

Dr. Luna

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The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 31

"And this is my roooooom." Lucy's voice trailed off as she looked in her room. There was a set of bunk beds and a sleeper couch moved into her room. On top of that, she saw Jasper's luggage in there. She turned from her room to see Aiden trying to slink away. "WHAT IS THIS?!"

"Oh yeah... about that. Well, you see... we are going to be bunking with you. It is a safety measure for all of us. I knew Jasper was planning on staying with us anyways. So Justice and I thought it would be fun for us all to stay together." Aiden chuckled, giving her a "By invading my privacy? Look at it. And now it's going to smell... Nope no no no." Lucy shook her head angrily.

cheesy grin.

"Lucy, I'm not about to leave you alone for a second. And this way it isn't weird having a guy sleeping in your room." Jasper said quietly.

"No, I'm going to have three." Lucy folded her arms over her chest and glared up at Derek.

He raised his hands up innocently. "I honestly didn't know a thing about this. However... I can't say I disagree either. I think this is a good idea." He watched her gaze darken. "In a numbers is safety sort of way."

Lucy gave him a poisonous smile. "I see. So it's okay for me to change my clothes in front of Jasper then?"

"If he looks at what is mine, I'll burn his eyes out." Derek growled.

"Hey!" Jasper said, shielding his eyes from Derek.

"Oh, Lucy, don't be dramatic. You have a bathroom attached to your room. You can change in there." Aiden said, shaking his head. She was trying to play mind games with her mate's head. But that wouldn't work on him. He was her brother and knew her too well. "Do you guys think I am going to sneak out in the middle of the night or something?" Lucy arched her eyebrow and frowned.

"Lucy... I just want to be close to you. I'll feel better. And honestly, it makes the whole scenario better if Justice and Aiden are in the room too..." Jasper carefully spoke hoping not to anger her further. "You almost made my heart stop once Lucy... please? It'll be like old times? A camp-out only inside."

Lucy lowered her shoulders in defeat. "Fine. But it is my room. Which means we watch only Lucy approved movies." Her poisonous sweet smile reached Aiden.

"Oh no..." Aiden groaned. "Maybe we can have a competition for a special slasher day?"

"Oh Aiden, we won't be here that long. We will be leaving for the welcoming ceremony in a couple weeks. And then after that we will be leaving again... wait you don't plan on bunking up with me everywhere we go, do you?" Lucy watched as Aiden grinned and rubbed the back of his neck.

"No way. I'll bunk up with Alexis and Raine. That is where we will be heading next right? The west dragon kingdom?"

Aiden sighed. "Yes, that is the plan. I think it will be fun to hang out with our cousins there. Plus, Micah can help Justice in the guardian role there. He knows how hard it is with controlling the guardian power."

Lucy turned and looked back at her room. Her lips were curled down and she sighed sadly. She felt warm hands land on her shoulders slowly pulling her into a rock solid chest. Soothing tingles spread over her body as his arms moved from her shoulders to around her front. He held her gently.

"It is all temporary Lucy. All of this. Just a small hiccup to get past." Derek's tone was low and soothing. "I'm sorry about all of this. If I could just stay by your side now..." From the corner of his eye, he could see Aiden holding his hand up giving him the thumbs up motion. He then smirked and slowly backed away with Jasper. At least he wasn't completely oblivious to give the two of them some time alone.

Derek leaned in close to Lucy's ear. His breath beat against her skin and he smiled as he felt her shudder from in. "What do you prefer, Lucy?" His lips hit the tip of her ear. He dragged his bottom lip over her earlobe. "Top... or... bottom?"

He smiled and dropped his arms from her. He ran into her room and hopped onto the top of the bunk bed. He grinned mischievously at her and watched a smile spread over her lips. She walked into her room and she plopped on her own bed. "Neither." She said looking at her fingernails acting uninterested. "I find both boring. I like to experiment and see what works the best for me." Her eyes flashed up at him. She watched him swallow a lump down. "I've tried waterbeds, memory foam, gel... but it's my adjustable bed that I love the most. I can always change the position to suit my mood." She let her fingers trail over her bed as a faint smile played on her lips. She listened to the deep throaty

chuckle from Derek. She watched as he hopped off the bed and walked over to her slowly. His eyes were fixed on her like a predator.

"You win. I can't win games like this against you." He walked up in front of her and leaned into her. Sending her backwards on the bed with his body coming on top of hers. His lips crashed into hers as he greedily attacked her. His hand wandered over her side while his other hand reached up to hold her head captive. He moaned as she pulled on his bottom lip with her teeth. "I really can't win against you." He panted into her lips. "I love you Lucy." He said between kisses. His fingers trailed over her neck. Derek suddenly threw himself backwards off of Lucy. He backed up a few steps and gripped his fingers tightly. The want and desire of not only his but Lucy's was taking over him. He could feel her desire flashing in. It was almost too much to control. In fact, he was worried he wouldn't be able to control it. He didn't want to control it. But if he was going to mark her he wanted to do it right. A time when she hadn't just recovered. And a time when he would stay with her afterwards. Now, unfortunately, wasn't the time. He panted heavily as he watched Lucy sit up. "Soon Lucy. I'll be back to finish this very soon." He took in a deep breath. "Baby, I don't know how this is going to work after we mark each other. This is already intense. Feeling your feelings even in fragments drives me insane."

"The funny thing about soundproof rooms... They don't work if the door is open." Jasper said with a small smirk.

Lucy looked at her open door mortified. She closed her eyes and bit her bottom lip. She could feel the heat rush over her face. Derek glared at him angrily.

Jasper raised his hands. "Easy there. I'm doing you the favor. I mean..." He made a motion to the downstairs insinuating there were other people around.

"Well they know what mates are and what naturally happens. I won't be ashamed of wanting my mate." Derek said confidently.

"Of course not. Though I am sure Aiden doesn't want to hear you defile his sister either." Jasper smirked and winked back at Derek.

"Hey Jasper." Derek said with a serious tone. He looked up at his brown eyes. He glanced over at Lucy who was now looking up at him curiously. "Thank you for looking after her for me. I know you want to be able to fight too... but"

Jasper waved him off. "Are you crazy? This is where I want to be. Who wants to get splattered in the blood of unknown creatures? Besides, if Lucy is being kept out of the battle, I guess it is only fair that I should be as well." He winked over at Lucy. It was nice having a sense of camaraderie. They both wanted to fight. It was actually killing him that he couldn't be next to his prince's side when he needed him most. But he understood. When it came to protecting Lucy there was no one else better to be by her side. Only Derek himself would be better. And because he was the leader as Ryan, that couldn't

happen. Not this time... not in the middle of this mission. Trust was vital and the elite soldiers were a close-knit group.

Lucy turned and looked over at Jasper. A small smile rested on her face. She didn't think about that. She was only thinking about her babysitters. She didn't stop to think about how Jasper would actually want to be fighting too. And honestly, she didn't see why not. She was going to be safe. She would be tucked safely in the dragon kingdom. There was no reason Jasper needed to stay with her there.

"When I get to the dragon kingdom can't Jasper join you then?" Lucy asked looking back at Derek. "It isn't like anything will happen to me there."

Derek shook his head but Jasper spoke before he could.

"Lucy, as the future vampire princess and queen it is customary to have a guard. You are a vital part to the vampires now. It's quite rare to have a royal pairing. And instead of keeping a stranger around you who you don't know..." Jasper shrugged with a grin. "Besides, it'll be fun spending time in the dragon kingdom. And there will be other fights I can join in on." "Shouldn't you also have a protector then?" Lucy tilted her head over at Derek.

"That is a different situation. It is his job to prove himself worthy of the position he will be taking. Double standards I know but when you think about how far vampires date back these old fashion traditions make sense." Jasper said with a small shrug. "I don't think that seems very smart to do." Lucy furrowed her brows. "That isn't how it is going to be later. No son of mine is going to get put on some dangerous trial just to prove him an adequate leader."

Derek grinned. "You going to give me a son?"

