

Dr. Luna

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The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 21

"Ryan you're back..." Zach said trailing off quietly as the new people walked into the room.

"These people are our guests tonight. These are Lucy's parents and her aunt and uncle. I expect you to treat them with respect." Derek set a firm gaze over his vampires and watched them all nod in acknowledgment. "So that is why Lucy took off... we thought you were ditching Ryan here." Sabrina giggled.

"Go about your business. I know there are things you all should be doing." Derek said sternly. He watched as one by one the group dissipated. He sighed and walked over to the couch sitting Lucy down. He frowned and knelt in front of her. She looked paler all of the sudden and he kept getting random jolts of pain that he knew was hers. He reached his hand up to smooth her hair behind her ear. "Lucy... you are burning up."

"Okay, Lucy let's see what we are dealing with." Freya pulled the pant legs up on her daughter. She inspected the wound carefully.

"I don't understand. We have taken hits from this vervain before. It has never affected us like this..." Derek said quietly.

"This special mixture wasn't meant for vampires solely," Freya said with disgust. "This mixture is intended for someone who is both werewolf and vampire." She shook her head slightly as she ran her finger alongside of her unhealing wounds. The silver wasn't bothering her daughter, but the vervain was. However, it was the strange mixture that was making it harder on Lucy. What the hell did that witch get into. This wasn't normal witchcraft. It was dark... it was demonic. Still though... this wasn't why Lucy wasn't healing. "Freya." Wyatt walked up and stared at her concerned face. That seemed to be getting agitated over something.

"They were healing mom. I just reopened the wounds." Lucy said trying to alleviate her concern.

Lucy.

Lucy looked up her mother confused. Why was she mind linking her?

Take it down. Freya ordered. The barrier you have set up guarding yourself against your mate.

Lucy gasped. How did her mother know about that? It was the reason it was harder for her to feel the soul mate connection. It may have leaked through a bit but the reason she wasn't constantly feeling it was because she had been guarding her heart. The truth was that she always had her guard up. She never wanted to overly expose her feelings too, so this helped guard them. She had to be strong. For her pack, for everyone. And letting people in scared her a little. The truth was she was a bit anxious about having a soul mate. Someone able to see her true self. What if he didn't like the person he saw? There was no hiding herself from that.

Freya smiled at her daughter knowingly. And she felt a bit at fault. She should have explained to her daughter a long time ago the importance of letting people in on a deeper level. Especially your mate. Though to be fair she didn't talk about the mate stuff since she didn't want her to feel bad. But it was different now that Derek was her fated mate and a soul mate at that.

Lucy, you have nothing to be afraid of now. You are allowed to claim your mate. He isn't someone you have to reject. You don't have to guard yourself anymore. You are blocking your energy from flowing properly. And connecting to your mate will make you stronger. Freya gripped onto Lucy's wrist for a moment. She should have noticed this a long time ago. She felt guilty. Lucy was the one she never worried about and because of that, this slipped by her.

What if he doesn't like who I am on the inside? It feels incredibly revealing... to be connected on that deep level.

No, Lucy. It is freeing. Trust me. I went years being isolated and having no one. I didn't think I could trust anyone or bare myself to anyone. But once I met your father, I realized how wrong I was. Having someone to share your soul with is very comforting. It is someone who truly accepts you for who you are. There is no reason to hide from someone like that. Look at him Lucy. There is only concern in his eyes. No judgement. That is what is so amazing and special about having a fated mate. It is something I never talked to you about before because of your situation... but there is nothing more amazing than the feeling of pure acceptance.

Lucy turned her head to look at Derek slightly. She met with his amber eyes that were full of concern. She looked back at her mother who had a small smile resting on her face. The problem wasn't just her blocking her mate. It was that deep down she always guarded herself so much that she wasn't quite sure how to bring those walls down.

She was sure if people knew she blocked a part of herself off that they would be shocked. She was always outgoing and helpful. Yet deep down she was guarded. And she remembered when it first happened... It was the time she was ten and she had gone to spend a week with Derek over the summer. It was the summer he turned fifteen

and changed completely. She was hurt and didn't want to feel on that deep of a level. While her emotions were still there, she was able to build up an almost numbing wall around herself. No matter what, the pain would never be devastating. She could almost laugh at herself. Here it wasn't even Derek then. It was some stand-in. A stand-in was the reason she closed part of herself off.

Lucy took in a deep breath. She tried to focus on her mental barrier but the moment she deep a stab of emotional pain seeped out. She immediately halted. She didn't want to feel that. She didn't want to feel that moment again. You have to Lucy.

Lucy shook her head and looked at her mother. "I can't-"

Freya narrowed her eyes at her. "A child of mine is telling me they can't? We don't know the meaning of that word."

Lucy smiled. "I can't do this in front of everyone is what I was going to say."

"Oh... well that's more like it." Freya looked at Derek. "Take her someplace quiet where she can concentrate. Which way to the kitchen? We better get Jin her chocolate before she faints." She stood up and winked over at Wyatt showing him everything was okay. "I'll show you and put some coffee on," Jasper said walking them towards the kitchen.

Derek reached his arms around Lucy and pulled her up into his chest. He wasn't sure what was going on but was doing what he was told. He felt her curl into his chest as he carried her back to his bedroom. He took her in and shut the door behind him. He very tenderly laid her onto the bed and adjusted the pillows around her so she could sit upright.

He slid beside her facing her. His hand came up and gently brushed across her cheek as he stayed locked onto her green eyes. "Are you okay?"

She nodded her head. "I'm okay. I just need to do something..." She watched him waiting for her to explain patiently. She didn't know why but she felt embarrassed over it. "You once mentioned that I wasn't feeling the soul mate connection because I wasn't viewing you as my mate. That isn't entirely true... I-I-I also have built up my own little barrier in here." She tapped on her chest. "To protect myself..."

"What happened? Why did you do that?" He could feel his anger rising at whoever hurt her. Who had hurt her enough to make her build up an emotional wall?

She looked into his amber eyes. "When I was ten... and I came to visit you only it wasn't you I was visiting. But that moment really bothered me." She watched as pain reflected in his eyes. And she started feeling twinges of his grief again.

"I'm so sorry Lucy." Derek looked away from her ashamed. He was an i***t. Why didn't he think about how he could be potentially hurting her. For one, he expected Ryan to be

more accommodating. Though he couldn't blame him either because Ryan couldn't risk Lucy falling for him. It was all a big mistake. And there was nothing he could do to change it.

Lucy reached out and took his hand in hers. She watched him turn back to face her. "We can't change the past. You were too young to really understand the choices you were making and how they could affect others." She smiled and bit her bottom lip. "I'm a bit nervous, to be honest."

He smiled at her warmly and leaned closer to her. He reached up and cupped her cheek in his hand. "Everything about you is also me and everything of me is yours. There is no you and me, but it is now us and ours." His eyes traveled to the lips he had been craving to touch. Even though it was taking all of his self-control he would wait a bit longer before he claimed them. He could wait until she was ready.

In a shocking motion, Lucy closed the gap between them. She captured Derek's head with her hands and held him in place. Not that she had to hold him but her possessive nature had pushed through. She squeezed her fingers in his silky hair soliciting a low throaty noise from him. Her first kiss. It wasn't awkward. It didn't feel weird... it felt right. And she was the one to initiate it.

She pulled her barriers down as she moved against his lips. She wanted to feel more. She wanted to belong to him. She wanted a connection like her parents. But she was shocked. As she disintegrated her guarded barrier it wasn't pain that she felt. It was love. The feeling she had locked up tight was her love for Derek. She didn't understand the feeling then only that she hurt when he brushed her off. So inside of the barrier, she tucked away her feelings for Derek.

He was pleasantly shocked when her lips crashed into his. It was like being liberated from a torturous situation as he tasted her sweet soft lips. He felt a strong warmth swell inside of his chest. He held her cheek tenderly in his hand as he continued to taste her lips. The feeling intensified and he could feel a rush like the floodgates opening inside of him. He realized that he was only ever feeling a fraction of Lucy. What he was feeling now was all of her... and her own feelings for him. This was the greatest treasure he had ever received. The feeling of the love of his mate. And this feeling... this connection would only grow after he marked her. And knowing this made him excited. How could life have worked out so perfect for him? That Lucy would end up being his everything. She felt it all. His love, his desires, and the depth of how much he cared. It all poured into her. And instead of getting jumbled up by words, they all made sense to her. She could understand him and understand his thought process. Her mother was right... this was a gift. She could understand his thought process and why he did the things he did. And she could feel how much he longed for her. Then and now. It was like reading his personal diary.

His feelings for her encouraged her and she pushed into the kiss deepening it. She was pleased with his reaction to her as he seemed just as eager. She finally broke apart for air. She leaned her forehead into his as they panted for air.

"This was way better than your dream." Derek said with a wry smile.

Lucy giggled. "Shut up." She bit her bottom lip and nudged her nose into him.

"I love you too Lucy. You are everything to me. So much that it hurts. The very idea of being apart from you makes me crazy."

Lucy looked into his amber eyes. "I never realized I was already in love with you then. I guess it was our soul mate connection?"

"I don't know. I didn't feel it when I first met you. Of course, you were a drooling baby who needed their diaper changed." Derek grinned at her and sifted his fingers through her hair. "But after that... the more I was around you... I don't know why, and I don't care. All I know is that I have loved you since we were kids."

"I'm still a bit in shock over all of this. I can't believe you are my mate..." She raised her hand up to touch his that was resting on her cheek. She leaned into his hand, "Don't leave me again."

"My sweet Lucy. After this business with Beryl we won't be parted."

Lucy went to nod her head absent-mindedly and then stopped. Wait a minute. After this business with Beryl? She lifted her head up and looked at him confused. "Wait, when you say that what are you saying?" "I'm sending you home."

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"You are sending me home?" Lucy shook her head no. "Why? Don't you want me here with you?"

"Of course I want you with me Lucy." Derek trailed his hand down her arm and gazed into her green eyes. "I never want to be away from you. But not here. Not part of a battle party. You need to be where it is safe."

Lucy let out an airy chuckle. "Please don't tell me you are going to be that guy... Don't go making the same mistakes all the guys make about the women in my family. We are not the ones who wait back at home for the men to return."

Derek's eyes flickered in amusement. "My future queen, your existence is too important to risk. I'm not calling you weak. Just that you are a target. This witch is after your

family, and I won't make it easy for her. I don't know what she is planning but judging from the voidless army she has created we need to be cautious."

"I won't be leaving your side. So don't be ridiculous." Lucy could see in his eyes that he was going to be insistent. Lucky for her she had her own tricks up her sleeve. "Very well... if you really wish for me to leave then I guess I have no choice but to comply." She watched his face drop in confusion.

A faint smile spread on Derek's face. "Good. I will send you back with your parents and I'll come for you as soon as all of this is taken care of."

Oh, naïve Derek... Lucy stood up and walked up to the bedroom door. As if she was really going to obediently listen to him just like that.

"Lucy? Where are you going? I wanted to talk more." Derek jumped up and followed her out the door.

"I'm informing my parents that I will be returning with them of course."

Derek noticed the flicker in her eyes and could feel an odd emotion glimmering from his mate. "Lucy... what are you planning?" She smirked as she entered the dining room.

"Lucy. Much better. I am glad you got that all sorted out." Freya stood up and looked at the glint in her daughter's eyes. What is it?

He wants to send me home. Since he can't have me fighting by his side...

Freya could read her daughter clearly. As a parent she wanted to protect her daughter. But she also trained with Lucy and knew how capable she was. And being the former huntress she had no problem being an advocate for her daughter.

"I guess I'll be coming back with you guys tomorrow." Lucy said innocently as Derek walked in keeping a suspicious eye on her.

Freya smiled and nodded her head. "Of course... probably for the best." The devil in Freya's eyes came out. "After all, we will need your help to lead one of the armies into battle."

"What?!"

"What?!"

Derek and Wyatt said simultaneously.

Lucy smirked. Gosh she loved her mother. She was always in her corner and fighting for her to never be overlooked.

"I

I figure Aiden and Lucy will lead a group while we lead the other." Freya turned an icy glare to Wyatt. "You wouldn't be thinking of leaving me behind, right?" "Well... no, but-

"And after our daughter was injured and taken, we are planning to retaliate in full force, right?" Freya asked as she quirked her brow up at Wyatt.

