

Flashbacks and Panic Attacks

After Eric left Haley set up a vision board. I used my fairy magic to create it. I decided I liked the pink and navy color scheme. I went with that theme and texted Miley my vision board. Miley always found it amusing that I could use my magic via text. I was most excited about the wedding dress I'd found. I wasn't a fan of all white dresses. I preferred those with a blush tone to them. But I did throw in a few white options in case I changed my mind. I loved the glass chapel venues I found. There weren't any in the area though. I would have to talk to Eric about what spaces in his territory were available to have a building conjured. I'd seen the lake outside a few times. A glass chapel overlooking a lake would be perfect! If Bex and I worked together we could conjure the chapel I wanted. I became obsessed with the idea of releasing lanterns after the ceremony. Miley had made me watch *Tangled* a few months ago. I was enamored with the lanterns.

We could have a reception at night so we could see all the lanterns being released. We could even have the reception in the back yard. I could conjure a tent with a dance floor, and there could be a DJ. I'm sure someone in this pack liked to DJ. I texted Miley all my ideas, then sent a quick text to Bex, but I didn't expect a reply. She was probably fucking Liam and his weapon of mass destruction.

I sent my dress ideas to Veronica. If anyone could track them down, it would be her. My mom immediately answered and said she loved the ones I'd sent her and that she would have those dress samples with her at the planning session. I knew it. She could always get clothes with a quick turnaround. I could conjure them myself, but mom loved to do things like this. Plus, she could get anything she wanted.

Satisfied with the start of wedding details, I grabbed my computer. I started looking into online degrees, and what universities my credits would transfer to. I absolutely wanted to finish my degree, but I didn't want to put any pack members at risk. Nick and Jim getting shot made it clear that anyone guarding me could be in danger. Since Eric would make sure I was heavily guarded this seemed like the best compromise.

Besides, it wasn't a big deal really, I could finish school online. It was the most logical conclusion. This was also not a fight that I wanted to have with Eric. I knew he'd worry about me, and I'd miss him all day. He had enough to worry about, there was no need to take away his warriors to guard me. Besides, I would be upset all day knowing he was worried. I wanted him to be able to focus, and I wanted to focus myself. Getting my degree was really important to me. If the best way for that to happen was online, then so be it.

I found a program that would work. I was relieved most of my credits would transfer. For the few that didn't, I'd have to take summer classes next semester. If I did that, though, I'd stay on track for the next year with my program. I filled out the application and had just submitted everything when Eric linked me.

I didn't understand why he sounded so upset. I'd stayed in bed just like Ethan ordered. Suddenly a sound I hadn't heard in a very long time filled the room. The sound of a fairy popping. I hadn't missed the sound to be honest. It usually meant something bad for me. Several male fairies looked at me, smiling. I would've started the conversation, but my words were stuck in my throat. I felt concern in my connections as my fear started to grip me.

The male fairy said, "You are coming with us, princess." My anger fired at his words. Never once had a fairy outside of my family addressed me by my title. I realized not all the anger I felt was coming from me. It was Bjourn, he was angry too. I let it fill me and spoke, "That's going to be a big fucking no from me. I like it here, but thanks for calling me Princess. That's a step up from what I was often called in Faerie." The male fairy grinned and popped next to me, reaching out to touch me. I choked back the bile in my throat as he said, "I wasn't asking, princess. You are coming home with us. Your Uncle misses you." I snorted and punched him in the nose. I popped up and kicked him in the balls next. Several fairies were astonished. "She can pop? What the hell?" They were all chattering. I rolled my eyes and used their astonishment as a distraction.

I popped away to my treehouse. I took several calming breaths as I let Bjourn's feelings in our connection overtake my own. He was the closest to me, so it was easy. I was ready. I popped back into my room. Unsurprisingly, the cavalry had arrived. I was really happy about that. I could take out this group of fairies, but they would've used their powers on me. I was good, but these were trained guards. They'd get in some shots. I just knew Ethan would lose his fucking mind and try to make me stay still for a week or something ridiculous.

We took down the fairies in the room. Eric said there were more. I popped everyone to the clearing where Eric's men stood ready for battle. I wanted to try to save them. They were acting under my Uncle's orders. As much as I didn't like them, they were still my people. The odds of my succeeding weren't great, but I might be able to save some of them.

I looked around the group of Faeries here. I wouldn't mind if some of these guys did die. One in particular. I couldn't look at him right now. I cleared my throat, "As your princess, I order you to stand down." The one I desperately didn't want to see scoffed. Drexsi said, "You ungrateful half breed! Get your pathetic self over here right now." I turned to face one of my own personal monsters. I cringed inwardly but showed no fear outwardly.

I used Bjourn's anger and glared at him. I didn't hide the contempt in my tone, "Drexsi, your disrespect is noted. Perhaps I should go get Hexxus' hair to remind you all of who you are speaking to. I am your Princess and disrespect is not tolerated." Gasps echoed in the clearing. Bjourn's pride hit me hard.

A female fairy spoke, "You cut Hexxus' hair, princess?" I smiled. She'd called me Princess too. Maybe Aiden told them to address me properly after all these years. Maybe he finally accepted me as I am. I told them all, "I shaved it off. He's quite bald now." All the female fairies giggled, whereas the males gasped in shock. Many started looking around at each other.