"I don't know. Not sure if you know how to make babies or not. I was talking about my son. Not sure who the father will be yet." Lucy smiled, biting her bottom lip.

"Okay I am shutting the door before another x-rated sound show starts." Jasper quickly shut the door.

Derek chuckled and shook his head. "You planning to shake tradition?" Derek asked as he lifted Lucy up to stand into his chest.

"Well isn't taking me as a mate already breaking tradition?" Lucy asked, raising her eyebrow challengingly.

"Mmm... it is." Derek leaned his head down and kissed the tip of her nose. He then moved lower and pressed into her lips slowly. His lips moved against hers as he savored the taste of her. Slowly, he dipped his tongue into her mouth. Massaging her

tongue with his own. Lucy began to suck onto his tongue, keeping it a prisoner in her mouth.

"Mmmm." Derek growled into her lips. He bit onto her bottom lip and pulled it into his mouth gently nipping and sucking at it. He pulled away and looked down at her. His fingers traced over her face. "It's an amazing feeling... isn't it? The mate bond... soulmate bond... our bond. It just feels so perfect."

Lucy smiled up at him. "It does. I never thought I would ever get to have this..."

"I need to do something real quick..." Derek said looking down at Lucy's face. He smiled and pulled her out of her room. "Jasper..."

"You raaaannnggg?" Jasper said from the floor below.

Derek led Lucy down the stairs to where Aiden and Jasper were sitting. "Can you watch her for just a few moments." His eyes glazed over as he had a private conversation with Jasper.

"Alright. But when you get back we are going to hook up the game system. Let's race." Jasper said with a challenging smirk to Lucy.

Derek chuckled. He looked down at Lucy's disappointed face. He inwardly smiled at this. He loved that she didn't want him to leave her side. "Baby, I won't be but a few moments. I promise." He kissed her lightly on the lips.

"I'll walk with you." Aiden suddenly said. "You are new here. I don't want pack members to get jumpy."

Derek nodded to him and the two men headed out the door. Lucy walked over to the couch and sat down.

"Awe, don't go pouting Luce Luce." Jasper chuckled and tossed a small bag of chips to her.

"Where is he going?" Lucy pouted not caring about hiding it.

"He is checking on our soldiers, Lucy. You know... responsibilities and all." Jasper chuckled. "He will be back soon, princess."

"Come on." Lucy said, tossing a controller over to Jasper. "We might as well get a few warm up sessions in." She grinned and waved the controller in the air.

Jasper laughed. "I won't go easy on you. Your status means nothing to a vicious competitor like myself. Bhahaha." Jasper said with his fake villain laugh.

Lucy giggled. "Good. So, when I beat you, you will really understand the difference in our skills."

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Lucy smiled brightly when she saw Derek and Aiden walk in through the door. She dropped the controller and walked over to greet them. Well really Derek.

"I told you I wouldn't be long." Derek said and pulled her into his chest.

"Luce Luce." Aiden said waving a paper. "Mom and Dad are staying the night in Elysium. We are under strict orders to stay in the borders at all times. If we step one toe outside of the borders..." "Heads will roll."

"Heads will roll."

Aiden and Lucy said giggling at the same time. Yep, they knew their parents well.

"Are you guys coming? I am all warmed up." Jasper said, looking over the couch to them.

"You any good at this game?" Aiden asked Derek.

"I just played this against Lucy. I was in first the whole time but she overtook me on the last lap." Derek gave her a wry grin and she smiled innocently up at him.

"She is sneaky like that. She purposely let you lead." Aiden said with a wink. "She was anticipating something happening to you... let me guess a blue seeker shell?" Derek nodded slowly and watched as Aiden's lips curled upwards. "Yep, thought so."

Derek smiled down at Lucy. "Clever my little mate. I'm afraid I can't go easy on you during this next battle."

Lucy batted her eyelashes up at him with a fake pout. "Even if I asked you to? What if I just asked you to only target Aiden and Jasper?"

"That would be cheating." Jasper yelled from the couch.

Derek chuckled. "Of course, if that is what you really asked for I couldn't deny it."

Lucy giggled. "No, I want you to bring it. So when I beat you you know you were outmatched."

"Savage, isn't she?" Aiden said with a grin.

"Perfect... that's what she is." Derek kissed the top of her head and looked down at her with pride.

"Ugh, mushy mate stuff. Gosh, am I going to turn into a sap like that too?" Aiden chuckled.

"You will." Derek laughed. "But it's worth it..."

"You haven't even gotten to the good parts of having a mate yet either." Jasper chuckled peering over the couch.

"Okay, let's get this match started." Lucy didn't like the direction the conversation was shifting in.

Derek snatched her hand and twirled her back into his chest. He cupped her chin with his thumb and covered her lips with his own. He moved against her slowly, tasting and enjoying her. "It's all the good parts Jasper... all of it. Every moment with her." He leaned in again and kissed the tip of her nose. His heart felt so warm and full. He felt so good on the inside as if his chest was about to burst. She was everything and more. He looked into her green eyes and her pink stained cheeks. It was still hard to believe that she was his and she was his soul mate.

Aiden grabbed a controller. "Just watch how fast she turns on you once you enter the track. There is no mate pull in the game. Only the will to win."

Derek grabbed a controller and pulled Lucy down beside him. "I'm afraid I will have to unleash my real powers against you. I hope you are prepared?"

She giggled and turned her face up to him. "Show me what you've got."

"Let the games begin!" Aiden said as he cracked his neck to each side.

Each one of them took turns dominating. They were all scattered all over the board in the place they took. They decided on one last race and whoever took first was allowed to claim victory. The four of them were all neck and neck on the last lap.

"Uh oh Lucy look out!" Aiden yelled as a black speck landed on her leg. Lucy dropped the controller and began brushing her leg in panic.

Derek instantly dropped his controller and grabbed the black speck off of her. He held it out in his hand and rubbed her back soothingly. "It's okay Lucy!"

Lucy looked at the black piece of fuzz and turned to look at Aiden and Jasper snickering together. She arched her brow at them and then jumped up and quickly turned the television off.

"Aww Lucy!" Jasper whined.

"Don't you aww Lucy me. Aiden! That is not fair. That is cheating!" Lucy growled as she pointed at the black fuzz. She had a near heart attack thinking that she was once again under attack by the spider assassin. Aiden shrugged, giving her a cheeky grin. "All is fair in war."

"When we were kids and we used to play, I remember once when you refused to go on the patio because of a spider. I think it is adorable... some things don't change." Derek kissed the top of her head and pulled her body into his.

"There is nothing adorable about it. Soon you will see that. If there is a spider in the shower, in the corner, within a one mile perimeter of pack borders.... it's 'Aiden there's a spider! Daddy there's a spider!' I'm thankful that the torch will soon be passed to you." Aiden chuckled while Lucy shot him an annoyed look.

"I'll be your spider champion my princess." Derek said with an over exaggerated bow. He grinned and playfully winked up at her.

"Now you're poking fun at me too." She furrowed her brows down. "You guys can believe what you want but I'm telling you they would eat us if they were big enough. And I know they are still testing out their strengths." She listened as the three guys chuckled at her. The main door to the pack house opened and Gia popped her head inside. "Lucy." She bit her lip and looked at the stranger in the room. She then looked back at Lucy. "I'm glad you made it back in one piece."

"Sorry about leaving you then..." Lucy stepped away from Derek and walked up to her cousin. She noticed she was acting a bit strange. "Is something wrong?"

"Well..." Her eyes darted over to the three guys. Kyle is here to see you.

Lucy's eyes bulged open. When you say here...

I mean here here. Like right outside here.

Go play with him then. I'm busy. I found my mate. Lucy watched Gia's eyes widen in shock.

I think he is determined to see you... Gia shrugged and looked over at the stranger again. The one she presumed was Lucy's mate. Not bad Lucy. Not bad at all. And you get to keep him? It's a long story. But yes, I am keeping him. Lucy sighed.

"Knock knock."