Jason chuckled already knowing exactly what was taking place. Wyatt sighed in defeat. His queen has taken the king in this chess match. It was lost before it started.

"Alright. I'll have Lucy and Aiden lead a group together. Not individually mind you. They will work together." This would have to be Wyatt's compromise. "Perfect." Freya said, winking at her daughter.

Derek growled lowly. "With all due respect. I do not want Lucy fighting. Period."

Lucy turned her head from her mother to look at Derek. "Sorry 'Ryan'. This is official werewolf business. Best not to stick your nose in where it doesn't belong."

A deep dark chuckle escaped from Derek's throat. "You are mine Lucy. And you are my business. I won't risk it. The witch is gunning for your family. She has been preparing who knows what for this moment." He turned his head and looked over at Wyatt. "Let the vampires handle it. Keep your pack away from this witch."

"I understand what you are saying... but you have to understand we can't just sit by and do nothing. We have to set a precedent for attacks on werewolves. And that is we will come back viciously and mercilessly." He glanced up at Freya and Lucy. "I understand wanting to keep your mate wrapped up in a bubble and to keep her safe. Trust me. I know what feeling you have all too well. I want to keep my family safe." He looked at Derek and smiled. "But don't you think they also want me safe too?"

"Mates are stronger and weaker together. It is a fact of life. Mates give you a vulnerability, but they also give you a strength and an edge in battle. It isn't right for you to ask your mate to stay somewhere safe while you are out risking your life. Especially someone as strong as Lucy." Freya gave Derek a faint smile. "We want to be there fighting and protecting our mate. As much as Wyatt wants my safety, I want his. My desire to fight and protect is just as strong." She looked over and gave Wyatt a crooked smile. "I even fought pregnant in the big demon war because I couldn't bear not being there to help protect my mate."

Wyatt chuckled. "I never would have allowed it had I known she was pregnant." He shook his head. "You are fighting a battle that all of us have fought before." He looked over at Jason who nodded his head. "Lucy is a strong fighter. And even though I tend to baby her as my little girl I know she is an asset in battle."

"I do not doubt that Lucy would be an asset. And I don't want to send her away from my side. But the things we have been seeing... like these mixtures that have been used in fights like the vervain and silver. And the experiments that have been going on and the voidless army. We have things we need to discuss." Derek met with the sharp silver eyes of Wyatt. "This is not just about Lucy. This is about your whole family Wyatt. It is my recommendation for your family to stand down. Let's discuss this in more detail in my office."

"I think you need to hear about these things in more detail so that you can see the complete picture and then make your decision." Jasper finally spoke up. He knew what Derek wanted to talk about. And he knew why he wanted Lucy somewhere safe and far away from the witch. "Jasper, would you please show everyone to my office?" Derek said as he focused his gaze on Lucy.

Lucy watched as everyone slowly followed Jasper out of the room. Leaving her alone with Derek. He was quiet for a moment and stood there just quietly watching her. Then he walked up to her. He pressed into her, backing her into the wall. He leaned his two arms on the wall behind her holding her captive while she looked at him curiously.

"I didn't want you to hear about this... what I am going to tell everyone now. But I guess it is only fair for you to hear it too." Derek whispered into her forehead as his lips lightly brushed against her skin. "My little mate." She looked up into his eyes. His amber eyes reflected so much emotion, but anger was not one of them.

"Don't think that I don't have faith in your abilities for a moment. And NEVER think that I don't want you by my side. Sending you away is going to be incredibly painful..." He leaned his head down and rested it on her forehead. "I'm afraid to lose you. I'm afraid for your family to fight this time. Listen to what I have to say in there... please... I don't want you to be upset with me. Please listen and understand my actions here." He brushed his nose over hers and smiled near her lips. "My feisty Lucy."

She felt his breath beat upon her lips making her body shiver from his contact. His voice that started out almost sad and pleading ended with a sweet raspy breath. Every inch of her body craved him. She raised her arms up and rested them around his neck. She couldn't imagine him saying anything that could convince her that she shouldn't be by his side. But she would listen... really listen to what he wanted to explain.

"You aren't mad at me?" She bit her bottom lip as she watched a smile spread across his face. A low chuckle reverberated from his throat.

"I actually think it was quite adorable. You went to your mother to try to get your way."

"I went to the person who always has my back. Regardless of my gender."

"I always have your back. Forever and for always." Derek closed the small gap between them and brushed his lips against hers. Her lips were soft and sweet. And he really

wished the timing could have been better for them. He wanted to spend more time with her and really connect to her as his mate.

"I love you, Lucy." He breathed out against her lips. "Come on. We shouldn't keep everyone waiting."

He reached his hand and interlaced their fingers together. Then looking down at her with a sweet smile he led her to his office where everyone was seated waiting for them. When they walked in he continued to pull Lucy along with him instead of her sitting next to her parents' side. Jasper had taken a seat next to a dark wooden desk and there was another large chair behind it.

"Jasper, did you get out the pictures?" Derek asked and Jasper pushed a yellow envelope towards him on the desk. He grabbed the contents and walked it over to Wyatt still keeping his fingers interlocked with Lucy's. "Take a look at these."

Lucy watched as her father opened the envelope. He reached inside and pulled out several pictures that she couldn't see but she noticed her father's shocked face immediately. Her mother even gasped looking at the pictures as they scanned through them. "What... what caused this?" Wyatt asked in a quiet breath.

Lucy moved up on her tiptoes trying to get a better look. When that wasn't working, she walked a bit more forward and leaned her head to the side. Freya grabbed one of the pictures and turned it around so that Lucy could see.

Lucy looked at the picture of a girl laying on the ground. She had blood pouring out from her eyes, mouth, nose, and ears.

"She was a werewolf..." Jasper spoke up quietly. "But within an hour of being injected with one of the witch's creations, she was dead."

"It was like nothing we had ever seen. This was one of the first cases we documented. We watched in secret as we studied the events. She was in her werewolf form at first when whatever it was, was injected into her. Then she started coughing up blood and within fifteen minutes she shifted back to her human form. Blood soon started dripping out of her and she was screaming in pain. Within the hour... she was dead. But that is not all of it. We later got ahold of the discarded body and ran our own tests on it. She no longer had any traces of being a werewolf. It was as if she was a normal human." Derek watched Wyatt shift uncomfortably.

"What do you mean?"

"Whatever was injected into her... it was like it pulled the wolf apart from her. And her losing her wolf is what killed her ultimately. She was only the first of many cases we have witnessed. All that we were able to test were the same way. They had lost their wolf blood. They were no longer werewolves." Derek stepped into Lucy and wrapped his

arm around her. "This is why this time... the werewolves need to stand down from this fight. And why I need Lucy far from this battle."

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Wyatt's eyes glazed over as he looked over at Freya. Lucy could tell by their faces that there was a deep discussion going on there. She watched her parent's fingers tighten together as their private conversation lingered in the silence. Lucy wasn't dumb. This new information had changed things. She could see it in both of her parents' eyes. She stepped a bit more into Derek. She was going to have to leave him. And she understood his reasons now, but it didn't make it easier.

She felt his arm pulling her deeper into his side. She could see her parent's eyes looking up to her and she already knew. She felt like a child once again under her parents' gaze. She knew that look. She had seen it before. "And just like that I'm no longer the strong capable daughter anymore? Right?" Lucy snorts angrily.

"Derek is right. We haven't studied this witch enough or her allies to know what she is capable of." Freya said quietly.

Lucy laughed in exasperation. "This coming from the woman who dove into a coven house that was a trap. The same woman who hunted down demons on her own. You didn't always know what you were getting yourself into."

"I know what it is like to almost lose a mate. The blood potion that was used before on your father could have drove us apart. And looking down on your opponent is what opens you up to weakness. We know this first hand." Freya said quietly. "Well then don't underestimate them. Call Uncle Levi and Uncle Titus. Ask Harley for help." Lucy didn't get it. They had the strongest allies around. So use them.

"We may need to ask for their help in time. There is more to worry about than just the witch. And I plan to talk with Rhea and my parents. We will discuss all of this and plan ahead. But for now... It is best if you come home with us." Wyatt said firmly. He watched Lucy go to object and his eyes darkened. "Lucy, you are not staying. You will be coming back to the Diamond pack with us." He made sure there was no room for objection. His commanding tone entered there as he gave his daughter an order. Something he didn't do often. But when he did it was absolute.

Lucy's jaw dropped. Her father just used his alpha king power to give her an order. She was stunned. Shocked. He had only ever used his father's tone, not his alpha tone on her. And to be honest she was hurt. Maybe he knew she wouldn't come unless he ordered her? But she felt her blood boil at this.

"If it is possible, I would like for Lucy to still attend the welcoming ceremony that we had planned before she moved in at the end of the summer. It is just a formality so the other vampires can get to know her. Jasper will escort her there and she can use her pearl to return back to the Diamond pack. You can even send her brother and a group of your soldiers with her if it will make you feel better. Of course, I will make sure to have my own escort of vampires as well. And it is in the opposite direction of the witch and the attacks, so I believe it to be safe." Derek could feel Lucy tense under his arm. He could also feel strands of her irritation pouring through.

Wyatt nodded his head. "We need to keep up as much normalcy as we can. We don't want to alert our enemies. Plus, this is an important moment. The vampires will be meeting their new princess. I don't want to give them a reason to think badly of her." "Well I'm glad everyone is able to settle everything. Just point me in the direction of where to stand and how to act and we will be good." Lucy shrugged herself out from Derek and opened the door to the office. "I don't need to hear the rest. Just be sure to give me a list of my duties and I'll be all set." She shut the door and walked out and towards the living room. She could have at least been included in the conversations. Instead, they were spoken as if she wasn't in the room. Yes, Lucy will not stay. Yes, Lucy will be at the ceremony.

As she heading towards the living room she spotted something interesting. She tilted her head as she watched Chaz crawling around on all fours looking under various objects. He had lounge pants on and no shirt. Someone was obviously very proud of his muscular physique.

"What are you doing?" Lucy quirked her brow at him.

Chaz looked up at her and gave her a sheepish grin. "I can't find my phone charger. I know I left it plugged in out here. I bet someone took it thinking it was theirs."

Lucy began giggling at his flustered looking face. She had a feeling that the someone who took it was fuzzy and a known troublemaker. Especially since she had caught the little cave brownie earlier in the action. She walked up to him and started looking around. "Where did you plug it in last?"

Chaz pointed at the wall. "Right there. Right next to that stand. I know that is where I left it."

Lucy looked around the desk carefully. If it was her brownie friend he would have either hid it in a drawer or... She followed the wall upward and looked at the ceiling. A crooked smile rested on her lips as she noticed a white dangling cord from a rafter. "Hey Chaz."

He lifted his head up and looked at Lucy. He watched the amusement in her eyes and followed the direction her finger was pointing... up. He glanced at the ceiling and sighed. "Are you shitting me? Who did this?"

Lucy giggled. "I don't think this is one of your friends here but a cave brownie. It was here earlier today."

Chaz frowned. "I'm not known to be the best jumper. I am more the muscles of the operation." He said flexing his arms proudly.

Lucy rolled her eyes. Yeah, she could tell he was proud of himself. She smiled and bit her bottom lip. "I'll help you."

"Really, little sis?" Chaz asked with a big grin.

"Little sis?" Lucy quirked her brow at this nickname.

Chaz flashed her a big smile. "I've decided that you are going to be like my new little sister... is that okay?"

Lucy nodded her head. At least he treated her like a normal person. And that she was capable of helping. "Well muscles, how good are your throwing skills?"

"I excel of course." His grin widened already figuring out what she was thinking.

"Good." Lucy walked up to him. "Toss me up in the air and I will grab it."

"Oh, a fun personality! Awesome, that is just what this group needs."

Lucy smiled. It might be what the group needs but she wasn't going to be part of the group. She watched as he cupped his hands together and looked up at her expectantly. She glanced up at her target and then stepped into his hand. He lifted her up effortlessly. She easily grabbed the cord that was hanging there but that is where things went wrong. The little brownie had set up a clever trap. And when she grabbed the cord, it was attached to a rag. The rag was full of dust and feathers that came crashing in Lucy's face. She was falling now but had no idea where since her face was full of debris.

