

Scrambling

Eric stared in astonishment as the Queen of the Hackura began to beat the Queen of the Fae. Alania screamed and popped away, but that didn't deter Veronica. The two squared off. It wasn't even a close fight; Veronica was kicking her ass. Alania popped beside Titus. She appealed to him, "Aren't you going to do something about your wife?" Titus didn't even acknowledge her presence. He radiated anger and grief. Veronica screamed, "DON'T YOU DARE TALK TO HIM! YOU ARE WEAK! Appealing to a man because you can't handle even the smallest fraction of what you allowed to happen to my little girl!" Alania rolled her eyes, "From one Queen to another, you know that things happen that we don't want. Sometimes they must. Haley did take some beatings; however, she survived. Do NOT call her yours. She is MY daughter!" Veronica screamed in rage.

She tackled Alania to the ground and beat her, taunting her, "What, didn't you see this coming? No? She is MY little girl! HOW COULD YOU LET THIS HAPPEN TO HER?" Alania popped away again, this time behind Jackson. Jackson linked me, "As if I wouldn't move out of the damn way." I shrugged.

Bjourn came up and grabbed his mother's arm. He told her, "Let's hear what she has to say, mom. Then she can get the fuck out. If she has nothing worth saying, dad can declare war on the fairies and the vampires." Veronica smiled, "Right you are, my son. Now, Alania what else is it you have to say. Keeping in mind I am making one thing VERY clear. Haley is MINE." Alania was annoyed. Veronica turned around, "Titus if you declare war, this bitch is mine." Titus nodded, "Of course my dear."

Alania's jaw dropped, "I'm the mother of your child! Haley wouldn't want the fairies to die. She would not want war and she especially does not want me to die." Veronica's jaw tightened, "Don't act like you know anything about her! Don't you even say her name!" Alania frowned, "Queen Veronica, I abhor violence. I do know her. I raised her."

Bjourn snorted, "Did you? Or did you allow your brother and his disgusting band of morons to rape her, beat her, and experiment on her? We clearly have different definitions of raising a child, Alania. I would never allow one hair to be harmed on the head of any child of mine. The things you allowed are depraved and reprehensible." Alania took a step back, "I didn't know she was raped by my brother until I read her note. I punished Fabian for it, even though I saw it would lead to my downfall. I love her." Titus spoke, "Don't use words you don't understand, Alania." The room shook with his power.

Alania shook her head, "She wasn't experimented on. She only mentioned Fabian raping her in her note. You are misinformed." Thor was angry and so was I. I told

her, "They are not misinformed. I don't really care what you believe, Alania. I want to get my wife, my mate, my..." I paused as my voice broke, "I want my Angel back. If you aren't going to help with that, get the fuck out. Get out of my home before your blood stains the walls and floors." Alania frowned, "I told her when I came, she would be alright. I would never let her die. She's my daughter." Veronica hissed, "I would never let her be taken if I could prevent it. You let it happen because you choose your pedophile brother over your own child! You disgust me! The choice is easy. Your child. Always. You didn't make that choice even once!"

Alaina frowned, "You don't understand the choices I make and that is fine. Titus, you may speak with my son, Aiden. He's the ruler of Faerie now, having stripped Fabian of all titles. He will... he will be aggrieved Haley has been taken. Both of my sons will be distraught over the circumstances she finds herself in." She finds herself in?! She was kidnapped! I hated this woman. I growled asking, "Are you going to help get her back?" Alania glanced at me, "I will return with my sons when we all speak in a few days. I meant for my presence to comfort you; however, I can see it does not. Dear Bexley, you look good my darling. I am happy you found your mate here." Bexley cried, "I don't understand Auntie. Why didn't you help her?" Alaina smiled sadly, "If she would've been in danger of dying, I wouldn't have allowed that. This is merely a trial for her. She will survive."

Marcus burst in through the door, knocking it off the hinges. Following closely behind him was a curvy blonde who I assumed was Torvi. Marcus yelled, "WHERE IS SHE?!" I honestly hadn't noticed he wasn't with the group prior to this. Marcus screamed, "WHY WASN'T SHE AT THE SUMMIT?! I KNEW something was wrong when she called. I should've come back!" He grabbed his hair with his hands. He wailed, "WHY DIDN'T I COME?" Torvi put her hands on his back, "It's not your fault, Marcus. She avoided the topic." He started throwing things until his gaze came to rest on Alaina. He yelled, "Bring her back now fairy!" Jackson brought up the feed and projected it on the wall.

Bexley gasped as Haley appeared on the screen. She screamed, "NO!" I was so tired. I felt like I hadn't slept in weeks. Had I really only seen my angel a few hours ago? I asked dejectedly, "What's wrong, Bexley? Are you all right?" But she didn't even look at me. She locked eyes on Alania, "Auntie? No, not this. You have to bring her back!" Liam held onto Bexley as she sobbed. Alaina looked at Bexley with sad eyes, "I'm sorry, my dear niece. It has to be this way." Bexley surprised me by yelling, "It doesn't have to be this way! Look at her!" Alaina sighed, "I don't have to look at her, I know. She will be all right." Bexley sobbed.

Marcus stared at her. Finally, he said to Bexley, "You know. You see it." Bexley nodded still sobbing. Bjourne looked between them confused. Finally, he spoke, "We will get her back brother, whether her pathetic excuse of a birth mother helps us or not. This isn't your fault. We will tear realms apart if necessary. We will find

her location and then they will all pay.” Marcus cried, “You don’t understand, brother.” Pops sounded. Two fairies surrounded the queen, “My Queen! You are hurt. WHO DID THIS?”

Miley looked between Marcus and Bexley, seeming to realize something. She screamed in anger, “NO! Tell me I’m wrong! Not this, Marcus. She can’t be!” Marcus had tears in his eyes as he whispered, “I promised.” I’d had enough.