I casually asked, "So did my brother send you?" I didn't think Aiden would do that. I really hoped he didn't. Drexsi sneered at me, "We were sent by the leader of Faerie to bring you home. Those are our orders, and that is what we will do. Don't think you'll be able to run off this time. We have a nice iron cage waiting for you until it's time to marry you off." Eric growled menacingly along with his brothers. Bjourn's hand tightened on his weapon.

A different female fairy replied, "What Drexsi means to say is no, princess. Prince Aiden did not send us. Fabian did." I nodded. Relief hit me hard. That made my next move clear. I smirked and said, "Did he approve of this action?" The female fairy shook her head indicating he hadn't. I said, "Well then. You are breaking our fucking laws. You are trying to abduct a princess from her mate. Tsk, Tsk, those are very serious offenses. Punishable by death."

Drexsi scoffed, "We are breaking no laws." I smirked at him. I could feel Bjourn's concern though because he knew how I really felt. Sick to my stomach. I countered, "The ruler of Faerie has to approve an attack on another supernatural group. If Aiden didn't give you permission, you are breaking that fucking law. Fabian is an advisor, not the damn King." The fairies started muttering amongst themselves. I couldn't make out what they were saying. I couldn't link Eric because he didn't know Fealish. The only person here on our side besides myself that knew Fealish was Bjourn. I took a chance and kept talking, hoping I could save some of them. I said, "Taking anyone from their mate is a serious crime and, despite how you feel about me, I am a princess. My title makes it a much worse offense. Alpha Eric Connors is my mate. Attacking me and trying to abduct me against my will in front of other supernatural's..." I let my sentence fade out. They knew the possibilities.

If they were taken in by Eric's warriors Aiden would do nothing to save them, even after the treaty was signed. He'd let Eric kill them all, or he'd kill them himself. At least twenty of the fairies here to kidnap me gave each other uncertain glances. I pushed one last time, "Set down your weapons and go home. I would say I do not want you to die here, but that wouldn't matter to you assholes. Go home and speak with Aiden. He would not want this. He's visited me himself, and I am

still here. Do you really think I would still be here if he decided I needed to be in Faerie?" I knew and so did they that if Aiden wanted to take me home, I'd be home.

Drexsi yelled, trying to rally his troops, "Do not listen to this abomination! She is weak and pathetic! Get her!" I desperately wanted to pop away hearing Drexsi's voice. It was tearing me apart inside, but I held strong. I was a master at keeping my emotions off my face. I would not give Drexsi the satisfaction of knowing his voice was taking me back to that place. Bjourn was staring at me. I pulled my feelings back and he sent me his annoyance and anger. I sighed and let him feel me again. He didn't look any happier about that. A handful of fairies cheered and agreed with Drexsi.

That all but stopped when Bjourn's withdrew his sword from his sheath. The area went deadly quiet. Bjourn spoke, "Your death will be MINE Drexsi! You were on my list to hunt down, but you came to me. It's not as fun as tracking you down, but I'll take it." Drexsi paused asking, "Your list?" Bjourn nodded, "Yes, my list. I have doled out assignments to my brothers. Recently, my brother Evin brought back a fairy named Perris. You were who I was to bring back to our realm. Since I came here first I hadn't moved onto procuring you yet. I'll have to kindly ask Eric to let me play with you in this realm. You see, I do so LONG to spend some quality time with you before calling my brothers to take you to the Hackura realm. I am staying here to spend time with my sister."

Shock colored all the remaining fairies' features. They looked between Bjourn and I for several moments. Fifteen fairies turned and ran away before remembering they could pop. There was a portal not far from where were. If only I'd stumbled through it before I fled. I'd have met Eric a long time ago.

Drexsi went pale. He stuttered, "Your sister?" I didn't bother trying to hide my smirk. I barely resisted the urge to stick out my tongue at him. Bjourn nodded, "Yes, your princess is also ours. We recently learned you were among the fairies who were her constant tormentors. We have some iron toys we've had made especially for you. They are waiting for you back in my realm. My brothers and I promised our father we would warm you up for him to deal with. He is enraged over what you did to my sister." He winked at Drexsi, whose fear was etched into his face.

Drexsi gripped his weapon so tightly his knuckles turned white. He yelled, "Get the abomination and let's go home! For Faerie!" He popped next to me. I managed to shoot Drexsi an incredulous look. He was really stupid. I was standing right next to Bjourn. Bjourn had anticipated Drexsi's move and was ready for him, knocking him unconscious with the hilt of his sword. No other fairies stepped forward to follow Drexsi's lead. They gave each other unsure glances. After several moments one stepped forward tentatively. Honestly, Aiden and I were

going to have to talk. You don't tentatively go into battle against a Hackura. Faster than you could blink, Bjourn was on him. I would not let my brother fight alone. I popped to his side.

Three fairies charged at me, and I took them down easily. Eric shifted and let Thor destroy and rip through the remaining fairies who had decided to attack. Once each one those that remained were defeated, Bjourn turned to face the group. He teased me saying, "I think I would've rather had them all attack us, this was far too easy. You shouldn't have talked to them, little sister. You should have let them forfeit their useless existence."

I slapped his arm, desperately trying to cling to my sanity. I tried to grasp at Bjourn's post fight glee in our bond. I said, "Bjourn Rollo Cambridge! Don't make fun of the horrendous show of strength the fairies just put on. That's mean." I gave him a weak smile, he laughed, "But of course sister. How mean of me. It was valiantly fought by the fairies in..." he paused to look at his watch before saying, "Three whole minutes. The wolf that took the other fairy from your room to the dungeons hasn't even caught up to us yet. They were so scared of us; they didn't even use their powers. I am disappointed."