"Gotcha little sis!" Chaz said and Lucy felt herself land gently in his large arms being held into his bare chest.

She was coughing and had tears dripping from her eyes from the dust. But she held her hand up triumphantly. Victory was still theirs. And she was feeling quite proud of herself. That was until she heard a familiar low snarl pierce through the air. "Put. Her. Down." The low growl annunciated every word with authority.

She felt her body slowly slide down until she was gently put on her feet. She was still wiping her face from the dust.

"Easy Ryan. I just caught her and that was all." Chaz then whispered lowly to Lucy.
"Well at least one of you has a fun personality."

Lucy giggled and wiped the dust from her eyes. She placed the cord into Chaz's hands and smiled through a couple more coughs. "I think we were baited into a trap. But we still won." "Haha that we did little sis."

"Lucy, are you alright?" Freya walked up to her and looked over her appearance. Her hair was messy with dust and feathers poking through it.

"I was a victim to a clever brownie trap." Lucy smiled but it soon faded as she looked at her mother. "I am still mad at you. I just had a momentary lapse in judgement due to my triumph."

"Hope you aren't mad at me because I am your new roommate." Jasper said with a chuckle. Derek growled at him, and Jasper laughed some more. "Well in a manner of speaking. Think of me as your non werebear guardian." He said, pumping his chest out slightly. Jason laughed at this and slapped Jasper on the back hard. "Sorry kid. You are tough but not guardian tough."

"Ouch." Jasper said feigning hurt.

Derek remained quiet as he held an intimidating stare onto Chaz.

Chaz only chuckled and shook his head. He looked at Lucy as he grabbed the rest of his stuff. "Next time you can throw me. Maybe then I won't get in trouble." He winked at her and started to walk out of the room.

"Chaz." Derek said, making him halt in his steps. "Show them to the spare rooms where they can sleep for the night." Chaz nodded his head.

"If you follow me, I'll show you to a few modern cave room motifs." Chaz added a fake tour guide accent as he waved them to follow him.

Lucy made to follow her parents but Derek's hand shot out as she walked by grasping her wrist. She looked at him and stared into his amber eyes.

"I thought... we could talk." Derek said softly.

"Talk?" Lucy arched her brow up at him.

"You're leaving first thing in the morning. I thought you could stay with me." His voice dropped quieter as Wyatt and Freya stopped walking. "Oh... I see. I can't stay with you, but you want me to warm your bed tonight? Is that it?" Lucy snorted and glared at him defiantly.

"Now wait a minute it isn't like that. I just thought we could talk some Lucy. We haven't had time to properly talk." Derek's voice was soft.

Lucy stared into his eyes. They were pleading with her. The thing that Lucy was realizing was that she really didn't know Derek. Sure he was her fiancé and her fated mate. But besides the time she played with him as a child, what did she know about him? How did she retain these feelings of love... for a stranger now? She supposed it was the soul mate thing. She couldn't deny how much she wanted to be near him. How even being close now was a comfort to her. Besides she needed to explain a few things to him herself. "Alright." Lucy said quietly. She turned to look at her parents and nodded her head for them to go ahead.

Wyatt's eyes darkened as he stared at Derek. A clear warning. Before finally Freya managed to pull him along. A faint smile resting on her face.

The moment Derek closed the door to his room he wrapped his arms around Lucy. He pulled her deep into his chest and leaned his head near her neck to breathe in her scent. "Forgive me Lucy for being selfish. Don't be mad. I just want you safe."

A sweet tingling spark jolted down her back and spread through her chest. She couldn't deny how being in his arms felt like home. She sighed and turned in his arms to face him.

"What if it was the other way around Derek? What if it was vampires that were being targeted? What if there was a potion that reversed the effects for you? In this situation I would be sending you back, right? You are telling me that you would just accept this and go. While I stay here and fight. After all, I would only be doing it because I selfishly want you safe." Lucy had fire in her eyes as she met with his amber eyes fiercely. She could see a flash of realization hit him as he finally was able to understand. He wouldn't go. It was evident in his guilt-ridden face. What he was asking of her wasn't fair.

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Derek felt the guilt pang in his chest. She was right, he would not leave her. He was being selfish just wanting to protect her. "Oh Lucy... I'm sorry." He pulled her tighter into him. "I don't know what I should do in this situation." He leaned down and breathed in his scent trying to calm himself down. He felt so torn. "I don't want to be away from you. Honestly, the idea of you leaving tomorrow is killing me. I am also afraid of losing you... Maybe I should talk with your parents more about this." Lucy let out a dry laugh and looked up from his chest. "It's impossible now." She could see Derek's confused eyes.

"You are my mate, Lucy. You belong to me."

"Derek, my father gave me an order using his authority as my king and alpha. That is something he has NEVER done before. Which means he is afraid for me. So much that he won't risk me disobeying him by just telling me no. He gave an order I can't refuse. He can do this because even though I am your fated mate I am not yours, yet." Lucy sighed. What she wasn't saying was how she felt something in her stir during that order. An order that came from her father and the king of the werewolves. Yet, it should have had a much stronger effect on her. Maybe her being a lycan was giving her an edge here. She bet that Aiden could directly defy an order from their father.

She respected her father and wouldn't disobey him. But she felt like she could fight off his order. Lycan e naturally higher-ranking wolves. No werewolf could ever out rank a Lycan. Which is why they were the leaders at one time. The fact that her and Aiden were lycan's must also mean something. Though they were afraid of what this was insinuating. Even the very need for the werewolf king arising insinuated something big on the horizon. A war among the wolves... She hoped not. And that this was just a means to keep her family in power. But she knew her parents and family were already thinking it.

Her grandmother Lilly had said, "There is a purpose to all gifts. Even when we can't see the reason right away."

Her Uncle Levi always grumbled about the pesky meddling goddess Selene and how she can never leave well enough alone. Though since after the demon war she has been fairly quiet. Just a few unexplained things that happen randomly that make everyone believe she is still guiding the events here. Like Lucy being a lycan and being Derek's fated mate.

She felt Derek's hands rubbing small soothing circles on her back as he kept his head buried near her neck. She could get minor internal feelings from him. She could sense his turmoil and inner struggle. It was still fuzzy. But once they were marked it would come through clear.

"I don't know if I am strong enough to do it Lucy... I don't know if I can be away from you."

She felt his breath beat against her neck and she closed her eyes with the sweet sensation it brought. Then come back with me."

"It's been crossing my mind. But I am their leader right now. I can't leave in the middle of a mission like this. It could cause chaos. These people here don't know who I am yet... I am just their leader. The one they depend on to make the decisions. But soon they will be our most trusted guard and friends in the palace." Derek nuzzled his nose into Lucy's neck. Her sof neck was so tempting. He wanted to taste her... taste her blood. And mark her as his own.

As a pure vampire the exchange of blood will bind them together. Their blood will be linked to one another. Marking and mating is only one step of the binding process. Vampires mate for their eternal life and few ever take another mate if something happens to their first. Most end up either dying recklessly in battle or they just give up on living.

"I want to get to know the real you better... Not just the pull from our bond. I want to know about you. Since the person I have thought was you... wasn't."

Derek pulled back and cupped Lucy's cheek tenderly. He gazed into her green eyes and smiled. "I want you to know everything about me. Inside and out. I want to be as familiar to you as your own hand." He picked Lucy up and carried her towards the bed. He sat her down and climbed in front of her sitting cross legged. "Let's talk. Tell me about yourself... everything. I know things that Jasper has told me, but I want to hear from you. And I'll tell you everything about me. I'll start from where we left off. When my fifteen-year-old self disappeared from your life."

The two began filling in the gaps about each other. Starting with their likes and dislikes. They talked about their schools and how life was there. Derek explained that since he wasn't seen much upon his growth spurt it was the best opportunity to switch his life up. He started attending school as Ryan while the real Ryan was kept inside the palace with the private tutors. This was the role Ryan was born to fill and later he would become the leader of the palace guards.

He explained how shocked he was at first attending the vampire academy. Life was not just different but the nobles and such he remembered as a child were different. The way they treated him as Ryan was completely different. They treated him like a parasite. Some even openly bashed and mocked the royal family. It was a real eye opener.

Then when he was twenty, they started hearing rumors about a witch causing trouble. She was caught abducting vampires and wolves. He had been part of the elite army for only a few months. And within two years he had worked his way to becoming their natural leader. Which was obviously going to happen since he was a royal. Royal vampires were not just a title. They had scary dangerous abilities that were often secret and unknown.

As the leader he started leading scouting missions to try to uncover as much about the witch as possible. All the while he continued to keep tabs on Lucy. He always had Jasper report back to him and tell him about her. He loved hearing about her spirit and feisty nature.

When the strange attacks started happening about a year ago Derek took the elite army to their hideout. They would be stationed there permanently until they destroyed the witch and uncovered all her accomplices. This was also a bonding experience. One that was necessary to bind loyal soldiers to him forever.

"Nice, your parents trust you to go out and fight like that." Lucy said with a bit of envy.

"It is a rite of passage and necessary. I guess it would be similar to having your brother lead a pack into battle. My mother was never keen on it but I'm not exactly sixteen. I'm twenty-four years old. An adult. And I am protecting my fiancé and her family." Lucy smiled at him and leaned forward. She laid her head down on his legs and felt his hand start drawing lazy circles on her back. "One of your special skills wouldn't be to freeze time, would it?"

Derek looked down at her with a sad smile. "No... I wish. I can tell you about them though. Well at least the ones I know. I want you to know all of my secrets and for me to know all of yours."

Lucy really didn't have a lot of secrets. Just one. And that was about her wolf not being separate from her and that she was a lycan. Jasper didn't even know this about her. It was something that was kept very secretive in the family. They were worried how other werewolves would react. Her and Aiden were already the prince and princess, but would they feel indignant if they knew they were lycans?

She closed her eyes and enjoyed the tingles his fingertips sent through her. It was really fascinating how it fastened you together. It made Derek feel like an old friend of hers... a piece of herself. In a very lustful and completely clingy sort of way.

"I really only have one secret... but it's a big one." Lucy finally said quietly. She opened her eyes and tilted her head up to look into the amber eyes looking down on her. "I mean I have abilities and things but they aren't really a secret." She watched as a smile spread on Derek's face.

"And you trust me with your secret?"

She smiled up at him and nodded. "Yes, but I'm going to need your pinky for good measure." Lucy said, holding her pinky finger up in the air.

Derek chuckled and locked his pinky finger with hers. He leaned down into her finger and pressed his lips against them. "So adorable. So let's hear this big secret. What is it? You aren't really a werewolf." He chuckled at his joke and then noticed her stoic face. "That was a joke... right?"

"I'm not a werewolf." Lucy whispered out. "Look, you really can't tell anyone. No one knows but my family. I haven't even told Jasper about this."

Derek shook his head in confusion. "You aren't a werewolf? But you shifted."

"I don't have a separate wolf like werewolves do. My wolf is one with me... like a lycan's would be." Lucy watched as he seemed to ponder the information.

"So... my mate is even more badass?" A small smirk played on his lips.

"This could be a real problem for the packs. This makes me different from them. And something we feel needs to remain a secret. Especially with the treaty. It is best for them just to think of me as a regular werewolf. And that it is because I am their princess that I am larger and can command them."

"I agree with you." Derek watched as Lucy's green emeralds focused on him. "I think it is best to keep this quiet. Sometimes someone is only looking for a reason to be divisive. And this could give them the reason they need. It isn't necessary for all of them to know anyways. I do think it is strange though..."

Lucy nodded her head. "It isn't a natural occurrence. Maybe because of my parents being the king and queen? Or it could be our crafty moon goddess up to her tricks."

"In either case the reason doesn't matter. You are still my adorable little mate."

Lucy giggled. "Little mate?"

Derek shrugged. "It has been my nickname for you since you were young." He winked at her and adjusted her more onto his lap. "Rest your eyes my Lucy. You've had a very long day."

Lucy grabbed his hand and tugged on him gently. "Will you hold me?"