I spoke in a deadly tone that put all the wolves on edge, “Someone tell me what you are all screaming about... Right Now.” Alaina shivered at my tone. Torvi spoke, “I didn’t promise. Haley’s pregnant.” I was shaken to my core and my knees went out from under me. Jackson was at my side in a second holding me up. Jim gripped Miley around the waist in a vice like grip. She screamed at the fairies, “YOU ANIMALS! YOU ARE ALL ANIMALS! LET ME GO! I’LL FUCKING KILL YOU! I’LL FUCKING KILL YOU ALL!” The fairies popped out as Veronica advanced on them again, enraged.

I couldn’t think. I couldn’t feel anything. My pup. My mate was having my pup and she’d been kidnapped from our home. Jackson cleared his throat, “Eric, let’s watch the feed. I have the men searching the grounds for any vampires or fairies that remain here. I think we will find some. We will get answers. We have a plan. We will hit all the vampire’s business. We will make them hurt. We have to watch the tape though, Eric.” Jackson linked me, “For Haley, Eric. Do this for Haley.”

I wiped the tears off my face as I nodded. Bexley spoke rapidly in fealish. I asked her “What was that?” Bexley had tears streaming down her face as she answered, “A charm to give us sound. Liam told me you don’t have sound on these feeds.” I nodded. I watched my angel speak to Dave. She was so beautiful. I took in her appearance. She was wearing my shirt. Shame filled me. I shouldn’t have left her. Fuck the summit, I should’ve stayed with her. We watched as Haley tensed. She announced something bad was coming. All my warriors went on alert then they collapsed. I yelled, “Fucking cowards! They couldn’t face my men! Weak ass mother fuckers!”

My rant was cut off when Haley was hit. She went to her knees and screamed in pain. Bexley cried harder. Haley spoke to our baby and my world stopped. She begged the baby to stay with her. I paused the feed and looked at Bexley. I could guess, but I needed her to tell me. I asked, “What did Haley get hit with?” Bexley shook, “Iron. It’s a concoction meant to take down a fairy so they can’t use their powers. Her fairy side would not be able to help her. Her powers would be gone.” I rocked and whispered, “The pup?” Bexley looked away, “The Queen told her everything in her body would be all right. That was her way of saying the baby will be ok.” I nodded and hit play. We continued watching.

I couldn't help but feel pride as Haley took everyone on alone. She was amazing, my mate. She staked a vampire, and all hell broke loose. I growled when Zephyr appeared and Ubbe hissed, "He would've been mine! He should not even be here!" Marcus snorted, "You can assure yourself he is dust on the lawn, brother." Ubbe nodded. I couldn't stop my roar when Zephyr told Haley he would take our child from her. Not one person was surprised when she beheaded him. She was too focused on him to realize the vampires had her surrounded. In true Haley fashion, she wasn't fazed. She expertly and beautifully staked all but one. The one she'd spoken with. He backed off and I watched him run away. Coward.

Titus spoke, "Bjourn and Marcus, you trained her so well. She's stunning to watch... Oh my poor Princess." His voice was thick with emotion, and he had tears in his eyes. Neither Marcus, nor Bjourn bothered to respond. When Haley was hit with more iron Bexley wailed. I was barely containing Thor as we watched Haley go down again. A female vampire, who I swore would die, picked Haley up. Haley still spoke back to the vampire with that sharp tongue of hers. Then a scream filled the air that chilled all our blood. We watched my mother be forced to shift back from her wolf to her human form. My dad gripped my mom tightly to him. I tensed. We all saw it. It rocked me to my core. My mom was defeated, she would've died. Here in my home. IN MY HOME. It was unacceptable. I was feared for a reason. It was a reason everyone would remember by the end of the night. They would remember what it was to fear me. They would remember WHY they feared me.

Haley screamed in anger. She fashioned a stake from a nearby branch, her eyes blazing gold. She killed the vampire holding her and took her sword, then she cut through fairies left and right. Bexley stared at the wall in shock. She asked the screen, "How are you still standing, cousin?" I locked eyes with Titus. I knew he was the reason. He'd given Haley all the strength he could, along with her brothers.

Haley took out so many on her way to my mom. She was a warrior through and through. I watched as she took a dagger from one fairy she killed and threw it with stunning accuracy. It flew through the air, impaling the arm of the man that was seconds away from killing my mother. Even though I was looking at my mother sitting here perfectly fine, relief flooded me when the dagger stalled his arm. The fairy screamed, looking around for who had injured him.

Haley kept moving, nothing was stopping her. The vampires faded back. I raised an eyebrow at Jackson. He nodded to me. I knew he would link the men that there were vampires hidden around. They'd better find them. Haley reached my mom. Pride filled me as she killed the fairy with his own sword to defend my mother. Tears filled my eyes. She gave me so much and I left her here. I'd meant to keep her safe. Instead, I left her open for attack. I failed her spectacularly. I promised myself here and now, it would not happen again. She commanded my pack to get my mother to safety. I frowned watching it. My mom had argued. It took precious

time away from Haley. I shook myself and watched as Haley turned and stood to defend our pack alone.

It was a mixture of feelings for me. Pride and shame, each emotion consuming me as she fought everyone off until my mother and pack members were safely inside. Haley took a deep breath and told our pup that I was coming. She told them that I didn't know about them yet, but I would be happy. She also told our pup that I would kill them all for the both of them." I whispered, "I will, my Angel. I'll kill them all for you both. I swear it." Haley made her way through the fairies. She cut them down left and right. My mother was right, she almost made it.