I actually managed a laugh. Bjourn was right. I snapped shorts on the guys. For Molly I snapped yoga pants and a tight t-shirt. Jackson thoroughly checked over Molly who rolled her eyes at him. She said, "Jackson, I helped you kill a fairy. Just the one fairy, and you saw that he didn't hurt me. Men honestly. Prepare yourself, Haley." I tilted my head, confused, then felt Eric's arms wrap around me.

He was inhaling deeply at my neck, and his hands were running over me for injuries. I said, "Eric I didn't even get a scratch. Do you want to call Aiden, or do you want me to call him?" Eric cocked an eyebrow, "And how would you get his number to call him?" I smirked, "I see three choices, One, I ask Bex. Two, I ask Lucinda. Three, you give it to me. His number will be whatever Lucinda had last, and you have her number. He wouldn't change it just in case she called him. He wouldn't give up that line to her." Eric laughed, "I'll call him Angel, do not worry." I nodded. I was going to ask Bex for his number anyway. Maybe our reunion would be better suited to start on the phone instead of in person. In person had gone horribly as of late.

Bjourn produced iron shackles and chained Drexsi. I shivered involuntarily, cursing myself for it because I knew Bjourn would notice. I was trying not to show how affected I was at seeing him again. It was probably pointless as Bjourn could feel me. Bjourn noticed my shiver and he kicked Drexsi in the side. His anger came through in his tone when he announced, "Eric, I would very much enjoy playing with this fairy. I will call one of my brothers to take him back to the Hackura realm; however, I find I need to vent some anger." His eyes shot to me.

Eric followed his gaze and nodded. Eric said, "I think that can be arranged, Bjourn. I have some anger to work out as well." He kissed me and went off to show Bjourn where they could vent their frustrations. I watched them walk away, desperately trying to focus on my breathing. It was easier when I could see Eric, but once he was out of my line of sight it became much harder. I tried not to go back to the place Drexsi's voice had been pulling me too.

Molly glanced at me, the worry on her face clear. She was talking to me, but I couldn't hear the words. Shit! I was having a panic attack. It had been so long since I'd had one, I was hoping they were gone. Molly's voice came slightly back into focus. She yelled, "Jackson! She's... Haley, just breathe!" Jackson ran over to us. I couldn't speak.

Jackson yelled, "Get Ethan now!" Great. Ethan. He was going to sedate me. Jackson turned his eyes to me. He pleaded with me, "Haley! Breathe! Just breathe, Haley. He turned his attention to someone else and said, "Get Eric and Bjourn back here! NOW!" I wanted to tell them I was breathing, but the words wouldn't come out. I wanted to scream. I found myself back there, in that room as everything went black.

****FLASHBACK****

Haley is 10 years old (trigger warning sodomy mentioned) I shivered, waiting in the cold dark room. Uncle Fabian had sold more time with me to Drexsi, Hexxus and Uncle Fabian had snapped my clothes off before they left me here. I hated this damp room. I hated what happened to me here. After what felt like forever, Drexsi came in wearing gloves. That was never a good sign. I gulped. That meant he was going to use iron on me this time.

I pleaded with him, "Please... I'm sorry... I didn't mean to look Uncle Fabian in the eyes. Hexxus tripped me, and I was just looking up so I could stand back up. Please I... I'm sorry." Drexsi laughed, "I do not care who you looked in the eye. I have urges that need to get worked out. Sadly, for you, you are my conduit for those urges." I cried, "Pilleasse sirrr.. don't..."

Drexsi slapped me across the face. He yelled, "STOP TALKING! Your talking ruins the illusion." I whimpered and spat blood out onto the floor. I didn't know what illusion he was referring to. He came towards me with iron cuffs. My instincts kicked in. I cried and tried to run away. Drexsi smiled as he grabbed me and threw me against the wall. I knew what was coming. I pleaded with him again, "No... please... I" Drexsi covered my mouth, "I told you to stop talking." He threw me down onto the floor, and he placed his foot on my mid-thigh, right where my femur was. He smiled evilly at me as he stomped until he heard a crunch. I couldn't stop my cries of anguish. I'd been getting better and not crying when they hurt me, but the pain was too much to hold back. He grabbed the iron gag and fastened it around my mouth. I cried in pain. Drexsi laughed at me.

He dragged me over to the iron handcuffs he had hanging from the ceiling, chaining me to them quickly. Tears coursed down my face as the iron burned my skin. I shouldn't have tried to run. I could've dealt with the iron. My leg was throbbing. I wished I could go numb. I was trying to stop my tears, Drexsi got off on them. He proceeded to punch me repeatedly in the stomach. He treated me like I was a heavy bag like those I'd seen Aiden use in the gym. He kept kicking and punching me until I was bruised and bleeding, then he finally stopped.

My relief was short lived when he came up behind me. I struggled and tried to get out of the iron handcuffs, tried to get away from him. Drexsi laughed at my efforts. He put an iron dagger on my stomach and told me to stop moving. He roughly entered my ass from behind. Tears pricked my eyes as I felt things tearing within me. I choked back my scream. I wouldn't give him that. I couldn't stop the silent tears from falling. One day, I would. One day I would give them nothing.