Derek chuckled. She had no idea how bad of an idea that was. But how could he deny her? He just needed to really concentrate on controlling himself. He grabbed the blanket and pulled it over the both of them while he pulled her into his chest. Her sweet intoxicating scent hit his nostrils while her body heat caressed his skin. It was pure torture. But it was also satisfying to be able to hold her like this.

"This your first time being held by a man while you sleep?" Derek asked, expecting for her to say yes.

"No, it isn't."

Derek felt his blood begin to boil. Someone else had touched what was his? He growled and tightened his grip on her. "Who dared to touch what is mine?"

Lucy rolled over so that she could look at him. She smiled. "Jasper has patted me to sleep before."

"Oh? He has? That is a detail he has failed to report."

"Details. Plural. Meaning more than once."

"I'm going to kill him." Derek growled.

Lucy giggled and leaned up pressing her lips on his jawline. "You're adorable when you are jealous." She winked at him. "One time was during a campout. Justice, Aiden, Destiny, Gia, Alexis, Micah, Raine and Jasper were all there. I had really bad hiccups and couldn't sleep so Jasper patted my back until I fell asleep. And the other time..." A faint smile spread on her lips. "My parents and brother were away. Destiny was there with Harley... 'watching movies'. Jasper was staying in Justice's room. He was watching over me while my parents were gone. I think I was seventeen? I woke up from a terrifying nightmare. I still remember pieces of it. What haunts me the most were the eyes..." Lucy closed her eyes as she tried to blink that part of the memory away.

"Jasper came to check on me. Not sure if he heard me or just his usual checking. But he came and sat with me. He told me it was just a dream and stayed with me all night. He patted my back until I fell asleep. And was still there when I woke up. He stayed awake and watched me all night." Lucy looked up at Derek. "He looked after me and took care of me like Aiden and Justice always did. I have always considered him like a brother to me."

"I guess there are some stories he keeps for just the two of you. He never shared those with me... I'm glad he was there for you though. I just wish I would have been the one who was there. But I will be soon. And I'll be the one to pat you back to sleep." Derek leaned forward and pecked her nose. He leaned his forehead into hers and smiled. "Get some sleep, princess."

Derek felt her curl deeper into his chest. He kept his arms on her protectively as her body relaxed, a slow breathing rhythm following. It was the sweetest feeling in the world holding her in his arms. Knowing that she trusted him in her most vulnerable state warmed his heart. He kissed her forehead and with much stealth slid away from her. He stood next to the bed for a moment and watched her sleeping body. He wanted to hold her longer, but he needed to do something first... There was a conversation that needed to be had.

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Derek looked startled when he noticed Wyatt and Freya sitting on the living room couch. He walked over to them with a confused look on his face. Freya chuckled. "Right on time, I'd say."

"What are you two doing out here?" Derek asked as he took a seat across from them.

"We were waiting for you. We figured we would be hearing from you again tonight." A small grin played on Wyatt's lips as he looked up at Derek. They knew their daughter well... well enough to know that she would plant doubts in Derek's head.

Derek sighed. "The thing is... she has good points. I don't know what is right or what I should do. But if the situation was reversed I wouldn't leave her side either."

Wyatt smiled and looked at Derek's amber eyes. "Of course you wouldn't. Who would rightfully leave their mate because of the danger to their own life? The only way you would is if you were ordered to by your parents..."

"We know our Lucy very well. She wasn't leaving your side on her own. She would need to feel like she had to. Which is why Wyatt ordered her to leave... we needed to go to an extreme." Freya said quietly.

"...Ryan..." Wyatt made sure to use his cover name since they were not in a soundproof room. "The thing is this is an unknown and dangerous situation. For now, we will be taking Lucy back with us. We will analyze the situation and consult with our allies. But if the time comes and we decide to fight, Lucy will also be fighting."

"I wish you could come back with her..." Freya's voice was quiet. She remembered how hard it was being apart from Wyatt even when he was poisoned by the blood potion and wanted to kill her. It was torture to be away from one another. Derek sighed and ran his hands through his hair. He rested his elbows on his knees and leaned into his hands partially covering his face. "I don't know how I'm going to manage to be away from her either."

Wyatt nodded his head thoughtfully. "This right here is only a small fraction of your lives together. You will still have eternity together. It isn't going to be easy but all you can do is focus on the now for the sake of the future. If you must be here I understand... But don't get sloppy because you are trying to rush things. The witch certainly hasn't rushed things. This must have been something she has been plotting since she was a child."

"And you have allies. If you need help, remember to call on those around you. Reach out to us... don't hesitate to use the resources you have." Freya added, still keeping her voice quiet.

"It isn't the witch I am worried about. Not where my army is concerned..." Derek looked up from his hand. "It's this Wicker... us vampires have had tabs on him for awhile now. We are fairly certain he is a deity, but we don't know what his game is. You know that if he is what we think he is..."

Wyatt nodded his head. "We will need to have a discussion with Levi about this..." He looked over at Freya. "It's impossible for any of us to fight against a deity. Levi and Jade... and probably Alexis would be the only ones capable."

Freya nodded her head. "Of course if Alexis fights then I'm certain that Aken will show up. He has avoided the poor girl for so long. He can't possibly plan to never see her."

"If she ends up in danger, I'm certain he will show up. Levi has mentioned more than once even as a deity you can't ignore the desire to protect." Wyatt frowned. Wicker was a problem they couldn't handle. He would have to talk to the only ones that could and see what they knew. Levi knew about this Wicker he was sure of it.

"Anyways, Ryan. I don't think we can concern ourselves too much with things that are beyond our power. We will make sure the ones who can do something know about him." Wyatt directed his attention back to Derek.

"I understand. I was hoping to be able to have more information to give. But I guess I can't expect much if he is a deity." Derek nodded his head. Yes, they could only do what they could and ending Beryl was in their means. But they needed to find her. She was rarely at the hideout that they discovered. And she was very clever. She often used disguises and cloaks. He knew she would surface again. They would just have to keep doing what they were doing and wait. Meanwhile, he would send for extra guards to be at the ready. "Before we showed up, what was your plan with our daughter?" Freya asked curiously.

"I was so thrilled about finding her that I couldn't see any farther than keeping her close. I couldn't believe I ended up finding my fated mate let alone who she ended up being." Derek chuckled. "I honestly wasn't thinking about anything. All I wanted was to keep her close. But I know there is no way I can keep her here without her joining in the battles. When I started thinking about this..." He sighed and shook his head. "I knew she would have to leave this area and return where she would be safe. Where she would be away from all of this." He waved his hand around in the air.

"All I know is if I was Lucy, I would be livid. I would be furious with Wyatt for sending me away. What if something happened to Wyatt and me being there could have protected him... However, as a mother... after hearing what you have witnessed... I am selfishly worried for my daughter's safety. And not just her safety, but the safety of our pack. They have had time to mass produce this. They could strike every werewolf and kill them with ease." Freya frowned as she felt Wyatt's hand find hers. The warmth of his large hands encompassed hers and brought them closer to him. "It sounds like for now the wolves are at a stalemate. We need to find out what this substance is. We need it to be studied by the covens so that they can create an antidote if possible."

"In my opinion, this is not something she was able to mass-produce. It seemed more like to me... that these were precious tests." Derek's eyes met with Freya and Wyatt's. "We can't know for certain right now of course. But I think this is something she is trying to perfect so that she can take out the targets she really wants."

"This isn't a war she is trying to win." Wyatt said quietly. "This is a grudge she is wanting to settle. Our family bested demons. She knows she can't win against all of us."

"She plans to just take us down. The four of us..." Freya squeezed her eyes feeling dumb. Of course, this was Beryl's objective. It wasn't about the werewolves. It was

about her and her family. It was always about her. She was the abomination and Beryl would have been taught this. This was all about ending her line.

Derek frowned as he listened to this. He felt a flame ignite in his chest in anger. The idea of someone targeting his mate made him ready to kill. His desire to protect Lucy was overwhelming him.

"I'm sorry to say this but this is how I feel." Derek's voice was a whisper as he stared at the silver and green eyes in front of him. "I want Lucy in the vampire kingdom. She will be safer with my... the king and queen there. We know Beryl will be targeting the Diamond pack. But she wouldn't dare go into vampire territory. Not even to look for your daughter... or children. Yes, send Lucy and her brother together there where they will be safe. You know you two would be welcomed there too-"

"We can't leave our packs. The king and queen need to be there so that the packs don't get restless and alarmed. We will be fine." Wyatt's eyes glazed momentarily, and he nodded to Freya. "But we both agree. We want our future protected. Aiden and Lucy will go to stay with the vampires. At least until after the ceremony."

"I don't-"

"Let me finish, Ryan." Wyatt smiled as he interrupted Derek. "After the vampire ceremony, they will either go to Elysium or the dragon kingdom of the west. The vampires may be safer than the Diamond pack, but they are not safer than the fairy kingdom. Nor is it safer than the dragon kingdom. There they have family where it will be easy for us to visit them, and where we feel the most comfortable having them."

"If your sister thinks you are in danger, won't she leave the dragon kingdom to stay with you?" Derek frowned slightly. He wanted Lucy back at the vampire palace. But he could understand her parents' feelings. And the dragons had few enemies... who could afford to be enemies with the dragons. And Elysium was well protected by a living barrier. Her safety was the most important.

"No... We can't risk something happening to Rhea. She is also a werewolf too. Her mate isn't about to risk her life. Been there. Done that." Wyatt chuckled. "She will look after our kids for me. And IF there is trouble the dragons will come to our aid. Since it seems like the witch hasn't prepared anything against dragons."

"The dragons and Elysium are far away from here." Derek said with a frown. "It won't be easy to visit her."

Wyatt chuckled. "If you want to see her, just come to the Diamond pack and we will take you to her. You know my family was gifted with these special black pearls that allow us to travel to the others." He watched as Derek's eyes lit up a bit. He smiled and squeezed Freya's hand. They both felt better about sending their children away for more reasons than one.

Not only were they their precious children but they were also the future. If something happened to Wyatt and Freya it would be up to Aiden to lead. The werewolves couldn't lose their king after finally getting one. And Aiden could keep this going. "We will escort you back to the Diamond pack tomorrow. Given the conclusion we just came up with, I don't feel comfortable with you traveling on your own." Derek straightened up and watched as both Freya and Wyatt's eyes danced in amusement. "Son, we travel with a demon and a guardian. Plus we are well seasoned in war." Wyatt chuckled.

"All it takes is a second. If that stuff is loaded in a sniper gun of sorts... One hit is all it could take to lose everything." Derek shook his head. "This is a special situation. Besides, this way I'll get to be with Lucy a bit longer..."

"Well boys if we are traveling tomorrow then I suggest we should all get some rest." Freya said standing up with Wyatt joining her.

Derek stood up and glanced at his room. "She is already asleep... I umm."

Freya placed her hand on Wyatt's back and gently shoved him. "Don't wake her and let her rest." She put a bit more force into the back of her protective mate with a small smile. How quickly he forgot what it was like to find your mate. She winked at Derek and then walked out of the room with Wyatt. She remembered. Nothing could tear her apart from her mate. Not even him wanting to kill her.

Derek smiled in appreciation and slowly crept back into his room. He eased back into the bed and curled his arms around Lucy who snuggled right back into him. He tenderly pecked her head and closed his eyes. He took in her sweet scent and her comforting warmth. The feeling of holding her while she slept was therapeutic. He felt everything calming down and relaxing. He was happy knowing he would be traveling with them tomorrow too. It would give him some more precious time with her... his little mate.

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Lucy smiled as she felt herself wrapped in Derek's arms. There was a feeling of contentment that she never had before. It was like being in a safe, warm, cocoon. But there was also something else... a deep desire. The scent from Derek was more intoxicating somehow than before. She opened her eyes to look at his sleeping face. His eyes were closed and his face was right in front of her. Her focus went to his lips that were deliciously right in front of her.

She would be leaving his side soon. She was about to forcibly be put on a mate diet. And she wasn't sure how long she would have to go without him. How long would it be before she could taste his lips? How long before she would bear his mark? If you know you are going on a diet tomorrow, would you not have one last dessert today?

A delicious moist cake is served right in front of you. Would you not eat it because you are going on a diet tomorrow? Hell no. You'd eat it today because of the diet tomorrow. Derek was her dessert. She knew she couldn't have all of him right now, but his lips were fair game. She had tasted them before and was going to taste them again.

