that was all he was, just another man that I had met along my journey through the world, one of the many I had scowled at and fought with. And the only one I had willingly kissed, had revealed my hurt to, had snuggled up next to and wished for the moment never to end.

But he would leave soon, and I would leave after. Perhaps. And all this between us would be nothing but a meaningless dalliance, a simple momentary friendship, that would abandon our memories before long.

Yet as his distinctive scent of lime and saltwater enveloped me just as his hand, so strong and warm, grabbed a hold of mine, I hoped, nay, I prayed that I would never forget.

"I have yet to give you a proper good morning, my lady," he said, raising the hand he held to his lips and pressing a kiss on my knuckles, sending shivers of awareness up my spine.

"And so is that how you describe a 'proper good morning', Captain?" I lifted my left eyebrow, the feel of the air that rushed over my blind eye an odd one. I studied my captor's face, longing to run my fingers over his jaw and through his hair, even as I told myself that such actions were much too untoward for a lady of my station. Not that I necessarily cared.

Xavier's fingers slipped from mine, his arms wrapping around my waist. His gaze dropped to my lips, and I felt all self-control seep from me like water from a sieve. "Not quite." He leaned in, so close that only an inch of air stood between our lips.

But I pushed back. He was to leave soon. As was I. And though deep down within me, I wanted only to spend the rest of my short life getting to know this man better, learning to love him more, I knew better than to give into such feelings.

Not that I loved him; I didn't. But I obviously didn't hate him either.

If I told myself that once more, I would hopefully start believing it. Perhaps.

A wounded look appeared in Xavier's gaze as he released me, yet a smile curved up his lips. "And here I thought I had a right."

The teasing statement threatened to burst the bubble of laughter in my throat. I took another step backward. "I'm afraid, Captain, that your right is only valid as long as you own the place. You don't own the place."

"Alas, but you are correct. I shall have to throw you over my shoulder and take you back to my ship, then."

Oh, if only he would.

"When do you leave?"

There went his smile. "Trying to rid yourself of me already?"

"I would like nothing more."

He splayed a hand over his heart, a sigh rushing from his mouth. "You wound me, my lady." His shoulders slumped in dejection, and he bowed his head to avoid my gaze. But not before I caught sight of the smile on his lips.

"And you flatter yourself." I placed a finger under his chin and nudged his head up. "Tell me you don't plan to leave any time soon."

Xavier raised an eyebrow, his eyes gleaming. "Now you want me to stay? Make up your mind, love."

A retort edged its way onto my tongue, but the sound of horses neighing and wheels rolling met my ears before I could speak. The both of us turned toward the sound, surprised at the sight of a carriage as it rolled to a stop in front of the manor.

"Father did not mention company." I looked to Xavier, who appeared just as confused as I. Then, I grabbed his hand and dragged him with me as I ran through the courtyard, around the stables, and cut through the shrubbery to the front of Father's townhouse.

The driver of the carriage had only just swung the door open and was assisting a tall young woman out. The lady jumped from the carriage, landing on the ground with a thud, and ran—aye, she actually ran—straight into Father's arms before the poor man could even realize what hit him.

Father staggered back, the woman in his arms, and let out a hearty chuckle, pressing a kiss to the top of the lady's curly head.

I gripped Xavier's hand tighter, only one thought surfacing in my mind. A horrid thought, at that. Surely Father didn't become so chummy with another woman. A woman who wasn't his wife.

But as I turned my gaze to Xavier and saw the grin gracing his lips, the recognition in his eyes, I figured that there had to be some logical, and moral, explanation for Father to now be spinning the lady around.

He finally set the woman down, allowing me to have a good look at her features. With curly brown hair and bright green eyes, high cheekbones and a slightly crooked

nose, she looked just like Father. And when she spun on her heel, her eyes lighting on me instantly, I got the distinctive feeling that she had to be a relative. A sister, I supposed, as the resemblance between her and Father was uncanny.