Finally, Drexsi groaned and stilled. He left me hanging up like that for an hour. His mate came in eventually to get me. She took one look at me and wiped away the tears were in her eyes. I knew why she was sad though. A fairy could sense the motivations of others. She was happy this wasn't being done to her, but she hated to see what her mate could do to me. Because I was a child. She whispered, "I'm so sorry." She released my hands from their restraints. I couldn't stand though because of my leg, and I collapsed. Drexsi's mate quickly took the gag out of my mouth and left me. She walked out with remorse on her face as I laid there crying on the floor.

Masium eventually came to get me, stalking into the room yelling, "Why aren't you in your room yet! Aiden is looking for you..." He trailed off, "What the hell! He wasn't supposed to break your damn leg. SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! FUCK!" Fairies didn't often curse. It was considered improper. That Masium was meant it was really bad. He called Uncle Fabian as he picked me up and popped me to the underground healers at the old, abandoned hospital. It was sad how happy I was Aiden was looking for me. He was home again. Maybe he could help me, if only I could be honest with him.

****End flashback****

Hands were holding me down. Somewhere in my brain I vaguely heard someone say, "No! Don't!" But I couldn't focus. I couldn't bear Drexsi's hands on me for one more second. I screamed bloody murder, fighting like a caged animal against the hands holding me down.

Bjourn yelling, "STOP! Don't touch her! You'll make it worse." That didn't make sense. I knew Bjourn wouldn't be in Faerie. He would never let Drexsi touch me. I didn't even know him then. Oh no! Bjourn was here, that meant... My eyes cleared. I took deep breaths as I looked around me, shame and anger hitting me all at once. I choked out, "I'm... I'm so sorry!" Ethan and two other men were on the

ground injured by my hands. I had been fighting with them. Not Drexsi. I was fighting Ethan. Eric took a small step towards me, holding his hands up speaking softly, gently, "Haley, it's alright. You're ok." I couldn't stop my tears now if I tried. I was far from ok.

I looked Ethan in the eyes. I said, "Ethan, I'm so sorry." Ethan gathered himself and stood up. He wiped his jeans off. He said, "It's quite alright. We should've listened to your brother. He said this happened when you first came to their realm. I would like you to come back for an examination just to make sure everything is ok. I think we should also give you a mild sedative."

I backed away. Doctors never helped me. Not after an episode. I was beaten... I tried to grip onto Bjourn's concern in our bond. I felt concern in all my connections, but I couldn't hold onto their feelings. The desire to flee and run was overtaking me. I looked at Bjourn. He was bracing himself because he knew what was coming. I hated that. I hated knowing he was preparing to run after me. It hurt him that I ran, but I couldn't stay. I needed to run. Bjourn looked into my eyes. He said, "Haley, it's ok." It wasn't. It would never be ok. I looked away and turned around. I was trying to control my fear, trying to bring up my Hackura side to grab hold of, but my fairy side couldn't be pushed down. I did the only thing I could do. I ran.

I could hear someone running behind me. My leg was throbbing. Echoes from my past never left my body. I couldn't stop running. I just kept going until I couldn't ignore the throbbing in my leg anymore. It buckled beneath me, and I went down onto my knees. My breath was coming in heaps. I screamed at the sky, "WHY?! I don't want to be that scared little girl anymore! It's not fucking fair, I've changed! I'm stronger... I ... I can defend myself now... I..." My sobs overtook me.

I felt arms encircle me, tingles breaking out across my skin. I closed my eyes and leaned back into Eric. He whispered in my ear, "I've got you, Angel. It's all right, no one will hurt you. You are safe here with me. I've got you." He rocked us back and forth. I was able to calm down in his arms. I turned and buried my face into his chest, breathing him in. The smell of the ocean invaded my senses. I was finally breathing normally. Eric kept rocking us as I continued to calm down.

I wasn't surprised when Bjourn stepped out from behind a tree. I knew he'd been following me too. He'd just been giving Eric and me a moment. Bjourn said, "Haley, I have the sedative the doctor wanted to give you." I nodded. I felt concern, anger and worry from my entire family. I always did this to them. I whispered, "Ok. I'm sorry brother." Bjourn looked down at me with tears in his eyes. He said seriously, "You have nothing to be sorry for little sister." I cried, "I do. I'm not strong enough. After everything you guys taught me, I'm still not strong enough."

Eric tightened his hold of me. Bjourn knelt beside me and injected me with the sedative, tilting my face up to his with his finger, "You are stronger than most people I have ever met, Haley. I know I'm not Marcus. I know he's who you usually talk to after your flashbacks; however, I am here for you little sister. Your mate is here. We have you. You are loved and you are safe. Tell me what happened, and I swear to you; I will make the monster pay."

The sedative began to kick in. I felt as if I was floating away. It was too bad I wasn't given morphine. I explained my flashback in a detached kind of way. My leg was still throbbing. Maybe I could convince Ethan I needed morphine. That would be comical. I pushed that thought aside as I saw the worry in Bjourn's eyes. I'd worried him enough for one day. I looked at Eric. He was too pale. I felt tears on my cheeks. I hated upsetting the people I loved. I always had. Eric had an iron grip on me. Bjourn's eyes burned gold by the time I'd finished my story. I was much calmer since the sedative had kicked in.

I offered, "I could pop us back to the main house. I don't know how far I ran." Eric held me against him. My eyes were getting heavy. Eric said, "Sleep Angel. I will carry you home." Panic was building back up in me. I said, "Please don't make me stay in the hospital. I don't want to wake up there, Eric. Please." Eric's eyes filled with tears again. He kissed my forehead and said, "You will wake up in our room, I swear." I nodded, "I'm sorry Eric. I didn't mean to hurt your men. You deserve better than a mate who was broken and put back together. The pack needs a better Luna."