Suddenly, the sound cut out. I looked at Bexley, "What happened?" Bexley frowned, "It must already be tampered with so we wouldn't know who took her." Haley turned around. Someone had clearly said her name. I growled so loud the windows rattled when I saw the relief on her face. Whoever the fucker was, they waited until her back was turned. She was hit again with iron. She turned around as she fell. Right before the footage cut out, I saw her anguished face. Her mouth moved clearly asking why as the screen faded to black.

No one moved. I couldn't. Dave burst into the room, "Alpha, I know I failed you and the Luna. I am so sorry." I couldn't speak so I waved my hand. He couldn't have fought back. Those that came didn't want to face him. Dave continued, "On Alpha Jackson's orders we searched the grounds. I took a group to the top of the mountain, where we found two vampires and three fairies."

I stood as did the Hackura. I nodded, "Well, I think we should have a chat with our prisoners. Someone get me the vampire king on the phone." Dave nodded, "Of course Alpha. I thought you would want to speak to them, they are on the back lawn." The fastest way to them was through the window. I didn't have time to spare.

Screams sounded behind me as I ran at the window full speed. I broke through it and shifted mid fall. Thor linked me, "Let me take over for a while, Eric. We will get our mate and pup back." I linked him, "Are you ok? I know we are weaker without her here." Thor linked, "I've got this. The rage I feel... I have been weakened in a past life when my chosen mate was kidnapped. Instead of those feelings, I feel the rage fueling me. I am not weaker, that much I can tell you. I've got this."

I let him take control because I was spiraling, my inadequacies were circling my mind on a loop. Thor told me, "You have to put it aside. We can spend the rest of our lives making it up to mate. First, we need to get them back." I sighed. He was right. I needed to get my head on straight. Thor shifted back into human form. He nodded to the men who stood guard. I saw the fear in their faces when they realized my wolf was in charge. At least someone remembered I am to be feared.

Thor spoke, "I am not in the mood for fuckery, so someone tell me where my mate is. I also want to know who took her from our territory." A vampire spoke, "I personally don't know who took her. All I know is that it was my King's plan. The fairy... Fabio... Favon... whatever his name is, didn't want that person to come. He thought his plan was better with just the fairies and us. Clearly my King was right." Thor growled at him, "Why did you all back off from the fight?" The vampire didn't speak. A fairy sneered, "Because they were to keep watch. If we failed, they were to keep watch and see what your response would be. That's why they are still here."

Thor raised an eyebrow. My brothers and the Hackura joined us. Jackson handed me a pair of shorts. Jackson said, "Here Thor." My wolf quickly put them on. A fairy answered, "We had orders to stay as well. We were to see who showed up. Fabian wanted us to gauge how discussions would go with the Hackura and with you for negotiations."

Titus outright laughed, "Fairy, do you not know who I am?" The fairy tilted his head, "King Titus Cambridge. Everyone knows who you are." Titus shook his head, "That's not what I meant fairy. I DO NOT discuss or negotiate. I kill." The fairy sputtered, "No... no. Fabian said no one would declare war for the abomination." Thor roared, "DO NOT EVER CALL HER THAT! I am declaring war for her. The vampires are on fucking notice. We are at war. As far as I'm concerned, until King Aiden reaches out to me, the treaty has been broken. We are back at war with you." The fairy looked at me like I had three heads.

Titus spoke, "We are at war as well. As the King of the Hackura, I declare war with the Fae and the Vampires." The vampires and fairies cringed. Titus commanded, "Bjourn, notify our people. Get someone to bring Valtellina to me. She brought us the news that Haley did not need us through the summit. I will know if she lied to us and had a hand in this." Bjourn nodded and walked away on his phone.

Thor growled, "Does anyone else have any information like, oh I don't know WHERE MY MATE AND MY PUP ARE?" A vampire laughed. Thor snapped his arm in half. He yelled, "DO NOT LAUGH AT ME! WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?" The vampire hissed in pain, "Because.... Because Damon wanted her to be pregnant when he took her. He wanted to leverage you for the child instead of the girl. Fabio... Favon, whatever his name is said you only cared about a pup. He said that you would leave our King be with her if he could give you a child in return. Your child." Thor hissed, "His name is Fabian. He is a moron and so is your King for listening to him. I'll have them both back. My mate AND my pup. Do you hear me fanger?!" The vampire cringed, "We have no more information for you. Take us to your dungeon."

Thor smiled and attacked. He shifted into wolf form and ripped the vampire limb from limb until he got to his throat and ripped it out. The vampire turned to goo. Thor shifted back, and ordered, "Take the others to the cells. Titus, should you wish, they are you and yours to deal with. If you don't want them then I will deal with them later." Titus smiled, "We want them. I do believe Marcus needs to work out some anger." They left with the pack warriors. I knew they would show them the torture room.

Thor took one step before my brothers surrounded us. Jackson said, "Thor, can we speak to Eric?" Thor shook his head, "Eric needs time. I am protecting him by giving him time to collect himself." Jackson nodded, "Alright. Can he hear us, or did you block him out?" Thor shook his head, "No, he can hear you." Jackson nodded, "That makes things easier. I won't have to repeat this later. No one is answering our calls to the vampire king." Thor nodded, "Stake out all the locations we identified that he might take her to." Jackson nodded. I knew he was linking orders to our people.

Bjourn walked back over to me. He put a hand on my shoulder. I could see the unbridled emotion in his eyes. He wasn't handling this any better than I was. Bjourn said, "I understand the order. Once Haley's feelings settle down, we will all feel her in the bond again. We will be able to track which location she is at easier." Thor nodded, "Yes, but we don't know when that will be. She is struggling. She has kidnapped and betrayed. Being pregnant, her emotions are not stable. We do not know when she will recover from the iron. I need to know where she is." Bjourn nodded.

