

Classmates Belle Marie, Tess Brown and Julien Edgehawk discover that having tea on Wednesday afternoons – barefoot and in pajamas – is the secret gateway into Belzerac, a strange new world of talking animals and a glittering sapphire forest. But while Belzerac is easy to access, it's a little trickier to return from, and they might be stranded if they never find Belzerac's secret exit.

Meanwhile, musician Orpheus is grief-stricken when his bride Eurydice dies on their wedding night. He departs the living realm and descends into the Underworld in search of her. Heading straight for the royal court of Hades and Persephone, Orpheus hopes to petition the King and Queen for Eurydice's release. To his dismay, however, it seems the royal couple may not be the ones holding the keys to his wife's freedom.

In this sequel to the fantasy adventure novel, *Tea in Pajamas*, Belle and her friends – as well as Orpheus and Eurydice – all want the same thing: to be authors of their own fate. But they'll have to learn that salvation isn't about a destination, and has to come from within.



Discover the start of Belle's adventures in *Tea in Pajamas*

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Tea in Pajamas Beyond Belzerac

Marshall Cavendish Editions

"Rachel Tey has a natural talent for creating a rich fairytale atmosphere in her stories!" – Don Bosco, creator of the Sherlock Hong Adventures, Lion City Adventures and Superkicks series

Tea in Pajamas

Beyond Belzerac

Rachel Tey



For Review Only

"Hello? Anybody Home?"





Six o'clock in the evening was an odd time for the house to be empty.

It was now a full hour since Belle Marie came home, showered, and chucked her dirty laundry in the washing machine. The soles of her feet were grazed with tiny cuts and callused, and her striped cotton pajamas – filthy, ragged, and battle-weary – had certainly seen better days.

Belle Marie was desperate to see her family, but upon her return to Michelmont, there was no sign of her parents or older brother Éric. It was a little late for a grocery run, but since Mom's car wasn't in the driveway, her mother and brother must have made a highly unusual decision

to get takeout for dinner. And while it wasn't uncommon for Dad to still be at work at this hour, she found it difficult to tamp down a gnawing anxiety that things weren't quite right.

The kitchen bore no trace of activity. No meat was left to thaw on the counter, the cutting board was devoid of its usual carrots and onions, and the slow cooker – typically switched on almost all day – was not even plugged into the power socket, its contents dry and empty.

Is this home? she wondered.

It certainly looked the part. The house was exactly the way she'd left it, yet that distinct sense of warmth and ease that came with being home was markedly absent. The place was spick and span, and fixtures and furnishings were in their rightful place, yet an unfamiliar quality clung to the air.

Why does home not feel like home?

A gust of wind blew in from an open

window, making Belle shiver. She pulled the hood of her gray fleece jacket over her head and tucked her hands into the pockets of her blue jeans. Autumn was in full swing and the days were getting shorter: with nightfall imminent, she noted with irony how in a few hours she'd be back in pajamas, and found herself repulsed by the thought.

No thanks, I'll sleep in my jeans if I have to, she resolved. After a longer-than-planned sojourn in Belzerac, Tea in Pajamas was a chapter she'd closed – at least for now.

So where was everybody? The uncertainty of it all was unnerving. Belle had waited so long to make it home, and now that she was, she was loath to wait some more. The stillness of her surroundings only served to amplify the slightest sounds, such as the low buzz of traffic from the street and the ticking of the cuckoo clock on the wall.

A quarter past six. Perhaps it was time to make some calls.

Belle got to her feet and headed to the landline phone in the kitchen. At eleven, she was perhaps the only one in school not to own a cellphone. This was by choice, since she preferred not to be too contactable, but it was a decision she found herself regretting now.

As her eyes panned the house, she caught sight of something shiny on a small side table. She recognized it immediately: Éric's cellphone! Her absent-minded older brother must have left the house with his device still charging by the idle computer.

Almost crying with relief, she pulled off the cord and tapped away on the phone's numeric touchscreen.

There was no answer from Mom, and Dad's phone went straight to voicemail. Belle knew the names of some family friends, though not their last names, and anyway none showed up in Éric's phone.

It seemed he'd erased his call history too, so there was no way to find out who he'd last spoken to.

Half past six. Ornately carved wooden arms merged at the bottom of the clock's face as if to dissect night and day. It made no sense to just sit around and do nothing.

Belle walked to the window and looked out. The street lights had come on, illuminating a darkening sky, and a few cars plied the road in a muted murmur. On the sidewalk, a cat sat dozing by a trashcan and a little boy she didn't recognize was kicking a ball.

Ask the neighbors, she decided, though her hopes weren't high. The Maries did not live in a very tight-knit community. In this neighborhood where people generally kept to themselves, there was only a small chance anyone would know of her family's whereabouts.

But maybe. Just maybe.

Shoving her brother's phone into her

pocket and slipping on an old pair of sneakers, she pulled open the front door. A strong breeze immediately blew the hood of her jacket down, sending her coppery curls splaying across her face.

Well, this should only take a while, Belle thought, pushing her unkempt red hair behind her ears and pulling her jacket's hood back up.

Closing the door behind her and walking across her front lawn, she was hungry for answers but also dreading what she might find out. She decided to try the Carrolls: Emmett and Margery were an elderly couple who lived right next door and she noticed that their lights were on.

Belle approached their front door in hurried footsteps and rang the doorbell.

"Who's there?" asked a nasally male voice that sounded quite different from Mr Carroll's usually soft, husky tone.

"It's Belle Marie from next door," she replied. "Mr Carroll?"

“He isn’t here,” the voice answered.

“Oh.” That was odd. Maybe her neighbors had guests over.

“Why don’t you come back tomorrow?”

“Wait, I’m sorry,” Belle persisted, “I only wanted to ask if you’ve seen my parents or brother. Do you happen to know if they were home earlier? Or what time they left the house?”

A long pause followed. “Come back tomorrow.”

How rude and unhelpful, thought Belle, turning to leave. She was deliberating whether she should approach another neighbor’s house down the road when a deafening clap of thunder convinced her it might be a better idea to get back indoors.

She was right. Within seconds of returning home, rain was cascading from the sky in heavy sheets. The storm raged for hours, and still her parents and brother did not return.

That night, Belle ate cheese and crackers for dinner. After that, she lay in bed, still dressed in her jeans and hoodie, and stared at the clock until she drifted into a deep sleep.