Bjourn's fists tightened. I felt his anger in our connection. Before I could say anything, Eric spoke, "Haley, Ethan thinks you are strong simply by being a functioning person. The pack loves you. You've already done so much good here. I adore you, Angel, I would never have anyone but you. The only person disappointed or upset with you, is you. Try to understand that you went through thirteen years of abuse. It's only been six years. You are doing incredibly, and I am so proud of you. Rest Angel, your brother and I will take care of everything. You will not be alone for one second."

I felt a calming peace wash over me. That wasn't the sedative, it was magic. I looked over Eric's shoulder and swore I glimpsed Aiden. He must have just popped in. Bjourn's eyes focused on where I'd thought Aiden had been too. The small part of myself I'd long thought had died was beginning to hope that my fairy brothers could love me as I'd always wished. I closed my eyes, finally able to be lulled to sleep in Eric's arms as he carried me home.

Payback

Eric was leading Bjourn to the dungeons in silence. I was really worried about Haley. Bjourn broke our silence first. He asked, "Did you see how she shivered? I want to tear this fairy apart." I nodded, "I saw. It makes me angrier that she was trying not to show it." Bjourn sighed, "Marcus is better with this. At reading her. She used to get really bad panic attacks. Marcus was always with her. Those two are thick as thieves." Bjourn trailed off as Jim caught up to us.

Jim greeted us, "Hey guys! Did you already kill the fairies?" We nodded. Jim sighed, "Man the Hackura don't mess around" Bjourn laughed, "We do not, but Haley talked some of them down, it was rather boring. Eric is going to show me the dungeon and torture room. I can't wait to play with my prize." He kicked Drexsi in the side as he spoke. Jim nodded at Bjourn and linked me, "Can I watch? Prince Bjourn is renowned for his torture techniques." I linked back, "Sure." Darrin linked me, "ERIC! WAIT!" I tensed and turned around. Bjourn and Jim did that same.

Darrin came running towards us looking very pale. I asked, "Darrin? What's wrong?" Darrin was panting. He said, "You've got to get back... it's Haley... she couldn't breathe!" Bjourn swore, "Shit... she's having a panic attack." Jim took the prisoner from him. Bjourn nodded to him and took off. I caught him easily with Darrin on my heels as we ran back to Haley.

Once we got within hearing range, we heard Ethan. He explained, "She's reliving what happened to her. Whatever triggered her has literally taken her mind back to that moment. Fairies experience things as if they are happening right now in their panic attacks. We can hear what she said and did, but not what was said to her. Fairies don't think about things in their minds as we do."

My Angel's cries felt as if they were a dagger to my heart. Haley was begging someone to not hurt her and apologizing for looking Fabian in the eye. Apparently, her piece of shit cousin tripped her. My heart constricted with each tear that fell from her eyes. When she screamed in anguish I went to my knees. I didn't know what to do to help her. Everyone was in tears. Molly was beside herself and Jackson was consoling her through his own tears.

Bjourn was taken aback. He said, "My god... I never..." He trailed off then offered, "Marcus always saw this part of her attacks. My poor brother. He never said they were this bad. Haley used to get these attacks when she first came to us. Here's what I know about them, don't touch her when she starts to whimper. Evidently I always saw the end of her attacks, but it's not pretty."

Haley jerked and screamed again. I longed to touch her as the tears streamed down her face. Before I realized what he was doing, Ethan and the two men went to hold her down. I couldn't find my voice. I quickly saw why Bjourn warned us not to do that. As soon as they touched her, Haley was screaming, punching, scratching, and fighting to get away from their hands.

I linked them, "Let go of her. NOW!" They immediately stopped trying to keep her still. When realization dawned in Haley's eyes what was going on, her shame could not be mistaken. She took off like a shot. I ran after her. I could hear Bjourn talking to Ethan. He was getting the sedative and coming after us. I kept pace with her. I could've caught her, but I knew she needed to run this out. I felt horribly inadequate to help her when she stopped running. The heart I'd spent years hiding was being ripped out of my chest tonight with her agony. Someone would pay for this. Haley truly had no idea how strong she was. I couldn't stop myself from going to her.

I gathered her up and rocked her back and forth. It hurt to hear Haley apologize for not being strong enough. I bit back my growl when she said the pack deserved a better Luna. She didn't see how much everyone here needed her. I needed her. I needed her like I need air. After Bjourn administered the sedative, she told us what happened. My eyes shot to Bjourn in surprise, hearing what happened. His own shock showed for several minutes before fury overtook him. His eyes were blazing gold. Drexsi would pay for this. I scooped Haley gently into my arms and she went to sleep almost immediately. Bjourn looked over my shoulder. I turned and briefly caught sight of Aiden before he popped away. Bjourn was fuming, "I don't know if Drexsi will make it back for my brothers to get a piece of him. I don't know how Marcus saw her experiencing a panic attack. Then hearing her side of things afterwards and managed not to kill everyone."

We walked for a few feet in silence. Bjourn spoke again, "Haley couldn't have given Marcus the full picture. We never sedated her afterwards. She panicked when doctors came near her. I just don't understand. How can she think she's not strong?" I sighed. I still had tears falling down my cheeks. I cradled my mate closer to my chest. I said, "Haley holds herself to an impossible standard. She's still young. We can't discount the fact that for most of her life she was mistreated..." My voice cut out. I cleared my throat and continued, "The way she just described to us was awful. She was told she was worthless. It's hard to re-program yourself from that mindset. I was going to let you torture Drexsi alone, but I can't do that now. I'm going to join you."