Thor turned to my brothers, "We need to contact our allies. Let them know we are back at war. This time there will be battles. I want every vampire seen in this area killed or captured on sight. Do not kill the fairies immediately, just capture them. Hit all the businesses and homes the vampire king owns on phase one of our plan. If he does not answer the phone, he will hear from people what we are doing goddamn it. He'll have to call himself to try and stop us."

We all went back into the war room. Jackson coordinated warriors with Liam, they were being sent out to locations. Ubbe came in to give a report. He told us, "Our messengers were tricked. They had never met until a few moments ago. Both spoke to a different person." Thor nodded. After a few hours of looking through the paperwork I spoke to Thor, "Give me back control." Thor asked, "Are you sure? Are you ok?" I told him, "I'm as fine as I'm going to be without her. I'm taking us to where there will be a fight." Thor hummed, "Good. I need to kill something." He gave me back control.

Jackson sighed in relief. Marcus came into the room covered in blood. Jackson asked, "Eric, are you alright?" I shook my head, "No, I'm not and until my mate is back home, I won't be, so don't bother asking. I am going to lead the attack on the

vampire club King Damon owns. I want him to know I'm coming for him personally." Jackson frowned, "Then I'm coming with you." I shook my head, "Someone needs to stay here. I need to know the second we reach the vampire king." Jackson grimaced, "With all due respect brother, I'm coming. Darrin, Harold, you two are in charge here. We will be back." Marcus and Bjourn and another brother I hadn't met followed us out. I grabbed Liam, Dave, and twenty more warriors who were preparing for this attack. I spoke to them, "This is for your Luna. They do NOT get to take our Luna and get away with it. Spare no one." They all howled as we got into the SUVs.

We rode in silence until the brother I didn't know spoke, "You are worthy of my sister, Alpha Eric. She would be proud of what you are doing for her. Probably surprised, as she does not know her own worth, but she would be happy you are fighting for her." I nodded, "I don't think she would be surprised at this point. She knows what she is to me. I love her, and she knows that. I would never leave her in the hands of anyone who meant her harm. I do not believe we have met." He shook his head, "We haven't. I am Drake." I shook his hand, "I wish we could've met under better circumstances, Drake. I meant to make it over to you guys at the reception but... that did not go according to plan. Call me Eric."

Drake nodded, "This isn't your fault, you know. If you wish to place blame, blame the fairies." I told him honestly, "I do blame them, but she begged me to take her to the summit. I left her home thinking her guard was there. I thought that she was safer at home than the summit since the vampire king was going to attend." Marcus interjected, "I would've done the same thing. I knew something was wrong with her. I just brushed it off as hormones. I ignored my instincts. This wouldn't have happened had I come to her."

Jackson growled, "ENOUGH! Both of you. This doesn't help Haley. She needs you both to get it together. The blame game does nothing. Eric, your wolf took charge because you were too upset to handle this; thinking it was your fault. This is no one's fault but the one who took her and betrayed her. We have vampires to kill. A lot of them. Focus on that. We are sending a message. Eric, this is your plan. You have to focus, because without her we all know what that means. If you want to walk into the building, then cut it the fuck out. I will not claim to understand the pain of your mate being taken. I won't claim to understand knowing that your pup in danger inside her but get it the FUCK together. For her and for your pup. Do it now since we are here. I don't care if I get hurt fighting you, but if you think I'll let you walk in there like this you are wrong." Bjourn chuckled, "Well spoken, wolf."

Jackson slammed out of the car, Drake and Bjourn following, to give Marcus and I a moment alone in the SUV. Marcus spoke, "He's right. I don't blame you, Eric. No one does." I snorted, "No one blames you either." Marcus chuckled bitterly, "No one except us. Let's go kill some vampires. I don't know about you, but it will

make me feel better to kill some of them.” I nodded. I shoved all my feelings aside. I stepped out of the SUV. I nodded to my warriors. I commanded them again, “No one leaves here alive. Understood?” The warriors nodded, “Yes, Alpha.” I growled, “For our Luna!” The warriors cheered, then instantly quieted. We entered the club after killing the doorman.

I didn’t care about the carnage we were going to leave behind. This area was warded by witches, only supernatural’s could enter. I walked through the club unnoticed. Some of my men moved to cover the exits. I stopped when we heard cheers. A vampire held up a cup of blood, “CHEERS to King Damon! We took the most feared Alpha’s mate, the Princess of the Hackura and Fae! No consequences have been felt. I heard the King is going to drink her in court tonight, sharing her blood with his three closest advisors.” I locked eyes with a vampire as most cheered. He started looking around, but there was nowhere to run. The vampire making the toast concluded, “Cheers to our generous King!” Everyone cheered except a few who’d spotted us.

I roared and silence fell immediately. Astonished and scared eyes fell on me. I narrowed my eyes at the vampire who had led the toast. I spoke, “I assure you all there will be consequences. If you do not recognize the men beside me, these are Princes’ Bjourn, Marcus and Drake Cambridge of the Hackura. Your King isn’t aware yet because he won’t answer his GODDAMN PHONE but allow me to tell you. Me and mine have declared war against all vampires.” Hisses echoed through the club. A few vampires tried to get out the door but were quickly staked by my men. Bjourn spoke, “Speaking on behalf of my Father, King Titus Cambridge, the Hackura are also at war with Vampires. Our sister will be returned to us, but you will not be around to see it.” Several went to their knees. One yelled, “Please MERCY! We didn’t condone this action. The King would not be swayed.”