The sound of Kyle's voice entered the room. Lucy looked up in shock at the guy looking in the door.

"Hey Lucy!" Kyle said with a wide grin.

"I thought I made myself clear."

Lucy heard Aiden's deep low growling voice from right behind her.

Kyle nodded his head respectfully to Aiden. "I just came to check and see if Lucy wanted to go to a party with me."

"Oh... I'm sorry. For one I am not allowed to leave the pack. I'm under lockdown. And two..." Her eyes drifted over to Derek and Jasper who were now by her side. "Um this is my mate, Ryan."

"Wait? Your actual mate?" Kyle lifted his nose a bit to take in his scent. He frowned and looked at Lucy confused. "So how is that going to work out?"

"Lucy is my soulmate. So, there is nothing to work out." Derek said, putting a possessive arm around her. He locked eyes onto Kyle. He did not like the way he was looking at Lucy. Like she was a prize he wanted to obtain.

"How does that even happen? How does our princess get a vampire as a soul mate?" Kyle said with a small scowl.

Aiden chuckled darkly and placed his hand on Derek's shoulder. A sign to let him know he would handle it. He walked forward and pushed Lucy backwards more. He wanted her distanced from Kyle. "Is there a problem? Lucy is my sister and I am fine with her choices. So if there is something you want to say here-"

Kyle raised his hands up in front of him and plastered on a fake smile. "Not at all. If this is what Lucy wants then I support her. I only came to invite her to a party..." He looked over at Gia. "You interested?"

Gia's eyes lit up and she nodded her head. "Yes."

"You can go but you have to take a couple pack members with you." Aiden said, looking from Kyle to Gia.

"That's fine with me. I'll wait for you by the car." Kyle said as Gia dashed outside quickly. He looked behind Aiden to meet with Lucy's eyes. "I guess there is one dream I won't get to fulfill." He grinned and winked at Lucy. "I hope for your happiness." "Thank you."

Lucy said with a faint smile. She could feel Derek's grip on her tightening, and she was certain he was fighting the urge to kill Kyle.

"Make sure my pack members get back here safely and in one piece." Aiden said in a low warning.

Kyle nodded his head to him and smiled. "Sure will." He glanced at Lucy once more and then left, closing the door behind him.

"Who was that?" Derek asked in a low deadly tone.

"That's the guy who tried to kiss Lucy before." Jasper said in annoyance.

"But he didn't and I wasn't going to let him." Lucy immediately added.

"I don't like the way he looks at you. Who is he?" Derek snapped his gaze to Aiden.

"He is from another pack. Don't worry I'll keep him away." Aiden said in a matter of fact tone.

"Because I am such a delicate female who can't possibly do anything against him. Good thing I have males around to protect me from throwing myself at every male around." Lucy scoffed and walked away. Aiden would keep him away? He didn't do anything. Besides, be the ONLY person who ever looked at her like a woman before. She didn't like his low opinions of vampires. But she actually found herself getting along well with him before.

Derek grabbed onto Lucy's shoulder and spun her to face him. "Tell me. Do you have feelings for him? If you do, I would understand. I just..."

Lucy's was floored. "What? Feelings for him? I only knew him for a couple of hours." She looked at him like he had an arm growing out of his forehead.

"I don't like the way he was looking at you..." Derek squeezed his fingers into a ball "He looked at you like you were his." He looked back at Aiden and Jasper who nodded in agreement.

"He has a reputation of getting what he wants. But he won't be getting my sister." Aiden said glaring at Lucy. "I never said you can't take care of yourself or that you threw yourself at men. My job is to protect you and that is what I am going to do. Luce..." Aiden tilted his head and raised his brows to her.

You know the way he is looking at you is inappropriate, right?

Are you going to go out there and teach him a lesson? The only guy who ever came to ask me out to a party? What about the way that girls look at you? Is that inappropriate?

Lucy folded her arms over her chest and she raised her eyes up challenging her brother. Why do you have to go and start throwing logic at me? Can't I just win an argument? Aiden chuckled, shaking his head.

"Gosh, you are such a moron sometimes." Lucy lifted her hands up and rubbed her face. "I'm not going to see him again. I only hung out with him for a couple of hours while EVERYONE else was busy. Let it go."

"Alright, Luce." Aiden sighed. "So popcorn and a movie?" He smiled trying to change the topic.

"Yeah... just give Lucy and I a few moments to talk first." Derek said gently, taking her hand in his. He led her up the stairs and back to her room where he slowly shut the door.

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Derek turned and looked at Lucy. His eyes were focused on her as a fire lit behind them. He stepped into Lucy and wrapped his arms around her. He pulled her by her waist holding her flush against his body. His eyes met with hers and continued to blaze. "Mine!" He said in a low growl before smashing his lips against hers. He pressed against her lips roughly as the beast inside of him demanded to claim her.

Lucy felt a bit shocked by his reaction. He was holding her body so tight against his but at the same time she felt like she was melting into his arms. She felt him deepening the kiss as his tongue prodded her lips open exploring her mouth. She moaned into his lips as he gripped her behind tightly trying to push their bodies even closer together. She could feel the evidence of his arousal between them as her fingers locked into his hair. Deeper. Urgent. His kisses were making her delirious and hungry....for more. The sweet sparks were no longer satisfying now there was a deeper desire. A stronger burn screamed for him from her lower body.

Derek pulled apart, panting against her lips. He reached his hand up to gently cup her cheek. "I never thought I would want to hurt someone so much for just looking at you." He said lowly while he took in deep breaths inhaling her scent to calm him down. Lucy met with his amber eyes as she tried to get her breathing under control. The electrifying moment had her feeling a bit foggy. She leaned into his chest and wrapped her hands around him. "I'm yours. I'd never allow anyone else to touch me. Even before... I knew you were my mate. I never..." She felt his fingers trail over her cheek. He teased her with the tips trailing them down to her neck.

"I know Lucy. I believe you and trust you. I need to reign in the emotions. I have never felt jealousy before... and..." He let out a dry chuckle. "I think I am a savage when it comes to you. I could easily rip someone to pieces and not even think twice about it

when it comes to you." He leaned into her and began peppering her with light tender kisses. He started on her forehead and moved down to her cheeks. Finally, he lightly pressed into her lips.

"I needed this to calm down. I figured I would spare the other two..." Derek smirked and winked down at her. "Ready for that movie?"

Lucy gnawed on her inner bottom lip and met with his eyes. If they watched a movie how long after would he have to leave? "What time... when do you need to leave?" She watched as a wide smile formed on his face.

Derek leaned in and he tilted her chin up with his thumb. He leaned in close to her mouth still smiling. "Tomorrow morning," he whispered into her lips.

"Really?!" Lucy said excitedly. When he nodded she jumped into his lips. She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him excitedly. "Thank you."

"Baby, don't thank me. I don't want to leave you either. When I left earlier it was to send the others back. I told them I would meet them tomorrow. I just couldn't bear to tear myself apart from you already. Though I know I'll never be ready to leave you, but we haven't gotten to spend a lot of time together." He brushed her cheek with his hand. "I have to keep reminding myself that we will be together for eternity. That I can get through this short time apart."

She leaned her cheek into his hand and brought her hand up to cover over his. "I just want to be with you too. It isn't natural for mates to be away from each other."

Derek leaned his head into hers still looking into her eyes. "If it was any other enemy Lucy... if it wasn't for this witch who is plotting against your family... I can't lose you. As hard as it is to be away from you it is more terrifying thinking, I could lose you. I love you, my little mate." He smiled into her lips and brushed against them once more. "Come on, let's enjoy our time now. Let's not be sad about what will happen tomorrow."

Lucy nodded her head. It would be a waste to think about being apart while they were together. She felt his arm slide around her and he opened the door up to her room leading her back downstairs.

"Have a nice soundproof chat?" Jasper said with a smirk.

"I remembered to close the door this time." Derek said with a smug grin. "So what are we watching?"

Aiden grinned. "Jasper and I already picked the movie since you two took so long. I hope that's fine."