She leaned in closer and gently brushed her lips against his. The sweet tingling sparks ignited where their lips touched. But immediately his lips covered hers. His body pressed into hers and was now capturing her beneath him. He greedily kissed her as his hand held her face possessively. She reached her hand up and brushed them through his hair tugging him into her slightly. He groaned into her mouth and deepened the kiss. Dipping his tongue into her mouth with deep slow massaging motions that soon quickened with passion. His kiss became fiery and possessive. She gasped as she felt him lightly bite her lips. He pulled on her bottom lip and growled into her mouth.

Their breathing was getting faster and faster. Lucy's cheeks were heating red from the passionate kisses. His warm kisses explored her face and down to her neck. Where he began to tease a special spot on her soft skin. He licked and pulled on the skin growling into her as his other hand wandered over her body.

He returned to her lips and desperately kissed her. Growling and claiming her lips. She clutched onto his shoulders pulling him deeper into her. The tingling sensation and sweet jolts of electricity were over taking them both. She instinctively arched into him and his low growl of approval made her body shudder underneath him.

He pulled away. He gripped the pillow on the side of Lucy's head while they both panted for air. His eyes fixated on her, and he growled lowly, "Mine". Then very slowly he kissed the tip of her nose before he forced himself into a sitting position.

Lucy reached out and grabbed his hand as he helped her into a sitting position next to him. She snuggled into his chest as his arms came around her.

"Don't you think you should leave your mark on me now? I'm liable to change my mind." Lucy teased and felt his chest tighten underneath her.

"I'll kill anyone who touches you." He listened as Lucy giggled and smiled. "I'm serious. It's our nature. If anyone touches you whether with your consent or not, they are dead. So, you may want to tell me now so I can chalk it up as the past... has there been anyone else..."

Lucy smiled. His voice sounded so meek. She looked up into his eyes and brushed her fingers through his hair. "What do you think?" She giggled but then noticed a very serious reaction. "Seriously?" She raised up on her knees and wrapped her arms around his neck, leaning her forehead into his. "I was betrothed since before I was born. No one messed with me. I was the girl who was always alone. No one to go to parties with, no one to take me to dances... because no one wanted to waste their time with someone already taken."

"But there was one guy recently..." Derek growled lowly.

"That was the first time that ever happened. Ever." Lucy shrugged. "Honestly it was the first time anyone ever looked at me that way before..."

Derek growled and grasped her sides. "You are mine to look at Lucy. Only mine."

"What about you? Going around as Ryan... no one knew you were unobtainable." Lucy pushed back and sat on her heels. She quirked an eyebrow at him. She watched as he smiled at her. His hands still resting on her sides.

"Were there girls interested in me? Yes. I won't lie there was a lot of interest... but I refused them all. It was always you Lucy. I told you this and I mean it. I have loved you for a long time now. You were always the one who occupied my thoughts. I just wasn't interested in anyone else like that. I went to parties and hung out with others... but never as a date. I only went to get to know my peers better as a future leader. But I've never been with anyone else Lucy..." He held his gaze on her to show how serious he was. "In my eyes no one else existed but you."

This lined up with what Tonya had told her too. Lucy leaned back into him, wrapping her arms around him so that she could hold him close. "I don't want to leave you already..." She breathed out.

"I won't be washing these sheets or pillows. I am going to need to keep your scent there..." Derek tilted his head into the crook of Lucy's neck as he took in gentle whiffs of her scent. "I'll give you my shirt... so it will help you sleep without me by your side." "Oh, I'm sure Jasper will pat me to sleep." She bit her bottom lip and smiled. She listened to his frustrated groan. "If it helps you sleep, I can tolerate it for you...my little mate."

She was surprised to hear this from him. She was just teasing him, but it warmed her heart that he was suppressing his jealousy for her.

"You know there is nothing at all romantic between Jasper and me, right?" Lucy wanted to make sure he knew this. She didn't want him to feel like he had any rivals to worry about.

"Mmmhmm I know. I trust you both."

Lucy leaned forward and took his earlobe with her teeth. She tugged on it lightly and felt him grip in to her tighter.

"I went to talk to your parents again last night." Derek managed to mumble out to distract himself from ravishing her.

Lucy pulled back and looked into his amber eyes. "You did?"

"After you fell asleep... they were already waiting for me. They expected me to talk to them again." Derek chuckled. "I told them how I was conflicted, and I wanted to keep you with me. I told them how I wouldn't leave you if the situation was reversed... It would take a direct order from my parents... like what your father gave you. Separating mates isn't easy." Derek smiled sadly. "Our conversation together led us into a conversation where we came to the same conclusion... Beryl is purely after your family. Her goal is to kill the four of you. No matter what the costs."

"I already thought about it earlier and that it was a suicide mission."

Derek sighed and cupped her cheek in his hand. "Someone that desperate to kill you... I can't let you near her. Your parents plan to send you and Aiden to either Elysium or the West Dragon Kingdom. They want you both to be somewhere where the witch can't get to you... And your father said that if I want to visit you, I can come to them, and they'll open up a portal to you."

Lucy listened to him quietly. At least they planned to send Aiden too. Most likely Justice would also come along. And it would at least be fun in Elysium and the dragon kingdom. They would get to spend some rare time with their family and cousins. At least maybe that would help distract her from not being with her mate.

"How long...?" Lucy asked, biting her inner bottom lip.

"I don't know exactly..." Derek looked into her pooling green eyes. "I hate this too." He chuckled and frowned, shaking his head. "It's killing me Lucy. It's killing me to think about...the only thing that keeps me going is that I am protecting your family... protecting you. But I don't know how long it will take. But I promise I will visit you. In a few weeks after you are settled I'll come to see you. And... with the vervain properly out of your system..." He cleared his throat slightly as he looked at her smooth unmarked neck. "I guess I should probably get ready..." Lucy said sadly.

"Hey... I forgot to tell you, we will be accompanying you. You are my soul mate. The vampires here will recognize my claim on you above the prince's. It is taboo to break up soul mates. So it is natural for me to give the order to escort you back to your pack... since you are my mate."

"Will you have to leave immediately after we get back?" Lucy felt his breath on her skin as he leaned closer.

"Depends on how we travel. If we hike to the vehicles, we can save some time. So maybe I can stay with you for a few hours before heading back."

"I'd like to introduce you to my brother." Lucy watched him nod his head and smile.

"I'd like that." Derrick pulled her in closer to him. He brushed her nose with his and covered her lips. He pressed his lips into hers offering a very soft, warm and sweet kiss.

He wanted to show her in this kiss just how precious she was to him. He wouldn't have many opportunities to kiss her without prying eyes. Not that he needed to hide his kisses, she was his mate. But some kisses were not meant for public eyes. And this was one of them. As his hand trailed over her sides. "Mmm Lucy." He mumbled through his lips. "You taste so sweet. Your scent... is addicting." He licked her lips lightly and nudged her nose lightly as he pulled apart. "I love you...my little mate."

"I love you too." Lucy whispered out shyly.

Derek smiled as he watched her cheeks redden with her confession. She was simply too adorable. "Come on. If we don't get moving now you won't have time for breakfast."

"I can think of something we can have for breakfast without leaving this room." Lucy said coquettishly.

Derek's eyes darkened and a low agonizing groan escaped through his lips. "You are like a rabbit who jumps into the fox's den."

Lucy shrugged. "Some rabbits just want to get eaten. Just waiting for the fox's instincts to take over." She grinned and bit her bottom lip. She watched his gaze move to her lips. The color in his eyes changed rapidly back and forth as he fought against those instincts. "You're everything I've ever wanted Lucy. Everything I could possibly want in a mate and more." He reached his hand out and plucked her up to her feet. He crashed her body into his chest and squeezed her firmly into him. "How am I going to do this Lucy... I feel like I'm drowning already. I'm weak. When it comes to you... I never realized how weak I am."

"Derek... you are not weak. It isn't supposed to be this way. We aren't supposed to be separated." Lucy leaned up and kissed his jawline. "I'll be waiting for you. Kill the witch and come for me." She smiled and leaned up to his ear. She let her hot breath beat against him as her lips brushed his earlobe. "And we will see if you ever figured out how to make a baby." She gave him a crooked smile. She was told when she was a baby that Derek had asked how to make a baby. He wasn't a child anymore and she was certain he figured it out. But it was fun to tease him over it.

Derek chuckled lowly. "Mmmm we will see if I can figure it out." He playfully pulled her hips into him and lowered his lips to her neck. He nipped on her skin slightly and flicked his tongue over her neck.

Lucy couldn't help the moan that escaped her lips when she felt his arousal against her. It was evident how much he was holding himself back.

"Just because you aren't marking me now... doesn't mean..."

A deep growl reverberated from his throat. "Don't think I haven't thought about that too. But I want it to be special... for the both of us. I want to mark you the same day we..."

"Derek." Lucy pressed against his lips lightly. "We can wait. I'm yours. And I'll be waiting for you."

He wrapped his arms around her tightly. The two stood there quietly holding one another. Both hoping that time would freeze just for them. But time stopped for no one. They had to reluctantly part from their sweet embrace. And begin the journey back to the Diamond pack... where they would have to say goodbye.

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Tonya and Zach. They left Lenny and Enzo to keep an eye on the activity with the witch.

Lucy held hands with Derek as they rode together. The group had hiked to a location where they had several SUVs hidden. Lucy, Derek and Jasper rode in one vehicle, Jin, Jason, Wyatt and Freya took another and following behind them in the third was Chaz, Sabrina, "This is going to be like camp. Aiden, Justice and I are going to bump chest, have manly shouting contests and drink each other over the table. Oh and we will squeeze in some tea time for you Lucy." Jasper grinned as he drove the vehicle along. Derek wrapped his arm around Lucy's shoulder and pulled her into his side. "Sounds like you guys are all good friends."

"I wonder what Aiden will think of you? See I'm safe since I wasn't Lucy's mate. But you..." Jasper chuckled and looked behind him in the back seat at Derek for a second. He was careful about what he said. The vampires behind them have exceptional hearing. So he made sure he didn't mention Derek's name or that they were engaged. "Of course, he has been trying to set me and Lucy up together. He didn't think the prince deserved his sister so who knows what he will think of you." Derek frowned and Lucy leaned up and kissed his cheek.

"Aiden will love you. He will probably do the fun interrogating bit but... as long as you are good to me, he won't have a problem with you." Lucy smiled up at Derek. "Justice will be good with you too."

"Lucy... no going anywhere without Jasper. I mean it." Derek finally said in a strained voice.

"You want me to follow her into the shower as well? Because I will. I'll do whatever it takes to keep your mate safe." Jasper teased. His cheesy grin faded when he looked in the rear-view mirror. If looks could kill...

"I've already heard about how you've patted her to sleep before. That is about the extent of the line I ever want to be crossed." Derek said in a lethal quiet tone.

Jasper chuckled. "You sound a bit jealous?" He then cleared his throat when he saw Derek's darkening amber eyes. "Don't worry. As long as I am around no one will be able to harm her. It's when I am not around, she gets in trouble."

"I have a feeling after this I'm never going to have a moment of peace." Lucy pouted.

"No... that is what will be coming after I mark you." Derek said wryly with a crooked smile on his face.

Lucy started to say something when everything went dark. She blinked several times. A face came into focus. First, she saw the brown eyes and then a body. The man had white hair that was pulled back in a ponytail. He looked out from a white building above the clouds. In front of him stood a young-looking man with brown hair and green eyes. Beside him was someone she knew very well. With his dark brown hair and bright blue eyes, it was her Uncle Levi.

"Lucy, Lucy!" Derek tried calling to her but she remained unresponsive. Jasper suddenly slammed on the brakes as the SUV in front of them came to a halt. The passengers ran to their vehicle and swung the door open.

"She won't respond to me." Derek looked up at Wyatt.

Wyatt reached in and grabbed Lucy in his arms. She started squirming as beads of sweat formed on her forehead.

"She's hurting." Derek jumped out of the vehicle placing his hand on her forehead.

"Give her to me." Jason said as he walked up to Wyatt.

"You aren't her guardian. What can you do?" Wyatt shook his head while Freya checked over Lucy carefully. Jin made a slight breeze to help relieve Lucy, it gently swirled around her body keeping her cool.