Marcus chuckled, “Brother, I don’t think our reputation precedes us with the vampires. I find I am offended.” Bjourn laughed. Drake replied, “The Hackura do not give mercy. We bring death.” With that he staked a vampire. I shifted, letting Thor loose, Jackson and our men following my lead. I began my rampage by flying through the air to the vampire who led the toast. I leapt on his chest and ripped his head off with my jaws. I destroyed every vampire I got my hands on. I had just ripped apart another one when I felt my mark begin to burn. I howled in agony as I felt Haley’s unbridled pain. An action that should’ve caused me to go down in pain. Instead, my strength intensified. I lost my composure and ripped through the remaining vampires. I took four vampires down at once. When I finished them off, I shifted back. One of my men handed me another pair of shorts.

I was so angry. I turned to speak to Marcus when the softest whisper entered my mind. It was the voice I had longed to hear. Relief and joy filled me as I heard Haley’s voice, she whispered like she was fading. I shouted out loud, “NO!” All eyes were on me I linked Haley back desperately telling her to hang on. She

promised me... she had to remember. I could hear the smile in her voice as she told me she was passing out from blood loss. I growled in anger remembering the words spoken about the King feeding from her. He fucking shared her. I lost her in our link. I closed my eyes and felt for our bonds. Our mate bond and Hackura were intact.

Jackson grabbed my arm, "Brother?" I hissed, "That BASTARD! He did it! He shared and almost drained her, but she's hanging on." Bjourn nodded, "She's still there. I feel it." Marcus and Drake nodded. Marcus spoke, "As do we." I strode out of the club and gathered my men. We got back into our cars. We had sent a clear message sent to King Damon.

Once we got back, we went back to the war room. We worked tirelessly, but we were unable to reach King Damon by the time sunrise came. Anger coursed through me. I knew Damon had to have known what I'd done before he died for the day. I was holding out hope that come nightfall the King would understand he's fucked up. Maybe he would return her to me.

I was distracted when my phone rang. I picked it up absentmindedly. I heard Aiden's panicked voice, "Wolf of my sisters' I don't understand. My people are reporting werewolf attacks and Hackura attacks." I growled, "Did you not speak to your mother? Our treaty is void as far as I'm concerned. The Hackura have no treaty with your people. Haley was kidnapped, shot full of iron fighting until her last moment here when she was betrayed with our pup in her belly."

Aiden's sorrow came through in his tone, "Haley... oh my poor sister. I can't make it to you today, but I'll come with Arion and Mother. We... we will figure this out. I banished Fabian from Faerie. I stripped his titles; he does not act with any authority of mine." I replied tersely, "Which is why no werewolf is killing fairies on sight, merely capturing them. I do not speak for the Hackura. I will make sure they are here when you come so we can all have a discussion. Your mother may want to bring her guards. I do not think Veronica will be any nicer to her than she was earlier today." Aiden was confused but agreed. We hung up. Jackson touched my shoulder, "You need to try to sleep." I nodded. I went to Haley and my room, collapsing on the bed. I pulled her pillow over to me. Her smell enveloped me. I let loose a sob into the pillow, "I'm so sorry angel. I'll get you back." I reached out in our bond, but I could feel she was out. I drifted off to sleep.

I woke up screaming in pain. The halls echoed in the quiet as my screams reverberated. I heard footsteps rushing to me. My family burst into the room looking for danger. I knew they saw nothing. I couldn't explain it, I was gasping for air. My mom stepped forward cautiously. She asked, "Son, what's happening?" I knew she was scared, but I couldn't speak. The pain was blinding.

Bjourn ran into the room with Marcus not far behind him. Bjourn explained, "It's not his pain. Since he's her mate, he feels Haley more closely. She can't control her side of the bond right now, she's in too much pain. She would not let him feel her pain if she could help it." Bjourn moved closer to me, "You can control this, Eric. Feel your bond with Haley. Keep her feelings with you but separate them from yourself." I screamed, "THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!" Marcus stepped up, "Imagine them as strands that are separated. You need to combine them." That I could work with. I nodded and imagined what Marcus had instructed.

The pain had lessened, but it was still intense. I groaned. Marcus spoke again, "Now imagine yourself pushing them down." As soon as I did what he said everything felt clearer. I sat up, "She feels that?" Both brothers nodded tersely. I looked outside and yelled, "The fairies GOD DAMN IT! It's daytime, the vampires are down. It's the fairies. They are torturing her."

Titus staggered into the room, "So it appears. I feel her stronger than my children do because I am her father. It even took me a moment to calm my side of the bond down." He turned to Bjourn and Marcus, "My sons, bring me Hexxus." Marcus and Bjourn nodded and left the room.

Darrin stared at Titus in shock. He sputtered, "We released him." Titus nodded, "You did. Marcus followed him outside your territory, then he captured him and brought him home. When I reach Fabian by phone, because BY GOD, I will get him on the phone. I will let him know the pain my Princess felt was felt tenfold by his son."

I winced and grabbed my head. It felt as though a spike was drilling into my head. I welcomed it the second I heard, "My Eric isn't mean to me fake sim Eric! Try again you fat, sadistic fuck! I know this isn't real!" I desperately tried to link her, "Haley? Angel, what does that mean?" The piercing stopped. I winced. She was gone. I stood and got dressed. I told Jackson, "Let's get to the war room. I need Bexley. Haley just broke through whatever is stopping her from contacting me. Her words didn't make any sense." Jackson nodded.

I took a moment to steady my shaking hands. I put my game face on and left the room. Someone had already gotten Bexley to the war room by the time I got there. She looked to me expectantly. She rushed her words out in a huff, "Did you find her? I can't heal her, but my presence will comfort her. As another fairy and her relative." I shook my head, "We have men scouting for her location as we speak."