"That's fine with me." Derek said and pulled Lucy next to him on the couch.

Lucy however did not like the flash of evil in her brother's eyes. And the moment the movie started she understood why. The title came up... Itsy Bitsy. Oh no. She could handle most scary movies but scary spider movies... nope. She moved into Derek's side deeper. "We don't have to watch this Lucy." Derek whispered.

"Oh yes, she does. It's only fair." Aiden said with a wink. "Besides a movie like this with Lucy... I'm doing you a favor." He winked at Derek and chuckled, turning his attention back to the television.

Lucy felt Derek's embrace tighten around her. "Don't worry Lucy. I'll protect you. Always." She felt his lips land on the side of her head sending soothing tingles over her body. Okay, maybe she could watch the movie in the arms of her mate....

Nope. She couldn't do it. It didn't matter that it felt amazing being in her mate's arms she could almost feel bugs crawling on her. She turned her head and tucked it in Derek's side. She felt his gentle vibrations from his chest as he chuckled at her. Then she felt his hand slowly begin to trace over her side. Her breath hitched as his fingers found the edge of her shirt. She shivered when his fingers touched her bare skin slowly swirling on her stomach under her shirt. If he was trying to make her think about something else, it was working. Or he might just be being a guy who found his mate... in either case she wasn't thinking about the movie. She was thinking about his sweet smell and his chiseled hard chest under her hand. And how just his fingertips could make her body desire him. Okay... maybe this wasn't a good thing to be concentrating about. Especially in a room where her brother and like a brother could easily smell her arousal. Something she couldn't hide from their keen noses.

She pushed away from him and glanced up to see his dark lustful eyes. She bit her lip and felt her cheeks heat up. "I'll be back. I'm getting a drink." She whispered, getting up. She quickly hopped out of the area and headed towards the kitchen. She rubbed her face slightly and opened up the refrigerator, grabbing a bottle of water. She downed the whole bottle and smiled, shaking her head. Just a couple of days ago she never thought she would be capable of these feelings.

Suddenly there was a commotion going on inside of Lucy's head. It was a lot of communication from the pack mind link but she clearly heard Sam's (her father's beta) voice boom in that there has been an attack on one of their pack members. She heard Aiden jump up immediately and they made it to the door at the same time. Jasper and Derek were there too though they didn't know what was going on.

"Stay here Lucy!" Aiden growled.

"You stay here." Lucy growled back and darted past him. The moment she reached outside she quickly shifted running towards the upper territory. He was just as in danger as she was. He didn't get to act like he was protecting her. She was protecting him as well. She heard Aiden's wolf right behind her and the sound of Jasper and Derek dashing next to them. They came up on a small group. Winston (Wyatt's Gamma) and

Adam (Wyatt's Delta) were there ordering pack members to return to their homes. Sam was kneeling next to a body on the ground. Lucy shifted back to her human form and knelt down next to the injured pack member. She looked up at Sam as Aiden reached their side.

"He is going to be alright." Sam said. "He was with patrol group B... they said these pale creatures came out of nowhere and attacked them. They were heading right for our pack borders..." Sam's eyes looked a bit worried.

Derek knelt next to Lucy and put his arm around her waist guiding her up so he could hold her against him. "I'm going to have another band of soldiers join us, Lucy. They won't get past my men. This only happened because we left... escorting you back here. They won't get close to your pack again."

"How can I leave my pack when it is in danger?" Lucy whispered out. She looked at Aiden and could see he was thinking the same thing.

"It won't happen again. Hey Lucy... look at me." Derek said, lifting her chin up to him. "They will never get close to your pack again. I already sent Chaz to go and request more soldiers. We will have this area under our protection as well." He looked down at Aiden. "Trust me..."

"It's not that we have a choice anyways. Mom and Dad are not going to change their mind." Aiden said with a scowl.

"Wyatt filled me in briefly on everything. We appreciate your assistance. We can't have anything happening to our royalty." Sam stood up and looked over at Adam who walked over. "Help me get him to the infirmary."

"Will do Sam. Then Winston and I are going to go and collect Gia, Kurt and Jamie. They are at a party." Adam sighed, lifting up the body with Sam.

"We will double patrol sizes for now. There is nothing for you two to worry about. I will personally see to the pack's safety until your father returns." Sam looked between Lucy and Aiden.

"You two should probably stay close to the house until your father gets back." Adam said not liking leaving the two of them out here.

"We will." Aiden nodded his head for them to go on.

Lucy leaned into Derek's chest as she watched them carrying the injured soldier away. "Dad is not going to like this at all."

"Lucy, please don't just dart off like that." Jasper finally breathed out in annoyance. "I know this is your pack but at least explain what is going on. You are going to give us a heart attack."

"Sorry I didn't have time to type up a memo Jasper." She shot him an annoyed look that quickly fell to concern. "There hasn't been an attack on our patrol in a very long time. This is big news... It is going to be unsettling for pack members. I'm worried how anxious they will feel about Aiden, and I being sent away." Lucy frowned, biting her inner lip.

"I think they will be relieved to know you two are safe." Derek said quietly. "Speaking of safety... let's go back to the house." He looked at Aiden who nodded his head looking around.

They were lucky there were not any casualties this time. But this was Lucy and Aiden's pack... their home. It was hard thinking they wouldn't be there to help defend it if the need arose. Lucy took in the scent of her mate... it was amazing how it helped comfort her. His warm arm around her was a weighted comfort. She was glad she had him by her side right now.

Jasper... Derek linked to him as they walked back to the house. He rubbed his hand over Lucy's shoulder in soothing motions. I want Lucy to go and stay in the vampire kingdom until after the ceremony. It will be safer for her there.

Jasper looked over at Lucy and nodded his head. It wasn't him he needed to convince. Though they think Wyatt would understand especially after this. And Justice could just plan to meet them in the dragon kingdom afterwards. It would give him more time to hone his skills as a guardian too.

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 34

Lucy came down from her room, she had gone up to change real quick. She put on a black tank top and a pair of shorts. She looked at the guys all hovered around the table as Aiden pointed to something and laughed. "What are you guys doing?" Lucy asked as she came closer to investigate. "Just giving your mate here a tour down memory lane." Aiden beamed widely.

She watched as Derek lifted something up. And she realized what they were doing. They were going through their photo albums! Aiden was also showing him pictures from his phone. Derek smirked and waved a picture at her. "He said I can keep this one..." Derek held up a picture of Lucy in a pink sleeveless dress. It was a picture of their school prom.

Lucy smiled and shook her head. "That one was from prom." She felt mildly embarrassed as he stared at the picture. She watched his brows furrow and then grow serious as he lifted up another photo.

"Who is this? Your date?" Derek asked, lifting up another picture of Lucy in the same dress next to a very tall muscular guy. It was someone he didn't recognize. The guy had black hair and light blue eyes and was half lifting Lucy up into his chest. He could feel his blood boiling mildly seeing someone holding his mate so close. Way too close.

Lucy bit her bottom lip and smiled. "Yes, that was my date. You turned me down and Jasper was busy." Technically it was his double that turned her down.

"You two seem close." Derek said as his eyes darkened on the photo.

"That's only a picture of one moment. I believe those two ended up in bed together that night." Aiden said with a smirk.

"Aiden." Lucy hissed.

"What? You did!" Aiden grinned widely.

Derek's eyes lifted up to Lucy. There was a menacing possessiveness meeting with hers. And the aura of a killer started filling the room. "Where is this guy? I want to meet him."

Lucy laughed. "I know you are strong but don't bother. You can't beat him in a match." She looked over at Aiden who started laughing.

"Gotta let that one go. Lucy is right, he would take you down..." Jasper smiled and patted Derek on the back.

"Oh look here it is..." Aiden said, pulling another picture out.

"Aiden don't!" Lucy squealed and tried to leap for the picture but Derek quickly snatched it into his own hands. Lucy watched his body immediately tense. His muscles flexed and his hand trembled slightly. "Now wait a minute... let me explain..." She said calmly. It was cute seeing his jealousy but it was unwarranted.