"That's fairy magic there. I sense it. I can try. She is your daughter... we are connected, I am certain of it." Jason watched as Wyatt placed her in his arms. He reached out to her as a guardian. He called for the magic that was stirring and it answered him. He felt the liquid lava flow into his veins. He grit his teeth as he endured the pain. "It's working. Not as strong as it would with you but it is working."

"What's wrong with her?" Jasper asked and looked up at the other vehicle. The vampires stood by the doors just watching quietly. They would wait for an order from 'Ryan' before they moved.

"I didn't think the fairy magic was strong with her. It always appeared dormant... but this looks like a premonition. We've seen Rhea go through this before as well as my mother. I've never had them... so I don't know what she is going through. But Rhea told me it

can be quite terrifying and numbing afterwards. And also painful..." Wyatt sighed and looked around. They were close to the pack borders at least.

"She's anxious." Derek said quietly and grabbed her hand squeezing it tightly. "I'm here Lucy."

"I'm here Lucy."

She heard the voice of her mate and she smiled. It helped ground her to reality. That what she was seeing in front of her was not really happening.

"This is all your fault Aken." The man with the white hair snarled. "Everything that has happened was all to lead to this day. But finally, I know how to destroy you. I know how to break you completely. And I have..." The man smiled cruelly. He stepped to the side and Lucy could see a girl with blonde hair and closed eyes bound by her wrists and dangling. It was her cousin Alexis. Her lifeless body hung limply in the air. Her body was grey and void of life and dark blood slowly pooled underneath her.

Lucy felt the tears streaming from her eyes. She wanted to do something. She needed to cut her down from there. Yet, she was stuck watching the gruesome sight in front of her. How could this have happened?

"What you wanted to protect... you couldn't. I found your weakness anyways." A dark chuckle escaped from the man with silver hair.

The next moment there was a big ball of energy flooding the area. Lucy couldn't see anything as a whiteout occurred. Yet, her tears continued to fall. Her cousin was dead. Lucy's fairy blood responded to the possible future and began to awaken. Would this event come to pass? If she was being gifted a premonition that must mean it can be avoided, right? Just like the demon war. There is still a chance to change the future.

If Aken accepts her cousin... will this premonition come to pass? Aken was a tier one deity, the Kraken. He is also her cousin Alexis's mate but has avoided her. She didn't know the details but only that he was doing it for Alexis' sake.

With a threat to the fairy line, she had gotten a premonition. And at the same time her fairy powers were awakening. No matter what, there would be a fairy princess. The fairy's depended on this. It seems the path is being laid. Either the future will change, or Lucy will be selected to carry on in her stead.

She looked around at the white quiet. Why was she still here in this void? Was there more?

The world around her suddenly changed. She looked out at a city that looked as if it had been through a war. The buildings were run down and covered with vines. In the distance a section had tall walls around it. There was smoke in the air that made it hard

to see. Through the smoke she could see something walking out. She gasped when she saw the face. It was the same face from her dream a few years ago. The one when Jasper stayed and patted her to sleep.

A man with one good eye and one red mechanical eye glared at the wall in the distance. Behind him an army started to emerge from the smoke. She couldn't make out the creatures, only that they were large. From the wall someone walked out slowly. The person was at a distance so she couldn't make out their face. But it looked like a girl with long hair and at her side she held out a sword. The girl was standing there alone to face against the army that was approaching her. In the smoke behind her was another dark shadow that she couldn't make out. A werebear? A werewolf? She couldn't tell. She could barely see its shadow cloaked behind the person.

Lucy held her breath as the army charged towards the girl. The girl raised her sword...

Lucy sat up panting for air. Her eyes were wide and damp with her tears as she focused on the world in front of her.

"Lucy." Derek squeezed her hand gently. "Lucy, I am right here."

She looked over at Derek and glanced up to see she was being held in her uncle's arms. Standing next to him was her parents, aunt and Jasper. They were all looking at her. She gripped Derek's hand tighter to try to stop it from trembling. What the hell was all of that? Both were visions of the future. One was more recent having to deal with Alexis. But the other one... things looked so different. It looked like it took place a long time from now. She had a feeling that the girl had some importance to her... maybe a family member? Whoever she was... she was facing an army all alone. With maybe one shifter of sorts with her...

Jason slowly lowered Lucy back to the ground and Derek immediately pulled her into his arms. He held her body flush against his as he tried to help calm her down. He could feel her emotions jumping. All he could do was use the mate bond to help. "Take your time Lucy. Let's get back into pack territory. We can talk about it after you've had time to digest everything." Wyatt said gently. He watched her green confused eyes look up to him. She nodded her head slowly. "Ryan...get her back in the vehicle. I want to get her back to the safety of pack borders." Wyatt wasn't sure what had happened, but he felt it. A strong pulse of fairy energy was beating inside of Lucy now. Jason could feel it too; he could see it in his eyes. Whatever had just happened... Wyatt could feel his fairy blood reacting to Lucy. And this reaction... was that to a fairy princess...

"Follow us just to the border. Then wait there. I'll send for one of you to take the other vehicle before it is time to leave." Derek looked at the back SUV with the vampires in it before he hopped into the vehicle beside Lucy.

Jasper didn't say a word. He started up the vehicle and hummed it along behind the one in front of him. On occasion he would glance up at the mirror to see how she was doing.

Her face looked pale and worn. It was as if she had a weight on her shoulders that she hadn't had a moment ago.

Derek kissed the side of Lucy's head and tucked her in gently into him. He felt her snuggle deeper into his embrace. She was quiet and still but her heart rate had returned to normal. And her breathing was back to a calm rhythm too. He wondered what she had seen. But he could feel there was a level of fear and confusion emitting into him from her. Whatever it was she seemed to not understand it completely either.

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Visions of her cousin's body flashed in Lucy's mind. She reached her hand up and covered her mouth. Liquid crystals trickled down her cheeks. It was so real. What did she need to do to prevent this from happening? She felt Derek's hand rub over her shoulder gently in a soothing motion. The vehicle came to a stop and Lucy glanced up surprised to see she was back home. She was so lost in her thoughts she didn't even realize it. The door opened and she was instantly pulled out of the vehicle.

"Damnit Lucy! I was so scared." Aiden wrapped his arms around her, crushing her into him. He looked down and saw the evidence of her tears on her face. His eyes immediately darkened, and he looked up at Derek.

"Easy on her Aiden." Wyatt came over to his son quickly. "Lucy had a premonition. She is still adjusting."

Derek slid out of the vehicle and Jasper was at his side. He looked up at the auburn hair colored man and smiled. "You must be Aiden?"

"Who are you?" Aiden said coldly.

Derek's eyes rested on Lucy. She was awfully quiet and still. So much that he was feeling anxious and worried for her.

Lucy took a small step from Aiden. She wanted to introduce him to her mate. Mate. Alexis mate. She needed to find Alexis' mate so that... the vision of her body flickered in her mind. The dried blood and bruises over her. The pooling blood below her. She must have fought incredibly hard. Lucy's hand started shaking.

"Lucy."

She snapped her head up to a familiar kind voice. Her eyes met with the green eyes of her grandmother, Lilly. She walked up to Lucy with confident commanding steps. And she wrapped her arms around her.

"Don't worry. We are going to fix this. Okay? Shhh, we are going to fix this." Lilly boldly and calmly said.

"Mom? How did you know?" Wyatt asked.

"The light of another fairy princess began to flicker into existence. I didn't know she had received the same premonition... until I saw her face though. Rhea also saw this. Don't worry Lucy. It isn't going to happen, okay? Alexis is going to be just fine. That is the reason we get these premonitions." Lilly rubbed the back of Lucy's head and spoke to her in a soothing tone.

"What about the other thing?" Lucy finally spoke quietly. "The girl with the sword."

Lilly's fingers tensed. "You saw that too?"

Lucy lifted her head up and looked at her grandmother. She nodded her head slowly. "Who is she?"

Lilly sighed and smiled. "That is a future not to worry about right now. That is centuries and centuries from now. Who knows what can change before then, right?"

"What is this about Alexis?" Aiden asked, taking a protective stance near Lucy. He rarely had seen her look so vulnerable, and he wanted to protect her. He placed a hand on her shoulder and looked at his grandmother.

Freya stood next to Wyatt along with Jason and Jin who walked up with Tyler, Lilly's husband and mate. (Tyler and Lilly were the Alpha and Luna of the Diamond pack before and are now the King and Queen of the fairies. Since Lilly was the fairy princess.) "Lucy, let me see you kiddo." A man's voice boomed from the side.

"Uncle Tristan." Lucy smiled and her eyes widened in shock as he picked her up. Tristan was also her grandmother's guardian. He was a very large man and was also a werebear, like all guardians before had been.

Tristan's face turned serious as he looked up to Lilly and Tyler. He glanced up at Jason and could see he knew it too. He could also smell Lucy.

"She has the smell... and I can feel her." Tristan eased her down.

"Hi... could someone please explain what is going on? I seem to have missed the seminar." Jasper said with a small grin. Derek stood there quietly taking in the information that had to deal with his mate. "Me too." Aiden said with a shrug.

"We had a premonition that Alexis is killed. We have room to adjust and remedy this. Just like how Elysium wasn't destroyed. But the fairy magic in Lucy has awakened. Her royal scent is now allowing other fairies to know her. She is also being recognized as a

potential heir. This doesn't mean anything though. Nothing changes except our Lucy here is a bit stronger now. However... in light of this it is protocol for her to have a guardian now." Lilly looked up at Wyatt. It was his job to pick one out for his daughter now. "No... please don't." Lucy stared back at her grandmother with determination. "I am not the fairy princess. Alexis is. And giving me a guardian... it feels like you are giving up on saving her. I don't want one. I won't accept one. I have Aiden, Justice and Jasper around all the time. I don't want a guardian to add to that too."

"We aren't giving up. It is just you are important Lucy. And protecting you is important." Lilly added with a frown. "I'm sorry you must have a guardian."

"Then let me do it." Justice jogged up from the side. "I know I can't shift into a bear but I can still protect Lucy. I want to do it. I grew up with Lucy. We are family. It makes sense. Right dad?" Justice looked at Jason with hopeful eyes. He always teased about being their honorary guardian. This was something he wanted to do.

Jason nodded his head. "The guardian power must accept you Justice... and if it does then you were meant to be her guardian. But I have to warn you. You will be accepting a very strong power at a much older age. We all had a long time to adjust to this new strength. It will require some very intense crash course training." He watched Justice nod his head enthusiastically.

"Now wait a minute." Derek finally spoke up and all heads snapped to look at this new person. "Could him getting these new powers be dangerous to Lucy? I won't allow it." His firm conviction resonated with a sense of power. "If there is any chance new powers could cause him to lose control..."

"That is what the training will be for. Don't worry. I promise I wouldn't allow him to be by Lucy's side unless he was ready." Jason chuckled. "You can relax. Besides, a guardian by her side would be a good thing. More protection."

"Okay, who the hell are you?" Aiden fixated his gaze on Derek. Who the heck was this guy to say anything?

Jasper smiled. "They aren't within hearing." He said tilting his head over to Derek for approval to continue.

Lucy smiled and walked into Derek's side. "This is my mate..."

Derek wrapped his arms around her and pulled her into his chest. She was looking normal again and even sounded normal. But he was feeling very protective over her and needed her body next to him.

"This here is Prince Derek... but for now please just refer to him as Ryan. We have comrades nearby and while they can't hear us here it is best to avoid an accidental slip up. For reasons right now he is keeping his identity undercover. But it just so happens

that him and Lucy are also mates... actually we believe they are soul mates." Jasper said almost proudly as he looked over at Lucy and Derek together.

"Yeah mom. They haven't marked each other but can already feel each other's emotions." Wyatt said bringing this information to someone who is much more knowledgeable.

Lilly looked over at Tyler. "That didn't happen to us until after we marked... That must be an incredibly strong connection. Something like that..."

"Isn't just an accident, right?" Freya added with a smirk.