Bjourn interrupted, "Ubbe joined them. We will find out where she is shortly." I sighed in relief. I needed to know where she was. I said, "Good. That's good. As soon as Haley breaks the enclosure charm, we will have her back." Bexley gasped, "Enclosure charm? That... I don't even know how to break that." I frowned, "She will figure it out. She broke through and linked me a few moments ago. It didn't

make sense. She didn't seem to realize she was talking to me. She said her Eric wasn't mean to her. She also said something about a sim Eric. She told Fabian, mind you I'm assuming he's the fat sadistic fuck, to try again."

Bexley's face contorted in anger. She screamed, "NO! They can't be putting her through SIMS!" Liam wrapped his arms around her. Titus's face darkened. He stepped in front of Bexley and ordered her, "Calm down! Just tell us what you know. Directly, no hidden words or fun." Bexley paled.

She shrank into Liam who growled. Bexley patted his arm, "It's ok, Pookie bear." That was going to be reflected upon later. Liam's new name was, hands down, Pookie bear. Bexley continued, "He's just worried about Haley. We all are. King Titus, SIMS are kind of like a virtual reality. They are meant to trick information out of someone. Or to get someone to fairy promise to agree to terms they want. What does Fabian want from her? It shouldn't be done to someone who is pregnant."

Marcus spat out, "He won't get it. Whatever he wants." Bexley frowned, "You don't understand. They are clearly trying to use Eric to break her. Simulations are... you just want them to end. When she realizes they aren't real she can look for the ripple to get out. She said that you were mean to her when she broke through. That means Fabian programmed the sim to treat Haley as he does. Should he adjust it and you are you... she may not want to leave the simulation. Simulations are done in between torture rounds. If... if he rapes her..." She stopped as I roared.

Darrin held me back, pushing me against the wall as Liam moved Bexley behind him, eyes narrowed. Darrin spoke, "She's not the one doing it. She's just explaining Eric. It's ok brother." I nodded. Bexley continued with a shaky voice, "If he does, she may not want to leave the simulation. If she broke through already, you're going to get more snips until the vampires wake up." I raised an eyebrow, "Why would it stop then?" Bexley shrugged, "The King has made it clear he wants her blood. He will not be able to take it while she's in a simulation."

I sighed and sat down in a chair. I quickly jerked upright, as did Titus, when Haley's pain came through like a hot rod before I tamped it back down. I yelled, "FUCKING FUCKERS FUCK. Jackson, find me someone to kill. NOW!" Marcus spoke, "Hexxus is in the dungeons here, dad." Liam linked me, "The Hackura Queen is... destroying things in the gym. She's uhh... fierce. Should I stop her?" I snorted, "No, Liam." Titus stood, "Eric, you may join me if you need to." I shook my head, "I appreciate it, but he is yours now. Your wife may need to join you, my warriors are linking me that she's destroying the gym." Titus chuckled, "Ah my little spit fire. I will pay for the repairs." I shrugged, "That's not necessary. I do not care about the gym. I have more than enough money to fix anything she breaks." Titus nodded and walked out.

I threw myself into work. I reviewed every report personally. Lucas had gone himself and hit many of our targets. I called and thanked him. Surprisingly, Lucas's Beta, Dylan, had been quiet. It must have been the tone in my voice. I couldn't help but think of Lucas and my relationship. We often commiserated with one another about not finding our mates. Especially as we got older and had not found them. We'd even offered each other our bodies on occasion. That time was past now. Neither of us held romantic feelings for the other, just respect. It was kind of Lucas to lead so many charges. I would do the same for him should he be in this position. I shook myself. I would not let this happen to any of my allies. It was torture to be away from Haley.

I enacted part two of my plan. I sent an anonymous tip to the FBI that several of the businesses owned by the vampire king were fronts for human trafficking. Which was true. The humans in question just happened to be pets. Most were willing to be pets, though there were some who weren't. Jim came in a few hours later with a red-faced, tear-stained Miley.

He cleared his throat, "The FBI took our tips seriously. They froze all those businesses accounts. They didn't detect that we were monitoring them." I didn't think they would, our equipment was superior to theirs. I nodded, then I winced again when it felt like something was piercing my skull. This time Haley sounded sad, "Eric, I know you're not real, but I miss you..." I tried to reach her, "Haley... Angel... Talk to me please!" My responses didn't seem to go to her. Next, I heard, "I know because you don't call me babe. It's not our thing." With that she was gone again.

I grabbed all the papers and threw them from the desk. I stood and began punching the walls. I whirled around, "Someone tell me we have reached Fabian!" Darrin frowned, "Unfortunately, we haven't. We have the right number, so he's just not answering our people." I frowned, looking at the mess I'd caused. A card on the ground caught my eye. It was Marcious' card.

I quickly picked up the card and dialed. Marcious actually answered, "Ahh Haley's wolf. I would say I'm surprised to get your call; however, I am not." I didn't bother to play games, "I need you here tomorrow. The Queen and her sons will be here. You need to tell her what you know." Marcious paused, "I'm not sure tomorrow will work for me." I growled, "I do not care what works for you fairy. Be here or I will never tell you what Haley told me when I told her why you wanted to do her a favor."

Marcious replied quickly, "Unless she knows of my daughter's last moments, she has nothing I want. Fabian does." He was wrong. I growled, "Maribella." Marcious dropped the phone. I heard it hit the ground. He quickly picked it back up. "I did not tell you my daughter's name." I agreed, "No, you did not tell me." Marcious

cried, “Haley told you, her name. I will be there.” I rolled my eyes, “I thought you might be.”

I slammed the phone down. Jackson immediately said, “Haley knew his daughter.” It wasn’t a question. I looked up, “Haley more than knew her, she saved her. Maribella is alive. She’s here in this realm along with many others Haley saved from their ring.” Jackson gaped, “She... she was a child being abused and she still saved others?” I nodded, “It’s who she is, who she has always been.”