"You can explain this?" Derek said, turning the picture so she can see it more.

She knew exactly what picture it was. It was a picture of her and the guy under the covers in bed together. Aiden had ran in and snapped a picture as they held up their hands trying to block themselves from the picture.

"Do you have feelings for him?" Derek asked in an icy tone.

"Wait let me explain-"

"Do you?" Derek asked tersely.

"Of course I do but-"

Derek's dark gaze snapped onto Lucy. There was something crushing about his gaze and almost smothering. But more than that she could feel him hurting. The suffocating drowning sensation started filling her up again. She walked up and cupped his face in her hands. "Will you listen to me? Turn the picture over."

Derek looked into her eyes and back to the photo. This all happened before they were mates so it shouldn't bother him but she told him she never touched anyone. His mind continued to race as he slipped the photo over. On the back was written 'Lucy and Micah caught hiding from Alexis after pranking her. He looked back to Lucy who still had his cheek cupped in her hand.

"Aiden don't tease him." Lucy looked over at him and scolded in agitation. "There has never been anyone else." She smiled at Derek and brushed her hand over his cheek. She felt his breath as he took in her scent, calming himself down. "Since I couldn't go with you and Jasper, my cousin Alexis's guardian Micah took me to prom. At the after-party, Micah and I tricked Alexis into eating a ghost pepper. This picture was us hiding from her wrath and Aiden outed us."

"I'm sorry..." Derek muttered embarrassed at himself.

"Aiden was provoking you the most. It's okay." She stepped into him and wrapped her arms around his neck. She played with the hair near the back of his neck with her fingers. She held his gaze with her eyes. In their case, it would really be a good idea to be marked as soul mates. She could see many misunderstandings not happening in the future because of it.

"Maybe you should just mark her now. It might help you get control of that jealousy." Jasper snickered. "Come on, Aiden. Let's finish the movie."

Aiden chuckled and slapped Derek on the back. "Sorry, it is like a right of passage for a brother to do these things." He winked at Derek and Lucy and followed Jasper into the living room.

Lucy bit her bottom lip and smiled up at him. "Do you want to go ahead and mark me now? It may prevent further misunderstandings."

Derek leaned his head down and growled into her neck. "I don't think your room is soundproof enough... Not with the moans I will make come from your mouth."

Lucy giggled. "This is soundproof for werewolf mating. Don't use a lame excuse like that."

Derek nibbled on her neck letting his tongue flick over the spot he would mark her. "I'll be back to mark you, Lucy. When I can stay with you afterwards for a few days. I want to be there with you through everything. We are both very special cases... and I'm a bit terrified of after the marking to be honest. I'm afraid I won't be able to pull myself away from you afterwards. And yet I can't leave you unmarked either. We will both be stronger because of it. But it will make being parted... torturous." He moved his lips to her cheek and buried his nose in her hair.

"Stay with me now... mark me now." She said quietly. She felt his fingers dig into her and he quietly groaned into her hair.

"Maybe that is a good idea." Derek's breath became more ragged and he pulled her body flush against his. He grabbed her chin and tilted it up crashing into her lips. He felt almost frantic now as he kissed her. He plunged his tongue into her mouth trying to take her as deep as possible. Her fingers tugging into his hair and pulling him towards her only encouraged him more. He pulled away, his dark eyes gazing into hers. "Let's go to your room." He watched as she breathlessly nodded her head. He smiled down at her. They both wanted it. Sometimes the best of plans couldn't wait for what nature intended. He lifted Lucy up into his chest bridal style and began to move to the stairs.

A knock was heard on the pack door just as they reached the first step. He halted and turned. They both watched curiously as Aiden and Jasper went to the door. Sam stood at the door.

"I ran into him by the pack territory. He needs to speak with Ryan." Sam motioned for the person behind him to come inside.

Derek slid Lucy down to her feet. "Lenny?!" He walked up to the guy as he walked in. His eyes glazed over as a conversation between the two of them took place.

Voidless are heading in different directions to different packs. I think they are trying to provoke the king and queen of the wolves to respond. Lenny reported to both Jasper and Ryan (Derek). s**t. Derek pursed his lips together.

You are going to need my help until the other soldiers come. Jasper looked at Derek. "I'll come back and take Lucy to the vampire kingdom right after the situation is under control but for now... you are going to need me so don't argue. Or I will pull rank on you." Jasper gave him a serious look. They didn't know that Derek was the prince and only the prince could outrank Jasper, besides their king and queen.

What is everyone doing currently? Derek asked looking back at Lenny.

They've broken up in groups of two and are trying to eliminate as many as possible.

Derek nodded his head. Go... He looked at Jasper and nodded his head. Go too. I'll catch up.

Jasper and Lenny both blurred away while Derek turned to face Lucy. He could see the concern in her eyes. He wished he could have had their moment together first. He took commanding steps into her and grabbed her arm pulling her to a secluded area of the house. "Baby, I've got to go." He cupped her cheeks and looked into her eyes.

"What's wrong? What has happened?" Lucy pleaded with her eyes as she felt her stomach drop. For him to have to leave like this it must be something big.

He rubbed her cheeks with his thumbs and smiled. "Everything is going to be fine. The voidless are spread out and heading for other packs. It's a trap to lure your family out. I'm certain of it. We will take care of it. It isn't more than we can handle. But I'm going to have to personally see to this." The look in her eyes was breaking his heart. He could feel how much she wanted to go with him. "But what if..."

Derek leaned forward and pressed his lips into hers, silencing her. Their lips moved together as he enjoyed the quick taste of her lips.

"Listen to me, when Jasper comes back, he is taking you to the vampire kingdom. Please just go with him for now. And after the ceremony, you can head to the dragon kingdom. I will see you soon." He squeezed her body into him tightly with one hand while the other tilted her chin up to him. He crashed into her lips urgently and desperately. His last taste of his mate before he would have to leave her. "I love you Lucy. Stay here and wait for Jasper..."

Lucy couldn't breathe... a mixture from both of their strangled emotions. She could feel her eyes watering slightly which caught her off guard. She didn't imagine she was going to feel this way when they had to part. Though to be honest this was very unexpected. She squeezed her fingers into his shirt. "I love you. Please... be safe and come back to me soon."

He brushed his lips against her forehead and inhaled her scent deeply. He then squinted his eyes tight and pulled away from her. When he reached the door, he turned his head to Aiden. "Take care of her for me." His voice croaked slightly. His eyes met with the watery emeralds of his mate. He felt like his heart was shattering. It was taking everything in him to fight against his instincts in order to leave her. He forced a smile. "I love you... my little mate."

Lucy watched as he disappeared from the room. Sam left as well shutting the door giving her privacy. She felt Aiden's arm wrap around her shoulder as her liquid crystals escaped from her eyes. Inside she felt a heavy pressure on her chest. Her nose and eyes burned. The farther his scent trailed away the heavier the pressure became. Part of her soul was gone, and it was a shocking feeling.

"Let's binge movies all night. We will set up a fort in the living room and fill it with snacks." Aiden knew he couldn't do anything to help her. But he could at least stay with her and not leave her side. Seeing his sister's tears hurt him... because he couldn't fix this. He looked up at the closed door with a frown, "Come on Lucy," he said gently as he led her away.

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Lucy woke up laying on the couch. She felt a fuzzy blanket covering her body. She wasn't sure at what point she fell asleep but there was new morning light streaming in from the window. She looked over and saw Aiden was sleeping on the recliner next to her. He had stayed with her all night. She smiled as she leaned up. He was a really good brother. He did his best to keep her distracted last night.

She inhaled a deep breath as she sat up. This was unnatural. She needed to be by her mate's side. She should be there helping him fight. She wasn't the type to sit idly by while the guy, her mate, saved the day. Though, neither were her parents and they are planning to stand down for now. She didn't know much about Meryl (Beryl's grandmother). She only knew what she was told but she could tell her parents were cautious.