Bjourn nodded, "I think we will have lots of fun with him. It will never be enough though. There's nothing we could do to him that will compare to what he's done to her. I need to call my dad. They are all worried." I nodded, "I will meet you in the main room, I'm going to take care of Haley first. I'll see you shortly and we can deal with Drexsi." Bjourn nodded.

He walked over and sat on the outdoor deck furniture. I continued walking inside and into the main room. I wasn't surprised to see my family and Ethan waiting there. Molly was still crying. She looked up and wiped her tears. She said, "Eric, you found her... I... that was awful!" I nodded my head in agreement. I told them, "Hearing what the flashback somehow was much worse than what we witnessed."

Jackson looked haunted. He whispered, "That scream... what happened?" I growled, "That fucker broke her leg." Darrin growled in anger. My mother's eyes went wide. She spoke in a shocked tone saying, "They broke her leg while she was awake?" I nodded.

Ethan's mouth turned into a grim line. He said, "I need to get her to the hospital to check her over. I am not sure if she's got enough fairy blood for some of the damage she experienced to reoccur." I flinched in shock. "What? That's possible?" Ethan nodded, "Yes, full blooded fairies re-experience things it's as if is happening in real time. Obviously, her leg isn't broken, however, there could be damage. I need to check." I begrudgingly nodded. Ethan continued, "I'd like her to stay overnight for observation." I shook my head, "No, I promised her that she wouldn't wake up in a hospital." Ethan sighed, "We can re-evaluate once we see the damage."

I carried Haley over to the hospital. Rose turned with a smile on her face, but it quickly vanished as she looked at us. She looked at Ethan, a clear question in her eyes. Ethan shook his head, stalling her questions. The blood on his face now dry from where Haley had broken his nose. I placed her down on their table so they could take scans of her. Ethan read the data as it came across the computer. He said, "Well, it looks like some internal damage occurred. This looks like she took a beating, but her powers are already healing that damage. With all the past damage done it's hard to tell about her femur. I think it might have a tiny stress fracture, but there's not much I can do right now. She will need to come back tomorrow so we can confirm everything healed."

I nodded and picked Haley up off the table, carrying her back to our room. Jackson and Molly were waiting in the hallway outside the door. I turned and asked, "Molly, could you sit with her? I need to show Bjourm where the dungeon is. I will be busy for... awhile. I don't want her to wake up alone. If you can't stay with her that's alright, I'll ask mom." Molly shook her head, "No, Cassandra is playing with Saied right now. Until I have words with her teacher, given she just let her wander off unattended, I want your mom with Saied. I can sit with Haley while they play. If it ends up being awhile Cassandra can replace me." I nodded at her, "Thank you, Molly." Jackson opened the door into our room. I laid Haley down on the bed and kissed her forehead. Molly sat down in the bed and turned the tv on. She shooed me away, "I've got her Eric. Go do what you need to do."

Jackson followed me out of the room. I asked him, "What are you doing, brother?" He scoffed at me, "I am going with you to see a dead fairy." I paused and looked at him. He was always by my side. I surprised us both when I pulled him into a hug. I said, "Thank you, Jackson." I clapped him on the back and broke the hug. We both started walking again.

Bjourn was waiting in the main room, his eyes were still blazing. He said, "My dad is sending guards." Jackson and I both stopped in surprise. Bjourn continued, "Well to be specific, he's sending Haley's guard." I paused then asked, "She has a guard?" I was wondering where the hell they had been. Bjourn nodded, "She's a princess. Of course, she has assigned guards. Four of our elite guards form her team. I would imagine my mom will show up early too. Marcus is going to be back tomorrow; he is very upset. I was right that she never went into that level of detail with him."

I nodded, "So are you leaving us when Marcus arrives? I'm assuming you're going to take Drexsi to your realm." Bjourn's eyes darkened, "No, I'm staying. My sister clearly needs us here. Her fairy brothers leaked her identity, and now Fabian knows her location. My brother Harper is coming with Marcus to collect Drexsi."

Jackson laughed, "Your guy's names are all over the place man." Bjourn laughed, "Yes they are. Not even the King argues with his mate after she's just given birth." I laughed. Jackson said, "Forgive him. He doesn't understand yet. Trust me when I say, I do. Did your mother name all of you?" Bjourn nodded and said, "Some of our names came from when she was obsessed with a TV show called Vikings. Sometimes she said she just saw us and knew. Or there were just names she heard that she liked or came across in a baby book." Jackson nodded.

I asked, "Is Haley your father's only off period child?" Bjourn nodded, "Yes, she is. My dad didn't want a child that was part human in the royal line. My parents have only had two off periods. It was son the second one that he ran across Alania. He thought that they would make a powerful child together. He was right, of course. The stupid fairies had to try and fuck everything up. My mom was ecstatic when she heard the child was a girl. She loves us boys, but she really wanted a little girl."

Jackson laughed, "You Hackura and your ways... my wife would kick my ass if I was with anyone but her. Having a child with someone else jeez. Eric, you'd have to give me a new identity." Bjourn smiled, "Yes, well in our realm it is the norm. The royals have a rule we can only have a child with another supernatural. For those not of royal birth partial human children are fine. So, if they meet someone on an off period or prior to meeting their mate who they find strong; they try for a child. Our mates help raise them once the children come to us at sixteen." Bjourn paused then added quietly, "Though we have been keeping a closer eye on things since Haley's situation. We have started removing children from any realm and

bringing them home if anything is going on that shouldn't be." Both Jackson and I nodded.