Her pain hit me again. I looked around the room. When I saw it was only Jackson and Caleb, I let myself cry. I looked over at my brother, “Her pain Jackson... it’s so intense.” My voice broke, “Our pup... I don’t know how the pup will survive this. I don’t know how SHE will survive this. I can’t go on without her Jackson. I can’t and I won’t. I need you to promise to take my position as lead Alpha if we can’t save her.”

Jackson growled, “I’ll do no such thing. We WILL get her back. We will save her and your pup. She is strong, brother. She will survive. She did before, and now she has reasons to hang on. Her goddess gave her protections this time, and she endured all this and more before. She can do this Eric. She will fight with everything in her to get back to you.” I sighed. I hoped he was right because I would not live a moment past making every person die who had a hand in this. I cried feeling her pain again. I began to do something I never thought I would. I prayed for nightfall.

The sun never went down, I hissed, “What the actual fuck is going on? It’s seven o’clock at night and the sun is still shining.” Darrin walked in and he didn’t look happy. He ran a hand through his hair, “I don’t know what’s going on. The humans appear to have the illusion that it’s dark outside. Only supernatural’s can tell the sun still shines.”

Like a punch to the skull, Haley’s voice entered my mind again, “I’ll never stop fighting, sim Eric. It’s who I am you’ll never get what you want me. DO YOU HEAR ME?” she faded out again. I punched the table, “Sweet, merciful Jesus WHAT DOES HE WANT FROM HER?” My dad walked in, “Son, go get some sleep.” I told him, “I can’t.” My dad frowned, “I wasn’t asking, go.” I growled, “I am not a child.” My dad shook his head, “You are my child, Eric. You always will be. Go to bed.”

I swung blindly at my dad who swung back. We began to fight and beat each other. No one dared say anything until my mom walked into the room. She yelled, “You two stop that this INSTANT!” Both of us froze. My mom glared at my dad. She put her hands on her hips, “HONESTLY, I send you to do one thing Nathan Connors! I told you to make sure my baby gets some sleep.” She turned to me and said, “Come on, Eric. Just go lay down for a few hours. Jackson will come get you

if anything happens.” I knew arguing with her was futile. I stumbled after my mother as she led me to bed. I closed my eyes and hugged Haley’s pillow again.

I woke in a dark, fog filled area. I groaned and sat up, “FUCK! I do NOT have time for shit.” The most beautiful voice floated to me, “Hello again, SIM Eric.” I whirled around. Everything snapped back into place as I saw her. Haley was bleeding from head to toe, but she was here. She was alive. I ran to her. I told her, “This isn’t a SIM. What is this place?” Haley laughed, “You always say that, but...” She trailed off and tears filled her eyes, “Oh fuck them all to hell and back.” She jumped on me. She crammed her head into my neck. I wrapped my arms around her, feeling at peace for the first time since I left for the summit. Haley whispered, “They made you smell like you. I miss you, Eric.”

I pulled her back and kissed her hard. She responded. I broke the kiss and just held her. Haley’s voice sounded small when she spoke, “You’ve never kissed me in the SIMS before, Eric.” I sighed, “I don’t know how to make you believe this is real. If I tell you something only, I would know, will you believe me?” She shrugged, “I guess you could try.” I thought about it then said, “When we first met, I came out from behind the tree, and you asked who said that. Your brain told you I was yours. Even before you knew what was happening you knew I was yours. I’ll always be yours.” Haley cried, “It’s you. It’s really you!” I held onto her, “It’s me, I’m here.”

Haley gasped, “Wait! How can you be here? The Shadow realm is for fairies.” I shrugged, “I have no idea how I got here.” I looked around and added, “This doesn’t seem like a place a fairy would like.” Haley frowned, “I can come here whenever I want as a reprieve from my body. The problem is they keep waking me up.” I frowned, “I’m coming for you, Angel. I was praying for nightfall so the fairies would leave you alone. I’m coming though. Don’t give up.”

Haley spat out, “I’ll never give up. I’ll never stop fighting. Masium has the power to make the sun stay up for a time. He’ll be unconscious for a few days once his power runs out though.” I frowned, “Why would he use it? What do they want from you? Who betrayed you, Angel?” She was about to answer when her body flew back from me, and she vanished into thin air.

I roared in anger. I woke up to Jackson shaking me. I explained what happened. Jackson nodded. “Fairy shit is weird. At least you saw her, Eric. She’s alive. That’s what matters.” I growled, “She’s fucking broken physically, Jackson. She’s bleeding from head to toe. She doesn’t know what’s real.” Jackson nodded, “She’s alive though, let’s focus on that. You saw her which you desperately needed. I’m sure she did too. On an entirely different note, her fairy family is here.”

I growled, “Fucking perfect. Just what I needed. I may just turn one of them to dust.” I got up and got dressed, then made my way downstairs. I strode into the war

room, met by the former Queen, Aiden, and Arion. My family along with Titus, Veronica, Bjourn and Marcus were there too. Aiden stood, "I am sorry my sister has been taken. I did not want that. I wanted her to be safe here, with you. What will it take to keep my people safe? What can I give to you?" I glared at him, "My wife. You can give me my wife." Aiden frowned, "I can't currently give her to you. I tried after you called and was thrown back when I popped. I can and will aid you in the search for her."

Titus leaned forward, "Declare the fairies that go against your crown traitors. I will continue my vengeance on those who have harmed her, and those alone, if you do." Aiden sat back clearly considering Titus' words. Alaina spoke, her voice shaking with fear, "Aiden, we pursue peace you cannot do this. Titus will kill them all." Aiden glanced at his mother, "If I do not agree our people will die. I did not authorize this. I showed Haley acceptance at the wedding. I danced with her. She is our Princess. She was not to be harmed ever again. I decreed it." He turned to Titus and told him, "I agree, King Titus." Alaina screamed, "NO AIDEN!" Aiden stared at her incredulously, "She's your daughter! She's my sister! What on earth, mother? She's suffering. Our people are suffering. I am keeping us safe and trying to bring my sister back where she belongs. What is going on with you?"