Inside she felt a hole that never existed before. The absence of her mate was something she had never experienced in the past. And even though she wouldn't do it she wished to bring the barriers up again. She missed him... missing him was only a shallow way to describe the depth of her feelings. She hoped he was alright.

"I need foood. Pancakes Lucy! Pancaaaakkeess." Aiden whined with eyes closed.

Lucy giggled and shook her head. He was still trying to distract her by making her cook. "Alright, I'll whip us up some pancakes."

"Eggs and sausage too. Oh and wheat toast." Aiden mumbled and turned his head to the side, still keeping his eyes closed.

Lucy smiled as she quietly walked out of the room. Usually, she would chastise him but not this time. He had a poor night's sleep just so he could keep watch over her. And even though he benefited from it he was using cooking as a distraction. Even asleep he was still aware of her. Well at least cooking was comforting to her. It was therapeutic and would keep her distracted... for now. She couldn't wait for Jasper to come back and give her a full report.

Soon the aroma of the different mixtures of cooking food filled the air. The scent lifted Aiden up and beckoned him into the kitchen. "Banana pancakes and chocolate chip

pancakes? And is that stuffed French toast?" Aiden eyed a plate that she was dusting with powdered sugar.

"Yes it is. Just my little way of saying thank you for staying with me last night."

"Well I expect this every day now. Since I'll be staying with you every night for a while." Aiden said with a wide grin.

"Cute Aiden, but consider this a future down payment as well." Lucy giggled and stacked the pancakes on a plate.

"Eh, I'll take it. You think you made enough?" Aiden said looking over all the different plates of food.

Lucy giggled and shrugged. "Guess there is plenty." Her and Aiden sat the many plates at the table. She watched as her brother filled his plate up with a bit of everything. And soon he was shoveling food into his mouth.

"Mmmm, these are fantastic Lucy." Aiden was in pure heaven.

Lucy smiled and poked at her food slightly. Her mind was on Derek and Jasper. She wondered if they had gotten to rest. Was the fighting over? Did Derek miss her as much as she missed him? Or was she just being pathetic? Her first boyfriend sort of deal... A heartsick puppy.

"Eat." Aiden said tersely. He lifted his eyes up to Lucy with a stern look.

"This is dumb, isn't it? Shouldn't we be fighting too?" Lucy finally said hastily.

"I agree. It's dumb. But this one must not be our fight. If this witch has really decided to target us then for once we are the ones who shouldn't be fighting. I don't like it. But this witch doesn't have the means to destroy everyone. She isn't a real threat like the demon war was. But she could cause a big problem if she kills either of us. With your death the vampires lose their queen. And with mine the wolves lose their king." Aiden scowled a bit. "I don't like it either..."

When did Aiden know how to talk responsibly? She was looking for her cheerleader but instead got wisdom. What a way to let her down, she thought wryly to herself. "He wants Jasper to take us back to the vampire kingdom immediately."

"Hey, it's not a bad thing. Think of it as an adventure. You know with everything going on here we would be under lock and key. At least we will be safe to walk around there? And it's a good way for your bro to assess the place for you. And a way for you to really get a feel for it. Since it is going to be your home soon." Aiden looked up at Lucy and smiled. "I like him. I didn't think it was possible to find a vampire better for you than Jasper but... I was wrong. He fits with you."

Lucy blushed slightly and nodded. "He does..."

"We aren't going to girl talk about it or anything." Aiden said with a smirk. "But I wanted you to know I approve."

"There really isn't much girl talk at this point anyways." Lucy said with a shrug. "Did Gia and everyone get back alright?" She had fallen asleep so she wasn't sure.

"Yes, all are back and accounted for. And for now none can travel without one of the current leaders or will need special permission from mom and dad. At least those are the orders Sam put in place." Aiden glanced up at the door and smiled. "Well speaking of mom and dad..."

"I could smell the pancakes from out here." Wyatt said, walking in with Freya by his side. Freya's eyes immediately landed on Lucy as they walked to the table. "Sam filled us in already... on everything." He said looking at Lucy. "How's Justice?" Aiden asked.

"It's a lot to handle right now. It's different when you grow up with the power but getting it all at once like he did will take some getting used to. Alexis and Micah are staying in Elysium so that Micah can help train him. Between all the guardians there they will be able to get him sorted out." Wyatt said, stuffing a large piece of pancakes in his mouth.

"How are you doing?" Freya asked, looking over at Lucy.

Lucy tilted her head to the side with a crooked smile. "How do you think?"

Her mother nodded her head. "I figured as much. It's hard being away from your mate. But everything is going to be fine, Lucy. And this will all be over before you know it."

"Titus (dragon king of the west) is sending patrols out. They have been ordered to take out any voidless they see. This will help the vampires greatly. Plus, they will report anything unusual to Titus. With their help we should be able to end this quickly." Wyatt winked over at his daughter. They all knew that with the dragons' aid it was a done deal. It wasn't a matter of if it was a matter of when. There was a reason the demons feared them. "They are already taking measures against the premonition too." Freya smiled over at Lucy. "Everything is going to be fine. So just do your best to push it all from your mind." Lucy pointed to all the food on the table. "I was trying to do just that."

Wyatt chuckled. "We will be eating well then."

"Actually... about that." Aiden said looking up at Lucy. "Lucy's mate wants Jasper to take us to the vampire kingdom when he returns."

Wyatt and Freya exchanged glances. "Honestly... that is probably a good idea." Wyatt sighed. "I like having you two close but for the first time it will be safer if you aren't here. Between the vampire kingdom and the dragons... they are the safer places. I'll send

word back to Justice so he can stay and train longer. Jason and Jin are coming back already tomorrow. You know how nervous Jason gets being away from me. I tried to get him to stay and train with his son longer, but he wouldn't budge. He originally planned to stay the week but I guess started feeling anxious." All this time and Jason was still incredibly protective of Wyatt. Just like Cody was of Rhea. And soon how Justice would be of Lucy. It was just a guardian's nature.

"I can see you are still picking at your food." Freya said, looking over at her daughter's plate. "Okay enough. Let's go. Aiden, clean up."

"What's going on?" Lucy asked.

"We are going to train. I'm going to keep that mind so busy you are not going to be able to mope." Freya gave her daughter a half smile.

"Oh poor Luce. Mom's training sessions are brutal. Yes, momma. I'll clean up. I don't mind at all. I love you so much. You're the best mom ever." Aiden said with a cheesy smile.

"After you are done cleaning you and I are going to have our own workout." Wyatt said with a low chuckle.

Aiden's eyes fell and a big pout formed. "Maaaaan." Aiden stood up collecting plates. His dad wasn't as grueling as his mother, but he didn't hold his punches back. He was going to be hurting after this.

"Lucy! Hold those daggers higher." Freya barked loudly.

Lucy panted as she wiped the beads of sweat off of her forehead. They had been out in the sun training for hours. Her mother was unforgiving with her training. You did it until it was perfect. And then you continued to practice it perfectly.

Her mother dashed at her with her daggers drawn. Lucy spun and raised a dagger up silver clashing with silver. She then pushed backwards doing a flip landing in a defensive position. She used her forearm to block her mother's kick and pushed back into her leg. Using her mother's own momentum against her. She found her moment to strike back. In a pile of dust both bodies were on the ground with each having a dagger at their opponent's throat. "Well done, Lucy," Freya said, panting heavily.

"Good thing the voidless don't fight like you two do or we would be done for." A familiar voice said from the distance.

Lucy turned her head to see Jasper standing at the edge of the clearing. He looked completely fine. She smiled widely and jumped to her feet. She sprinted over to him, and he wrapped his arms around her.

"You weren't worried were you, Lucy?" Jasper said in a playful tone as he patted her back.

She looked up at him with bated breath. She was dying to hear about what happened and of course... Derek.

He smiled down at her warmly. "Everyone is fine. Everyone. We had no casualties except for the voidless. Also, we got some unexpected help. A few fire breathers took out a massive army all on their own. Very convenient of them huh?" He looked up at Freya who only shrugged with a smile.