I unlocked the door leading to the dungeons and led the way down the stairs where Jim would've taken Drexsi. When I turned the corner, I was surprised to see Jim and Nick were still guarding his cell. Drexsi himself was now awake and crying. He was tied down with iron to the torture table. Hexxus was staring wide eyed into Drexsi's cell. I smirked. I specifically had him moved over here so he could see the fate that awaited him. I hoped he stepped out of line again soon.

I addressed them, "Jim, Nick..." Nick answered my unspoken question before I could ask. Nick said, "Haley is our friend. This fairy hurt her, that much is obvious. Jim and I weren't going to leave him unguarded down here. Not for one single second." I nodded. My mate inspired loyalty. I said, "Thank you for taking the initiative. You may go. We have him from here." The boys looked at one another. Jim asked, "Can we stay?" I turned back to them in surprise. Then I remembered Jim had already made this request. I studied both of them then nodded.

Bjourn smiled at both. He asked, "Haley has friends? She's called you her friend?" Nick laughed, "People keep asking that. She has called us friends." Bjourn's smile broadened, "Well, she was withdrawn in our realm. We had her Miley's classes since she was thirteen when she came to us. I am glad she is making friends here. For her to call you a friend is a big deal. She doesn't quite understand having friends."

Before we could ask what he meant Bjourn asked, "Who is the fairy with the shaved head in the next cell?" Jackson smirked, "That's Hexxus." Bjourn bared his teeth at him. Hexxus flinched and visibly shrank back. He cried out, "What? What could I possibly have done to you, man? I don't even know you." Bjourn gritted his teeth. He said, "Ah, but you spoke to my brother Marcus, did you not?" Hexxus paled, "You... you're a Hackura too? Which one?" Bjourn laughed. He let his eyes blaze gold. He said, "I am Prince Bjourn Cambridge." Hexxus shrank back to the furthest corner of his cell as

Bjourn walked closer to the bars of his cell. He told Hexxus, "Trying to get away from me would never work, fairy. No one escapes my wrath once set in my sights. Luckily for you... I am not here for you today. Marcus has already claimed you as his kill, I am here for this waste of space." He pointed to Drexsi, who pulled at his restraints. He boldly demanded, "Let me out of these restraints. I am an envoy of the ruler of Faerie. Harming me is a grave mistake." I growled, "An envoy who came here to take my mate from me. As my Angel pointed out, by your own laws I can kill you free and clear." Bjourn chuckled and grabbed Drexsi's thigh, gripping it tightly.

Bjourn said, "Now Drexsi, my rules are simple. Answer my questions quickly and efficiently or suffer great pain. Which of my sister's legs did you break?" Drexsi snorted, "Which time?" Bjourn broke his finger. Drexsi cried out. Bjourn said, "Now, now fairy calm down. It's just a finger. My brother Marcus did tell me you fairies were quite dense. So, I will break my rule down for you in small words, so you understand. I ask a question, you answer. If you don't, I will do things to make you talk until you answer my question. If you hesitate, I break bones. Do you understand?" Drexsi looked away.

Bjourn broke his thumb. He repeated, "I said, do you understand?" Drexsi cried, "Yes, you brute! I understand." Bjourn laughed, "Ironic, no? That you who preyed upon a child, probably multiple children, dare call me a brute for breaking your finger. Do not worry Drexsi, I have many other things in mind to do to you. Were there others that you hurt? Beside my sister?" Drexsi nodded, "There were other partial fairies. You should be happy, assassin. Your sister is the only one still among the living. Tell me wolf, is her ass still tight? No matter how much I broke her down... that asshole was still so tight."

I roared in anger. Jackson, Nick, and Jim growled along with me. Bjourn pulled out an iron dagger from his coat. He cut Drexsi's leg around his calf. I couldn't stop myself from stepping forward and punching Drexsi in the side. It was hard enough I felt two of his ribs break. Good. Drexsi screamed in pain. I looked up to see Bjourn was cutting a muscle in Drexsi's leg.

Bjourn explained, "Now for an anatomy lesson. Drexsi, when I make this last little cut you will feel this fold up like a shade in your leg. You see, this is your Achilles tendon. See those wolves were worried about you escaping, and I don't want them to worry. You will find it impossible to walk once I make this cut and with the iron restraining you... well popping isn't an option. This severing of your Achilles may cut off the circulation to your leg which may lead to you leading an amputation later on, but... I'll risk it."

Bjourn made the cut. Drexsi hissed in pain and sobbed. Hexxus whimpered. Drexsi recovered and continued talking shit to me. His eyes told me he knew he was going to die, so he wanted to cause me pain before he did. He asked me, "What about her vagina? It's tight, isn't it? Fabian would never let us go there with her. He said she needed to be pure when he auctioned her off for a marriage alliance. I wanted to take her virginity so badly. You know, she got her breasts when she was twelve. I only got a year to play with them before she ran away, but what a year it was."