"No, it looks like this was a gift from the moon goddess." Lilly smiled. The moon goddess knew about the treaty, and this was a beautiful gift to give the two heirs. She gave them an unbreakable bond with one another. A marked soul mate can't be ruined by misunderstandings because they can read the other's mind. They can hear their thoughts. They would know them like they know themselves. It is baring your soul more than any other mate does. But it is also worth it with the unconditional love, respect and trust that comes with it.

Aiden stared at Derek quietly. He looked how he held a possessive arm around his sister. Even the way he looked at her was like she was his treasure he was greedily protecting. But he wasn't convinced about this guy yet. He would need to hear more about his story. "We need to have a little chat I think." Aiden said quietly keeping an intimidating gaze on Derek.

Derek smiled and nodded his head. "I figured as much." He rubbed his hand over Lucy's shoulder gently. If her brother cared about her like he was told this was only natural. And he wanted to talk to Aiden as well. Since he would be relying on him to keep his little mate safe.

"So, Mom... about Justice?" Jason asked, seeing his son shifting from side to side.

"There has never been a guardian who wasn't a werebear. But Jason is right. If the power accepts you then you were meant to be. It is up to Wyatt. Wyatt is the one who must feel her guardian and who it is. It is how it works. He can't force it either. It is just how it is. You feel it inside..." Lilly raised a hand and sat it over her chest. "It's how I knew Cody and Jason belonged to me. It's how Rhea was able to pick Micah... even though he was dangerous in the beginning. But Tristan was able to straighten him out." "Nothing a few gentle slams couldn't correct." Tristan chuckled with a big grin.

"Hey um... Ryan." Justice cleared his throat, noticing he seemed a bit uncomfortable about the guardian idea. "If it ends up being me you don't have to worry, ya know? Like I'd never hurt Lucy. Not even by accident.

"I trust you Justice." Lucy looked at him and smiled. She could get behind the guardian thing if it was Justice. He was always around her anyways. But there was one thing... "But would this mean he would always be my guardian?" She looked over at her grandparents. "Yes. There is no taking the guardian power away." Lilly looked over at Justice understanding Lucy's point.

"This would be connecting your life with Lucy's. Wherever she goes you would go. Whether it be the vampire kingdom or Elysium. But as you have seen, the whole mate tradition has been changed." Lilly smiled looking at Jason and Jin.

"Yea, I'm not going to be celibate or anything like Uncle Tristan, but I don't mind following Lucy. And I think this would make the family feel more at ease knowing I was always by her side."

Tristan chuckled. "I didn't take a mate... I never said I was celibate."

"Whoa! Uncle T... I never knew." Justice said with a big grin.

"I don't exactly broadcast my private life." Tristan chuckled, shaking his head. He never took a mate. He didn't want one. But he was still a male and had needs.

"Well, I don't know if I have a fated mate or not, but I definitely plan to have a family one day." Justice said with a shrug.

Lilly looked over at Wyatt. Do not just pick him because he wants it. It doesn't work that way. Connect with that part deep inside of you where your fairy magic resides. It will help guide you. It has a will of its own and it will help you choose the right guardian. Wyatt interlaced his fingers with Freya's and looked into her green eyes. It has been a while since he really connected with the deep fairy magic that existed inside of him. There has been so much peace that the need for a real deep power hasn't arisen. It has been twenty years since he had to fight with everything he had.

He searched inside where his energy swirled. An energy that was also connected with Titus and Rhea. One he hadn't connected with in a long time. He watched as it circled around him in red ropes. The way fairy magic worked was different from other magics. You willed it and it came to light when you needed it. You developed your magic over time. It exposed itself to you when you needed it. And now it was awakening with the need for a guardian. The magic was searching for a protector for their potential heir. He watched as a bright green rope swirled around Lucy but also connected with Justice. The green ropes circled together in a figure eight motion. The energy was connected already. But what was fascinating was how a white glow emanated from both Derek and Lucy. The glow pulsed together and in perfect rhythm. It was a light he couldn't see until he pulled his fairy magic forward. And both of their lights were reaching out to Justice. As if it already knew he was the one. Wyatt didn't know what that all meant but one thing was obvious... Justice was meant to be Lucy's guardian.

"I guess I'll be needing to make a trip to Elysium for the guardian ceremony to transfer powers." Wyatt said quietly and watched Justice's shoulders slink in disappointment. "Hope you are ready for the life you are signing up for Justice."

"You mean it?!" Justice's eyes grew wide, and he watched Wyatt grin and nod. "Hell yeah! I'm going to be a guardian!" He jumped into the air and raised his fist upwards.

"This will be very interesting. He is the first one not to be a werebear. It will be interesting to see his power merge with fairy magic." Lilly looked at Tyler and shrugged with a smile. He was already thinking the same thing she was. (Since they were soul mates, they knew each other's thoughts). And they were both thinking this was not a coincidence. That somehow him being a sword wielding guardian meant something even deeper. And somewhere would be the connection to the vision of the girl wielding a sword in the future. A future that would one day come to pass... (But that is a different story...A spinoff being planned for late 2022).

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"I'd like to head to Elysium immediately so we can start his training now." Wyatt said looking up at his parents. "What is the hurry?" Tyler asked.

"That is something else we wanted to talk to you about. Lucy will be heading to the vampire kingdom for their ceremony. Then from there, I want her and Aiden to either stay in Elysium or in the West Dragon kingdom. At least until things with Meryl's granddaughter are settled." Wyatt said with a frown.

"We will explain everything in more detail but it seems like the witch has been working on something to take the four of us out. I don't know how it will affect us directly but it is killing regular werewolves. And she has been experimenting on vampires as well. To be safe, we want Lucy and Aiden out of her reach. And in Elysium or among the dragons is the safest place for them." Freya added.

"I am not about to tolerate anyone threatening my family. Not after everything we have been through." Lilly growled lowly.

"Mom, you have werewolf in you too. It is best for you and dad to also stay out of it. The vampires plan to take the lead on this for now." Wyatt said, looking over at Derek.

"Well, I want this over with quickly. We need to speak with Rhea and Titus over this too." Tyler rested his arm around Lilly. They both felt the same way. They didn't risk their lives fighting in a demon war only to have some witch tamper with their family now. "Well let's go then. Let's take Justice and head to the West Dragon kingdom and then meet at Elysium so we can give Justice his powers. Then Jason and Uncle Tristan can

give him a crash course on his powers." Wyatt looked over at Jason who nodded his head in agreement.

"Jin go pack some things we are going to stay in Elysium for a week." Jason watched as Jin bounced off towards the house. "You too Justice. Pack the essentials. Wyatt wants to leave five minutes ago."

"Yes! I'm going." Justice almost squealed in excitement and bolted to the house.

"Dad, I don't like you sending me away with everything going on." Aiden met with his father's grey eyes.

"Aiden, not only is it safer this way... but this way you can look after your sister too. The two of you together are very strong. It is just a layer of safety while we figure things out." Wyatt understood his son's feelings. But this wasn't like she was after the whole pack. This was a mission to destroy his family. They were almost certain of it. And he would make sure she didn't get ahold of his children.

"We will have you accompany Lucy to the ceremony. Then you and Lucy need to decide afterwards where you will be heading. You are welcome to stay at either place." Freya looked at Aiden already knowing where he wanted to go. He would want to go to the dragon kingdom. He liked testing his strength against the dragons. They were a real challenge where he could unload his power without worry.

"So uh...Ryan..." Aiden looked at him confused. "Are you coming with us?"

"No... but Jasper will be accompanying Lucy wherever she goes. She is his top assignment and priority. I will be handling this witch nonsense before I can be with Lucy." A sad smile rested on Derek's face. "It isn't ideal... but necessary."

"Hmm..." Aiden said almost in an accusing tone.

Derek chuckled. "Care to elaborate?"

"Just interesting is all... I mean, Jasper is the one always around her and taking care of her. I always see him... never see you. And instead of leaving the fighting in Jasper's hands so you can be with Lucy..." Aiden shrugged. "Just interesting... Just makes me wonder which one of you she is really better off with. Jasper is nobility. The treaty should be fine with him too, right? Maybe he is the better option. Seems like you can't be bothered with my sister." Aiden inwardly was smiling as he watched Derek's eyes grow dark. This was the reaction he was looking for. He needed to see his emotion when it came to Lucy. The best way to do that would be to challenge that he wasn't a good enough mate for her.

"I am the strongest and am the leader of the elite soldiers. It is only natural for me to be there to command them. Also, Jasper is the person I trust the most. I trust in him as a

person and his fighting skills. This is why I have him close to Lucy when I cannot be." His eyes flashed at Aiden. "Lucy is my world. She. Is. Mine. And there is no other option but me." His eyes softened and he looked down at his mate. "I just hope I can be good enough for her."

"Aww of course you are good enough for me." Lucy smiled up at him and then turned an annoyed gaze to Aiden. She could see the smirk spreading from his lips and she sighed. "Really Aiden? You just can't help yourself."

"Hey, I needed to see his emotions. He has been awfully quiet there. How am I supposed to know what his intentions are." Aiden shrugged innocently. "I still want to have that chat... come with me?"

Derek nodded his head. "Jasper..."

Jasper extended his arm to Lucy. "At your service." He said in a butler tone with a cheeky grin on his face.

Aiden... Lucy warned through their mental link.

Yeah, yeah, yeah sis. This is customary man stuff. Aiden winked at Lucy. "I'll take you to the office. It is sound proof so we can talk freely."

Derek kissed Lucy on the nose. "We won't be long... I want to spend as much time with you as possible." He gave her one lasting look before he placed her next to Jasper's side. "It was nice meeting all of you. I am sure we will be seeing more of each other in the future given the circumstances." He slightly lowered his head in respect to Tyler and Lilly. Then with a nod to Wyatt and Freya, he walked off with Aiden.

"If he ever mistreats you Lucy just tell your Uncle Tristan and I'll settle it for you." Tristan said with a protective tone.

Wyatt chuckled. "You'd have to get in line. Anyone who mistreats my baby girl will have to deal with me directly."

"I'd never let Lucy be mistreated. You have my word. If it came to her being mistreated, I would protect her... but I can promise you that won't happen. Lucy is precious to all of them... to her mate most of all." Jasper smiled down at Lucy. He may follow orders but if he ever thought Lucy was being mistreated, he wouldn't allow it. He wouldn't care who he had to go against. She was important to him... she was family.

"We are ready!" Justice came jogging to the group with Jin trailing behind him. Jason immediately grabbed the bags from Jin and gave Justice a reproachful look.

"Next time take your mothers bags too."

Jin giggled. "I am perfectly capable of carrying a couple of bags. Silly bear."

"Let's head to the training grounds before we leave. I need to talk with Sam for just a quick moment." Wyatt linked his hand with Freya. "We will be back later tonight Lucy. Don't leave the pack borders..." There was a low threatening growl in Wyatt's tone. It was a promise to Lucy not to disobey him. "Don't worry. I won't let her anywhere near the border." Jasper grinned looking down at his prisoner.

"Lucy... don't over think everything. Premonitions are just that. They are not concrete. It is a warning of a possible future. And we will make sure we stop it from happening. Just worry about yourself." Lilly looked into the green eyes of her granddaughter. Eyes that were similar to her own.

"Thanks grandma. I'll try to push it from my mind for now." Lucy watched her family walk off to the lower training ground. She still wasn't sure about this whole guardian business but if it was Justice at least she was already comfortable with him. "Just you and me." Jasper sighed with a smile.

"Lucy you are back!"

Lucy turned her head to see two guys jogging up to them. It was Kurt, her brother's future beta (he was also the son of Sam and Renee) their family have always been the beta's to the alpha. From Kade who was Tyler's Beta, to Sam who was Wyatt's beta and now Kurt who would be the future beta. Kurt was only a few months younger than them. He had dark hair and brown eyes. And was a fairly easy going and sweet guy.

The other man was Jamie. Jamie was Aiden's future gamma (he was the son of the previous gamma Winston). Jamie was only seventeen. His father had found his mate, Florence, after the demon war was over. Florence was a witch not a werewolf. Unfortunately, a couple years ago she got very sick and passed away. It was a tough adjustment but together Jamie and his father managed.

"Do you have any idea how much punishment we received? Aiden put everyone to work. We were doing three a days of training because you disappeared." Jamie said with a fake stern tone.