"In either case everyone is fine. I dropped a bag off at the house for you... from Ryan. It's a shirt of his..." Jasper looked up at the sky and winked down at Lucy. "He said you'll sleep better wearing his scent and so will he."

Lucy giggled. It was a possessive move trying to cover her body with the scent of another male. But he was right... his scent would help her sleep. "He's okay though?"

"Physically he is fine. I think he is already missing you like crazy though. But who wouldn't?" Jasper grinned. "Except maybe now. You are grossly covered in sweat." He teased playfully.

"Mom has kept me out here for hours." Lucy groaned looking at her mother from the side.

"You are reprieved. Let's go get showered up." Freya watched her daughter smile brightly as she trotted back to the house. She walked up to Jasper's side as they slowly strolled back together.

"I'm taking her with me." Jasper said quietly.

"I know..." Freya whispered quietly. "Keep my babies safe..."

"Always."

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 36

"Wait... now? As in we are leaving now now?" Aiden said and ran his fingers through his hair.

"I promised we would head out today. Lucy's mate wants her to be where it is safer." Jasper watched as Wyatt and Freya walked over to them.

"We have made preparations for your departure." Wyatt said with a small frown. Even though it was to keep his children safe he didn't like not having them close. He would feel better when they were at least at the dragon kingdom. Lucy walked down the stairs as she heard her father speak. "We are leaving, now?"

"Yes." Freya said with a faint smile. "But we have made arrangements so that you will get to your destination safely."

"Are you sending us out with a patrol?" Aiden asked.

"No with a dragon." A deep voice boomed from the doorway.

Lucy turned her head to look at the voice. A towering sculpted young man with dark brown hair and hazel eyes leaned against the doorway with a small smirk playing on his face. It was Brian, the son of Titus and Lila the dragon king and queen of the west. "Brian!" Lucy squealed happily and ran up to him. He lifted her up into his chest and hugged her. They were all really close. With their family having the black pearls they were able to visit each other all through childhood. And while technically he wasn't blood related he was family. His father, Titus, was her aunt's soul gemini twin. Really weird to explain but it was all concocted by the moon goddess. In either case, Brian was family to them and was treated like such.

"Luce Luce... I heard you found your mate... well that's an interrogation for another time I guess." Brian's lips curled upwards as Aiden came and slapped him on the back.

"Brian, what are you doing here man?" Aiden had a wide grin on his face.

"A little slow piecing things together I see." Brian chuckled. "I'm giving you three a lift. Safest way to travel besides the pearls."

"Nice." Jasper liked this idea a lot. "How are things going with the ladies?" Jasper also had built up a friendship with everyone Lucy was close to. Since he made it a point to visit often.

"I'm hoping I'll find my girl at the next mating ceremony. Until then you know I'm just playing hard to get." Brian winked with a chuckle.

Lucy openly rolled her eyes. These boys never played hard to get. That was their way of deflecting from not having girlfriends.

"When did you guys ask for Brian to come?" Lucy looked at her parents. Dragons were fast flyers but not that fast. Her parents just got back today so even sending a messenger immediately he couldn't have been here already.

"We just did. We used the pearl to see if a dragon could escort you to the vampire kingdom. We either would need two dragons or one capable of carrying three people.

Levi and Titus are working on this Wicker business but Brian immediately offered his services. So we brought him back with us." Wyatt felt more at ease knowing they would be traveling by dragon.

"And I was out making sure some werewolf wasn't the future woman of the house." Brian said with a chuckle. "Alas, none are lucky enough as of now... so you guys ready to take flight?"

"I need to pack still." Lucy said looking at Aiden who also nodded.

"Just pack the few things you need. We will have the rest taken directly to the dragon kingdom for your extended stay there." Freya added as she watched her two children head up towards their rooms.

Only a few moments later both had returned, each carrying a bag. Wyatt and Freya took turns hugging their kids tightly.

"Take care of your sister. And don't wander from the castles." Wyatt said sternly to Aiden.

"Trust in yourself, Lucy. And please think before you act." Freya kissed her daughter's forehead and walked with them slowly outside.

"Don't worry. It will be like camp. They will be safe and we will have a blast." Jasper said, trying to lighten the mood. He then looked over at Brian. "Should we make him take a breathalyzer test or something? We don't need a tipsy flyer."

"I could fly you there blindfolded and half asleep. Plus, what are you implying, Jasper?" Brian quirked his brow up and gave him a half smile.

"Now you are a smart guy... I hardly need to explain myself." A cheeky grin reached Jasper's lips.

"Yep, read you loud and clear. You are afraid of heights." Brian said with a chuckle.

"We will visit you. Try to just enjoy this time." Freya said quietly to her two children.

"Don't worry about us mom. We will be just fine. It's you guys and the pack I am worried about." Lucy hugged her mother tightly one last time as Brian shifted into his enormous dark red dragon.

"We will all be just fine here." Wyatt patted Lucy on the head. "Be good Lucy. And keep your brother out of trouble." He winked over at Aiden who snuffed out a blast of air from his nose. "Lucy... here." He held out a small black object attached to a string. It was the fourth piece of the black pearl. "Use this to go to the dragon kingdom afterwards. With this, you are always connected to your family."

"Thank you." Lucy pursed her lips slightly as she stared at the object. Her link to her family.

She took a few steps backwards and then turned, taking Jasper's hand as she climbed atop Brian's back. Aiden took his spot beside her and soon they were lifted off into the air. Lucy stared down as her parents became smaller and smaller. She looked over the territory of the Diamond pack. And realized... this was it for her life there. She had thought she was going to have the whole summer to say goodbye but instead, last night was it. They were going from the vampire kingdom to the dragon kingdom. Once everything was settled Derek would be bringing her back to the vampire kingdom. The Diamond pack... was no longer her home.

She watched the land below her until it vanished from her sight and then turned forward to look ahead. She was now heading into the future and to where her new home was. She had been preparing her whole life for this moment... and yet there was a bitter sting about losing her pack. She was sure she would adjust to wherever she was at with Derek by her side. But he wouldn't be there now. And she was going to have to keep up the pretense that the fill in 'Ryan' was her Derek.

Upon the fast wings of Brian, they entered the vampire kingdom in no time. Jasper pointed to an area behind the castle where they could land. It was all enclosed with tall walls with guards around the whole outside perimeter. Lucy had been here before but never saw an aerial view of the place. She never realized just how many soldiers were always very close by.

Jasper slid off of Brian first making sure that the soldiers were all able to see who it was. They immediately relaxed and returned to their posts. Aiden hopped off next and Jasper helped Lucy slide down.

"Thank you, Brian." Lucy looked back at his colossal dragon. "Do you want me to open a portal for you to go back?"

"No, I prefer to stretch my wings some..." He looked at Lucy and Aiden and nodded his head. "This is where I leave you then. But I'll be seeing you soon." Brian flapped his wings creating gusts of dust around him as he lifted off into the sky. "Well let's get you two situated. I'll have our rooms joined together while we are here. We actually have a suite that will work out well." Jasper grabbed Lucy's bag. "You are a double princess while you are here Lucy." He talked as he led them into the castle. The guards bowed their heads respectfully and stood aside. "You are not just the werewolves' princess but the vampires' princess. The whole point of the welcoming party is to welcome our new princess and future queen."

Lucy felt Aiden move protectively closer to Lucy. He hadn't been here that much. And there was still a lack of trust when it came to his sweet sister. Jasper noticed this and smiled. "She is more special to us than you understand Aiden. She is very safe here." "Lucy." A cool crisp voice said as a figure stepped out from a column. It was Ryan... the

real Ryan who was pretending to be Derek while Derek is pretending to be Ryan. Who she had to pretend was her fiancé. He walked up to her and held his arms open for her to walk into. He waited expectantly for them to put on the public show for others.

She slowly obliged and internally cringed when his lips touched her forehead.