Bjourn grabbed Drexsi's other leg and began to twist it until he heard a snap. Drexsi's face contorted in pain and agony. It wasn't enough. Bjourn admonished him, "Drexsi, that is my sister you are speaking of, and you will be respectful. If you wish not to suffer for decades to come, you'd be wise to shut your damn

mouth. Now Eric, Jackson, Nick, you all heard that scream Haley made during her panic attack. Did her scream sound the same as his scream when I broke his leg?" Jackson remained stoic, "It did sound similar. Although hers was the scream of a child." Jackson looked haunted, as did Nick.

I was arguing with Thor about who would get to torture Drexsi. Thor growled, "He's mine! He hurt mate!" I retorted, "She's my mate too." We finally settled on half and half. I let him have the first go at Drexsi. Thor took over and ripped the fairies pants off. Drexsi smarted off. He asked, "What are you doing man? I've heard you swing both ways, but I don't. I'm into women and women alone." Thor growled, "I heard you were only into little girls, but I'm not. I wouldn't go near you with a stolen dick, you sadistic fuck."

Thor grabbed an iron knife, then turned back around. He fastened Drexsi's legs to the outside of the table. He began to trace the dagger up and down Drexsi's legs inching closer to his intended target. Drexsi realized where Thor was going. He screamed, "NO... don't castrate me!" Thor chuckled darkly. He placed the iron dagger on one of Drexsi's balls. He hadn't blocked our connection, so I watched as the iron burned Drexsi's ball away. Drexsi screamed in pain. Hexxus vomited in his cell.

Jim groaned, "Oh come on man!" I took back over and asked Drexsi, "Did you know Fabian did experiments on my mate?" Drexsi screamed in pain, and clamped his lips shut, refusing to answer. I locked eyes with Bjourn and nodded. Bjourn smirked and broke another one of Drexsi's fingers. Drexsi screamed at us, "FUCK YOU, YES I KNEW!"

Thor quickly took back over. He held the iron knife steady until Drexsi's ball completely seared off. I took back over and looked over at Bjourn. I muttered, "Your turn." We went back and forth torturing Drexsi. When he fell unconscious, we brought him back to awareness with smelling salts. Or my favorite way, injecting him with adrenaline.

After four hours Bjourn decided it was enough. He smiled and said, "Well Drexsi, for my last and final act before you're sent to my family..." Drexsi whimpered but Bjourn ignored him and continued, "I have a final treat for you." He went over to the wall and grabbed a silver phallic shaped object. "Now, we had some iron dildos made for you sick and twisted fairy fucks, but in a pinch this will do." Drexsi writhed as much as he could against the table with his injuries. Bjourn was not deterred by his pleas or begging. Tears pricked Drexsi's eyes as Bjourn shoved it inside him. After five minutes Bjourn ripped it out.

He asked me, "So, what's there to eat around here, Eric? I'm famished." My brother and I led him to the kitchen. Jackson was watching me like a hawk. After Bjourn got his food, I got up to leave. Jackson stopped me. He said, "Molly is still with

Haley. They are both asleep. Let's go to the gym." I glanced at my brother. I had a feeling I knew what he wanted to do. I desperately wanted Haley in my arms, but I found myself agreeing. We walked to the gym in silence.

When we arrived I asked, "Why are we here, Jackson?" Jackson eyed me knowingly, "Because you need a fight, Eric. Bjourne would probably be a better choice, but you're my brother. You need this, and I'll give you a good fight all the same." I nodded. Jackson was right. The animal and fierce protector inside me needed to fight, to hurt something. The entire evening came crashing into me. Someone had tried to take my Angel from me. They made her think she didn't deserve love. Jackson and I proceeded to have an all-out brawl. I noticed our warriors in the gym paused their own fights. I could see their curiosity written all over their face. They were wondering where this ferocity in our fight came from.

Jackson and I were so engrossed in our fight we missed our dad stepping into the gym. I should've noticed because it was clearly the moment all the warriors continued their fights. Jackson and I were both bleeding. We heard a throat clear, but we didn't stop.

Our dad yelled, "Boys!" Both of us immediately stopped the fight. My dad entered the ring. He put a hand on my shoulder asking, "Eric, are you alright now?" I thought about it, "No, dad I'm not. I no longer want to tear things to pieces though." My dad nodded. Then he looked at Jackson, waiting for him to answer the same question he'd asked me. Jackson was quiet then said, "I feel the same way that Eric does. You don't understand. You didn't hear her scream dad; you didn't hear what she was saying. She fucking apologized for getting tripped and looking up. It's a natural reaction! You fall, you look up. She accidentally looked someone in the eye and they..." My dad nodded when Jackson trailed off. He grabbed both of us around our shoulders.

He ordered us, "Go see your mates." Neither of us argued because it wasn't an order we were upset to follow. First, we hit the gym showers. We both needed to wash away the sweat and blood before heading inside. Jackson and I walked up to my room together. Molly shook herself awake when the door opened. She turned off the tv and wordlessly followed Jackson out. I shut it behind them as they left.

I crawled into bed pulling Haley over to me. I kissed her forehead and inhaled deeply in the crook of her neck. Haley sighed. She turned to face me in bed. She looked at me with pleading eyes. She said, "Don't let them take me Eric, please. I can't live like that again." I pulled her closer to me leaving no space between us. I told her, "I won't let them take you. I will always come for you if they try." I paused because it felt physically painful to think about them taking her. I continued, "If anyone manages to use some witch, warlock, or Fae magic to take you from me; I will tear apart realms for you. I will bring you back to my side always. I love you." Haley smiled and muttered, "I love you too." I held her as I

drifted off to sleep with her tucked firmly against me. She was mine, and I protected what was mine.