Before she could answer a pop sounded. Prince Marcious stood before us. He looked angry. He said, "Alaina, we need to speak. Outside. Right now. You do not even believe your own children about the horrors Fabian subjected your own daughter to. They cannot lie! You foolishly believe you would've seen those paths when Fabian has always known how to get around your sight. Stand up Alania. Have some dignity and speak with me outside." Alania shrunk back as he spoke to her. She whispered, "You would speak to me this way?" Marcious ground out, "He killed my baby! My beautiful daughter. OUTSIDE. NOW WOMAN! I am losing my patience with this! The wolf has information I want, and you are in my way."

Alania stood, her hands shaking. Veronica laughed, "Finally. At least someone told that bitch her place." Arion spoke, "Watch it. She is our mother." Bjourn stood, "And you are speaking to mine. Take care fairy, or your next words may well be your last." Arion shrugged him off but there was fear in his eyes at Bjourn's words.

I spoke, "If you would help us bring Haley home Aiden, I would not turn down the offer. She has broken through to our connection a few times. She's being put into simulations and tortured. The sun hasn't set here in two days..." I would've continued but Arion jumped to his feet. He was outraged, "WHAT?! Simulations? No! Tortured... no that's... No!" Aiden grabbed his brother by the hand. Aiden asked me, "How do you know that?"

Bexley spoke to Aiden, but her eyes were on Arion, "She broke through their connection. She didn't answer Eric, but she called him a fake Eric. She even called him sim Eric. Tell me, cousin, what other conclusion is there?" Aiden frowned.

Arion paled. He ripped his arm away from his brother and strode purposefully towards the door. Aiden was perplexed, asking, "Where are you going brother?" Arion didn't even pause, as he called over his shoulder, "To do something to help our sister." He slammed the door open.

Bexley frowned as Arion disappeared as we heard a pop. Aiden frowned again, "I will alert my people that we are calling those involved in my sister's abduction traitors to the Crown. I will do all I can to find her. I know you don't believe it, but I do love my sister. She was supposed to finally be happy here, with you. I've never seen her as happy as she was here. I want to see that light in her eyes. The one she had when she looked at you."

Before I could respond Marcious entered with Alania, who was sobbing. She kept repeating, "I never knew it all. My baby. Oh, my darling girl." Aiden took her hand. He nodded to me before they popped out.

Marcious immediately asked me, "I fulfilled my end and spoke to Alania. What did Haley tell you?" I nodded, "You did. Maribella lives." Marcious staggered backwards, almost falling down, "No... it's not possible. My inside man saw Fabian's memories. It's a power all water Fae have. Fabian left her to die." I nodded, "He did. Haley overheard them saying they left her to die. She found Maribella and healed her. She told her to hide in the human realm and aided her escape. Haley thought they were all humans. She didn't realize there were other partial fairies besides herself."

Marcious sat down, stunned. After several moments he said, "She... she saved her? Healed Maribella. You said healed. Haley can heal? That's... my word. I did not suspect her to be that strong of a healer. I... I have to find my baby. I will have to put off finding my other children. Thank you, Alpha, I am in your debt and the debt of my cousin." With that he popped out.

It was only a moment after that when Haley's screams broke through our connection. I quickly realized it wasn't just our connection. Every wolf in the room was on the ground as the pain hit our skulls. In her terror she was reaching everyone. Her panicked scream came through loud and clear, "ERIC! ERIC! PLEASE!" I responded quickly, "Haley I am here, Angel. Can you hear me?" She cried, "You called me Angel. Please be real. Don't leave, Eric. You keep leaving me. You left me in the meadow, and by the waterfall." I looked around confused. Jackson nodded. They could hear her. I told her, "Angel, we've never been in a meadow, or by a waterfall." She sobbed, "Don't go. Don't go. He's going to rape me, Eric. Please don't go. I don't want to be here anymore Eric. I want to come home."

My eyes filled with tears. I let loose a roar of anguish. "I'm here Angel. I am here. You just say whatever you need to me. Hang on Haley. You just hang on. I'm here.

I'm with you." I looked around. Bjourn, Titus, Marcus and Veronica were staring at us in horror. I heard a pained cry in the hallway.

Bjourn jumped up yelling, "MILEY!" He ran out as Haley's voice calmed down. I didn't know what happened, but she was calmer. She was whimpering instead of sobbing. Jackson, Darrin, and Harold came over to me. They braced me to feel the pain of my mate being with someone else. It was going to put me on the ground in pain. We waited, but the pain never came.

Bjourn walked back into the room, his face ashen but his eyes held rage. They were blazing gold. He announced, "Jim told Miley what Haley said to them. Fabian is going to rape her again dad. We promised her this would never happen again." He punched the table. Titus' eyes blazed along with Marcus's. They looked like he might be sick. Veronica started to cry.

I reached out in our link, "Haley, Angel what's happening?" Haley was still whimpering. She whispered, "Arion saved me, Eric. I want to come home. Please... I just want to come home." I let out a sigh of relief, "Ok, it's over angel. Arion will bring you home to me. You're coming home. It's over." She cried, "He won't." I growled, "Of course he will Angel. If he takes you to Faerie, then Aiden will bring you to me. You're coming home." Haley cried, "Arion won't take me anywhere." I frowned, "Why do you think that?" She cried, "Because he's the one who brought me here." I lost all sense and destroyed everything I could get my hands on.

To Be Continued in Volume 2