From the author's POV: These are actually one of many beginnings to Chapter 19. I had the hardest time with that chapter! I think this was, like, the only moment I experienced writer's block with Held Captive—and probably my worst case of block to date (as in, that date. I've had many worse cases after this one). I finally went with Xavier's POV and his mental confession of love! (I think that worked out much better, don't you?)

Scene Seven—outtake from Chapter 22:

...the blatant joy in her expression lighting up her face before a frown took residence, concealing a twinkle of gold. Guilt sparked in her eyes as she scooted just an inch to the side. “They’d think the worst, you know.”

“I know.” Even if we were innocent. Blast. I shouldn’t have stayed with her, though both of our intentions were pure. I’d only meant to comfort her as a mother would a child after a bad dream. But not everyone else would understand that.

She cocked her head, bundles of tangled curls brushing against her bare shoulder and the ruffled collar of her shirt. Then she lifted a finger into the air as my mother did whenever she was about to ask Father some important question. Pointing said finger my way, she asked, “What do they say about me? You know, rumors and gossip. I’m sure I’ve become the talk of the town.” A smug smirk curled up her lips.

“Ah, yes!” I searched my mind for any tidbits of gossip I had heard last night. Chloe and Grandmother Susanna I knew had made their opinions known. Otherwise, most of the guests had seemed to like her ladyship. Come Sunday, though, rumors of Rina would be swirling all throughout church. Talk of abandoned children, hideous crimes, and anything else people could make up would become London’s opinion of Lady Catherina.

But such rumors already circulated through Rothsford’s London home, and I had managed to eavesdrop upon a few conversations here and there.

“They say you are actually an impostor sent to discover dark secrets about Rothsford’s past, perhaps even murder the duke and take the title for yourself. Others don’t deny your heritage, but they concoct many a story about your exploits. I heard one woman say that you have eighteen children, all pirates, that you’ve trained to infiltrate society and bring us all to ruin!”

That last one, which I did indeed hear from Lady Ana’s cook Matilde, made the both of us laugh in spite of ourselves.

Rina was the first to calm down, choking on her laughter before taking in a deep breath. “Oh, Elliot would have died if he’d heard that one!” At my look of confusion, she added, “Elliot is my first mate.”

I nodded, suddenly wanting to know more about Rina, about her life on board her ship, about the men she counted as friends and family. About the brother she longed to see again. About the baby she watched toddle around. About whether or not she wanted a family of her own someday.

Or if she already had one.

Ever since Rothsford had asked me the question, the thought of Rina having children plagued my mind. She would be a wonderful mother, I knew. It was just the idea of her children being some other man's that tore at me.

Rina obviously suspected the direction of my thoughts, for she then said, in a soft whisper, "Eighteen children. I'd be lucky to have one at my age. You know, Mother was fifteen when I was born! So young." Her whisper fell even quieter. "I wish I had been there. I wish *she* had been there. Uncle only knew so much about women, and I needed a mother, wanted a mother so badly. But Lavinia or any other woman would never have filled the hole Mother occupies. Uncle raised me well, though. Don't you doubt it. In fact, if a man so much as looked at me in a way I didn't like, he tossed them over board. And that was if he was in a merciful mood."

I could just see Rina standing at the quarterdeck, her finger pointed at one of her uncle's crew as he dragged the perpetrator to his doom. I didn't doubt that Blackstone had cared for his niece. The evidence was right before me. But to hear just how protective of Rina he was erased my worries.

From the author's POV: So, y'all remember that scene where Rina and Xavier wake up together? Yep – this is what it originally looked like. They had this long, drawn-out convo that really wasn't getting anyone anywhere. So I scrapped it, Xavier left the room, and they were both conveniently confronted by Rothsford. Still – it would've been nice to have had more moment of civil conversation between Rina and Xavier. Like, he knew nothing about her!