"That was your fault, Jamie!" Kurt said with a twisted face. "If you wouldn't have run off with those other pups Lucy never would have left the territory."

"I was just going after them to keep them safe!" Jamie said with a small pout. "Besides, my dad already punished me enough. He is having me do nightly drills all summer because of it."

"You are a future leader, Jamie. As the pack's future gamma, you need to lead by example." Kurt shook his head in annoyance. "Anyways Luce Luce, you look fine. Is everything okay? I see Jasper found you. Nice going Jasper."

"I'm perfectly fine." Lucy held her hands out with a shrug.

"Lucy can't ever disappear. I'll always find her." Jasper teased and poked the side of Lucy's head.

"Are you both supposed to be at the training grounds right now?" Lucy gave them both a crooked smile. "Skipping?"

"No way princess!" Kurt said in an offended tone. "We are being sent to the kiddies today. We are in charge of seeing which ones are getting close to shifting."

"Which we are now running late for." Jamie grinned looking back at Kurt.

"s**t. Gotta run Lucy. Fill us in on the details later!" Kurt yelled as the two quickly jogged away.

"They are going to get yelled at." Lucy giggled, smiling up at Jasper. "Want to raid the kitchen for snacks?"

"Sure, snacks sound great but I'm on to you. You just want to be as close to Derek as you can." Jasper gave her a wry smile and winked down at her. He watched her cheeks redden slightly. "You know... I can't tell you how happy I am that you two are mates. You are both my favorite people and there is no better outcome than this."

"I don't think it could be more perfect either. I wish we could spend more time together... but I guess we have our whole future for that." Lucy's voice was soft as she stared at the house.

Jasper roughed her hair up. "Let's see if those legs of yours are fully healed... race ya?"

"Oh you are on!"

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 30

Lucy's leg was still a bit tight from her injury. While her leg was healed the muscles still needed to be the pain? She wasn't sure but Jasper stopped abruptly in front of her. He turned to face her with a frown "How bad is it Lucy?" Jasper asked quietly.

hed out. Not that she could beat Jasper running anyways... at least not in this form. She never made a sound, but maybe her eyebrows furrowed slightly from

"Not bad enough that I'd use it as an excuse for losing." Lucy watched as he came closer to her. He pressed his forehead on her head and sighed. "Lucy... will you promise me something?" Jasper whispered, staring into her eyes. Their foreheads were

still coughing. She looked into his deep brown serious eyes as the wind played with his blonde hair. She looked at h

fused. "What is it?"

"No more secrets with us? I promise to always tell you everything from now on if you promise to tell me everything. I don't want you thinking I'm not your best friend because my cousin is Derek. You are just as important to me." He winked as his lips curled upwards. "You'll tell me anything?" way I am never lying to you."

"Yes. And if there is something I can't say I will tell you it is something I am not permitted to talk about." Likewise. That sounds reasonable. Okay... I promise." Lucy smiled.

"I promise too." Jasper lifted his head up and looked down at her. "Now that we got that out of the way." "Tricked." Lucy said with a laugh. She should have known better. But still it was a relief to know he was stiff." She could see the relief in his brown eyes and a faint smile reached his lips. "Okay, good." Jasper draped his arm around her shoulder. "Let's go raid the fridge."

Lucy walked next to Jasper's side back to the house. They rummaged through the cabinets and fridge instead of sitting on the couches they chose the floor.

"Justice will fit in well with us. The four of us are going to always be best friends and soon you will off." "It probably won't always be the four of us though."

"You planning on getting pregnant right away?"

Does your leg really feel? The effects of the injection may still be affecting you."

I'll tell her the truth. And she trusted him to do so. "It feels tight. Maybe a bit sore. It just needs to be worked out is all. The wound is healed but the muscles are

getting a little smorgasbord of food. Then they headed to the couches and sat on the floor cross legged in front of each other. They were silly like that sometimes

be my family too." Jasper said as he plopped a grape in his mouth.

smirking. "I was talking about you and Justice finding your mates."

Lucy started coughing and quickly grabbed her cup downing the glass of water. She looked up to see "Maybe Justice? The thing is Luce that vampires don't usually find their fated mate this early in their lives how long my dad had to wait? What happened in your case is rare... unheard of rare. It will be a while for me. But I don't mind. I don't need to settle down anytime soon... or want to for that matter. I don't live my life the same way as your mate has. I enjoy the experiences. Most vampires do. What if it takes

you centuries to find your mate? I can't live like a monk until then. It is like our unspoken thing. Some of us even date and take on a companion but it is common knowledge that it is just passing the time until our mate shows up. So yeah... it will be just the four of us for a while or when Justice finds his mate. Or until you pop some puppies out." Jasper then looked up at the ceiling. "What do you think they are talking about?"

"Knowing Aiden he is probably just giving him tips on how to 'handle' me. As if I come with a manual." Lucy rolled her eyes.

Jasper chuckled. "They will get along well. Aiden loves you and just wants you taken care of. He wants your happiness more than he wants his own. He is a really good guy. He will make a great king."

"I think so too. I hope he finds someone amazing to be by his side. I won't accept anyone who isn't. I'm stricter than he is. His mate will be amazing or I'll beat the amazing into her."

"You must be really relieved... I can't imagine how you felt when you first met your mate and it wasn't 'Derek'." Jasper watched her roll her eyes.

"I was so conflicted. I hated it. I hated that I would have to reject Ryan. I didn't want to... but I couldn't let down our two species." A faint smile reached her lips. "I was a mixture of so many feelings after... our talk..." She said still keeping a sense of vagueness in the details just as a precaution. "But I would be lying if I didn't say I wasn't relieved. It was like a huge weight was lifted off of me. And for once... I was able to see happiness in my future."

"You are always burying your feelings deep Lucy... I don't like it. Don't put yourself second even to your people. You deserve to seize your own happiness." Jasper's brown eyes fixed on Lucy's. It worked out for her this time but from now on he wanted her to think about herself too.

"Hmmm... I think the same should go for you." Lucy said, raising a challenging eyebrow up at him. "How often did you want to do or say something but didn't? Because you were thinking about your sense of duty and not yourself." "Touché Lucy. Touché. We will work on it together then."

"Good. Now... ready for the challenge?" Lucy said as she grabbed the bowl of grapes. "First one to miss has to drink one of Aiden's power juices."

"Eww sick. That stuff smells like the bottom of a troll's foot." Jasper said, scrunching up his face.

Lucy giggled. "I know. But he thinks it is going to help make him stronger..." She rolled her eyes. "Well?"

"Hope you enjoy troll feet." Jasper chuckled and grabbed a couple grapes. "No unreasonable tosses either. You have to serve them up."

"Alright, deal."

"I'm glad we are on the same page. I just needed to know that she is more important to you than your own life. Because if she wasn't then you didn't deserve her." Aiden stood up from the chair he was sitting in. "There is no life without her. I'd rather be dead if she didn't exist." Derek's amber eyes set onto Aiden's. He was serious. Lucy came before everything.

"Lucy can be feisty, but she is also really forgiving. Apologize quickly and often to save you from staying in trouble." Aiden laughed and rubbed the back of his neck. "That's what I do."

"Thank you for the tip. I have a feeling I may need it." Derek laughed. "Of course, if we really are soul mates then once the marking happens that should save my butt."

"I need a soul mate then. I think my mate will want to pull her hair out with me." Aiden grinned widely. "Of course, after misunderstandings, there is always makeup s*x but that's my sister and an off-topic subject." Derek chuckled. "I'm hoping the soul mate link will help avoid misunderstandings in the future."

"You sure you don't want to just get the marking done now?"

"Not like this. Not after just recovering from the vervain injection. But I'm hoping to soon. Either I'll get the witch stuff sorted out now or I'll arrange that I can leave for a couple of days. I'm not sure how my venom will affect Lucy. I want to be able to stay with her afterwards. You both have pureblood in your system but also aren't exactly the same as me. It is weird, to be honest. You are an anomaly. Very interesting ones. It's never happened before from what my father has said."

"There is a lot that hasn't happened before with my family. We just tend to roll with the crazy." Aiden chuckled with a shrug. "I'll have to see what Lucy wants but I think we will head to the west dragon kingdom after the welcoming ceremony."

"I'll plan to come here and have your father open up a portal there. And hopefully, we won't have to be apart for long."

"Derek... I know that you may be a bit anxious being away from Lucy after what happened. But I assure you that won't happen again. Between me, Jasper and Justice Lucy will be on lockdown. She doesn't know it but I've already made some arrangements..." Aiden let a wicked smile spread across his lips. "Actually she is going to be quite angry... but it's her fault."

"Don't tell me. I don't want her thinking I had anything to do with whatever you have planned." Derek shook his head smiling.

"Yeah, you don't want this heat." Aiden chuckled. "Come on, let's get you back to Lucy." He walked over to the office door and opened it. The moment the soundproof door opened the sounds of laughter and loud squeals echoed into the room. "CHEATER!" Lucy squealed.

"Sore loser, Lucy," Jasper smirked and rolled his shoulders arrogantly.

"You are such a cheater. No. Nuh-uh. That doesn't count. That was gross." Lucy squinted her eyes at Jasper and pouted. "You know some people would consider that an indirect kiss."

"You've drank out of my water bottle before, so same thing." Jasper said arrogantly.

"That is not the same thing Jasper and you know it! That is disgusting and not fair." Lucy stood up and started chucking grapes at him.

"Hey! You are going to have a mess to clean up." Jasper chuckled as he dodged her assaults.

"Mind telling me what is going on here?" Derek asked as Aiden came down to his side.

"Didn't you hear? He tried to give your mate an indirect kiss." Aiden grinned wickedly towards Jasper as mischief flashed over his eyes.

"Ryan... wait... I can see that look in your eyes." Jasper chuckled nervously and took a retreating step backwards.

"We had a game going where you had to catch the grape in your mouth the other person threw. The loser had to drink one of Aiden's stinky troll drinks."

"HEY!" Aiden objected.

"Sorry, Aiden... anyways. Jasper put one of the grapes in his mouth first before he tossed it to me. Obviously, I wasn't catching that in my mouth and now he is proclaiming himself as the winner!" Lucy said, pouting.

Derek pulled Lucy into his chest and glared at Jasper. "You wanted my mate to have YOUR spit in her mouth?"

"I knew she wouldn't catch it. It was a certain victory. And the only rule was to serve it up." Jasper smirked with a shrug.

"Yep, sorry Lucy you lost." Aiden said, clicking his tongue.

"Ugh, I'm getting ganged up on. I can see this is going to be a swell time being surrounded by a bunch of man-boys."

"I'll get your juice for you Lucy." Jasper trotted over to the fridge and pulled out a bottle of green looking liquid. "You know Lucy, I can make him drink it instead." Derek said with a cruel grin.

"She knew the stakes." Jasper said, holding the bottle out to Lucy.

Derek snatched it from his hands and held it up to observe the liquid. He opened the lid and immediately winced from the scent. He turned and looked at Aiden. "You drink this on purpose?!"

"It's my muscle building juice. It's not that bad..." Aiden shrugged not knowing what the big deal was.

Derek looked down at Lucy and winked at her. "My mate isn't to drink this stuff ever. And if I find out she has it will be your neck Jasper. But since a bet was made I'll drink it for her."

"No no no you don't have to do that." Lucy turned to stop him but he already quickly took it down.

"Yuck... what are you doing to yourself? This stuff is putrid." Derek coughed and held that bottle out. He tossed it over to Jasper. "I blame you that something that vile is now poisoning my insides." Jasper grinned widely and shrugged. "The crazy things you do for love."

"I can't believe you drank that." Lucy bit her bottom lip and looked up at him like he was about to die.

"Like Jasper said... the things you do for love." He smiled at her warmly and leaned forward to kiss her forehead. "There will be no ganging up on you, at least not as far as Jasper is concerned." He flashed a quick glance up at Jasper. "I'll make sure of it." Lucy giggled. "It's okay. They can try to gang up on me. But they will lose. They all know it." She grinned widely. "I don't always play fair..."

Derek smiled down at his little mate with adoration. He had had a lot of trials already in his life. But leaving her today would easily be the toughest thing yet. And the time away from her was going to be pure t*****e. It already hurt just thinking about it. He would make the most out of the rest of the time he had left with her today.