"I trust you had pleasant travels?"

Lucy nodded her head and watched him smile down at her.

"I am aware of everything that has been going on. While you are here you will stay with me." Ryan said matter of factly.

Lucy's eyes widened and she took a small step backwards looking at Jasper.

"Um... I was going to be staying with my brother and-

"No, Lucy. As my fiancé, you are expected and should be staying with me." Ryan glanced around the room briefly. "My chambers are the safest and as my fiancé, you shouldn't be sharing a room with anyone but me."

"My prince..." Jasper said with a smile that would have looked normal to anyone at a distance. But up close there was malice behind his smile and his eyes were piercing against Ryan. "I hardly think it is appropriate for her to stay in your room... with just you. I know of some who will not think it proper. Might even be a deadly decision..." He dropped his tone and fixed his dagger eyes on Ryan.

Derek will kill you if you lay next to his fiance. Jasper growled in his head.

She is safer with me. My orders are to keep her safe. She can have a bed to herself. But no one would ever be able to come near her in my room.

And like they could in mine?!

Why would my fiancé share a room with you? Don't you think this would cause unwanted rumors? No, she is staying with me.

Derek is not going to like this. Jasper scowled and grit his teeth. He outranked this man and was tempted to order him.

Jasper, we will talk later. As you know there are eyes and ears everywhere. Ryan cleared his throat. "My fiancé will be staying with me. Guards... see to it that her bag is brought to my room."

Lucy watched mortified as a man came and grabbed her bag from Jasper. She knew this guy just from when she met him as her fake fiancé. But she wasn't close with him.

They were cordial with one another. And she was supposed to sleep in his room. She looked over at Jasper who gave her a reassuring smile. Though she could see he was struggling with this as well. She needed to fix this.... publically.

"I have an idea." Lucy said, beaming with a more loud childlike excitement. She wanted for those around to be able to hear her. "Let's have a slumber party tonight. A way for the four of us to really get to know each other. It will be so much fun. We can swap stories and maybe roast marshmallows. I'd like for you and Aiden to become closer." Lucy bit her lip and smiled. She watched as Jasper's shoulders relaxed and Ryan's lips curled upwards.

"Whatever you want my princess." Ryan's reply was polite and strangely warm. Much warmer than he had been with her before. "Okay, let's all head to my room and get situated. Afterwards, we will join my parents for dinner."

"Sounds great. I am starving." Aiden chuckled, stepping closer to Lucy. He needed to act as friendly as possible here. He wasn't just Lucy's brother but the future king of the werewolves. He needed to do his best to portray them in a positive light. It would help other vampires relax.

Jasper looked at Lucy and gave her a small nod and smile. Thank goodness she was clever. This at least could get them all in Derek's room which was well protected and of course soundproof. Then he could really talk with Ryan. No matter how trusted Ryan was Derek would probably gut him for sleeping in the same room as his mate. And Ryan would know this. So he must have a very good reason for insisting on it. He could even see how relieved he looked at Lucy's loud proposition. She didn't realize it but she probably saved him too.

They walked down the halls and past the guards through two restricted areas before they finally reached Derek's room.

"After you my dear." Ryan said calmly, allowing for Lucy to step inside of the room.

Once they were all inside and the door had closed Jasper turned looking at Ryan. "Okay... what is this all about?"

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Ryan went and plopped down on a chair and unbuttoned the top of his shirt. "Maaaaan I can't wait to be me again." He chuckled and relaxed into the cushions. Lucy had NEVER seen him act like this before. She wondered what the real Ryan was actually like.

"Oh gosh Ryan it isn't that hard. Your hardest part was hiding who you were from Lucy." Jasper rolled his eyes and motioned for Lucy and Aiden to take a seat of their own.

"Yeah, sorry about all that Lucy. I'm so devastatingly handsome that if I treated you like the princess you deserve to be treated like you would have madly fallen in love with me. I hope we can start fresh from here on out."

Lucy raised her eyes at him and plopped onto the sofa between Jasper and Aiden. "I see. A poor fragile girl like me just would have buckled under the pressure of your charm. I'm so lucky to have such considerate and capable men around me. I'd be absolutely lost." Ryan chuckled. "Oh I like the real Lucy much much better. The Lucy not trying to keep up pretenses."

"Anyways Ryan." Jasper said changing the topic. "What is going on? Do you have a death wish? Derek hears you slept with Lucy in the same room you know what will happen."

"His hyper jealous mode will kick in and he will bury me in pieces on every corner of our territory? Yeah, I know. The thing is... there has been gossiping and talk lately. Rumors are getting out that the relationship between the prince and princess is strained. People are getting anxious that it isn't a solid treaty. If the prince and princess can't get along...

"Then how can the two species get along." Aiden said, nodding his head.

Lucy looked over at Aiden in shock. For once he was keeping up with the conversation. Which meant what she always suspected... he never paid attention.

"Anyways... Lucy and I need to act close. We should act like a couple excited to be together. Now that there won't be any misunderstandings we should be able to pull this off without Lucy falling in love with me." Ryan chuckled as Lucy rolled her eyes. "You think a lot about yourself don't you?" Lucy said with a crooked smile.

"I can't help it. I mean... look at me. Look at this body?! And I've had to live like a monk practically to protect the prince's reputation. After this is all over I am going to go crazy. I'll let the women feast upon my body until they can satisfy their hunger... if that is even possible."

Lucy looked over at Jasper. "Is he serious?"

"This is going to be a crowded room. There isn't much room for anyone else with his ego." Jasper said, rubbing his forehead.

"Hey! It's not ego. This..." Ryan motioned over his body with his hand. "This is a gift. And I should share this gift. It will be like a chance for women to get a taste of a bit of heaven. And if they can experience that through me then who am I to deny them of that." It was very obvious to Lucy just how much he was holding his real personality

back. He was always so quiet and reserved with her. And it was a bit weird at first seeing him as the guy she had known as Derek. The man she was originally picturing as her fiancé. And now... he was not that guy at all. In more ways than one. And... she liked him. He reminded her of a mixture of the guys she was always around... with maybe some extra ego.

"Wow, I can see Justice and Ryan actually getting along quite well." Aiden said, almost seeming to read Lucy's mind.

Lucy giggled. "Yeah, I think so too."

"Justice?" Ryan asked, quirking his brow.

"That's her cousin. He will be joining her here as her new guardian." Jasper watched as Ryan's brows furrowed.

"There is no need for anyone else to be here for her. That is the point of the elite soldiers."

"Derek already knows and is for it. Lucy is a special case... in either case, he will be joining us." Jasper answered pointedly.

"Whatever, that could only lead to more me time and goddess knows I need it." Ryan sat up and leaned his elbows on his knees while he looked at Lucy. "Are you up for what we have to do? I mean I don't think it should be too hard to act interested in me... but..."

"I

I guess we didn't do a good enough job before or the rumors wouldn't have started circulating... But that is still on all you guys being morons. Not well thought out at all. Had I known we could have put on a better show." Lucy clicked her tongue in annoyance. "Well just don't go falling in love with me because I am going to treat you like you are mine. Once Derek is back for good I'm off the clock."

Lucy rolled her eyes. "I'll try to contain myself."

Ryan's eyes turned serious as he pushed aside his fun demeanor. "Lucy, it is very important that we do a good job here. All joking aside... can you look at me as you would your mate?"

Her eyes widened slightly. She could see the determination behind his amber eyes. His dedication to his role was evident. And she rationalized for him to be hiding his true self this whole time he must really take his job seriously. Next to Jasper, she supposed he was Derek's most trusted man.

"I can do it. But don't expect me to act like a love-sick blinking love-struck mate. That isn't me. But I will do my part." Lucy met with his eyes showing her own strength and conviction.

"Just don't go overboard," Jasper said, looking at Ryan. "Just remember Derek will hear about all of this."

Ryan grinned. "Lucy already spared my life by thinking fast and having you two room up with us. Well, that has tonight covered. We will have to think about how to proceed with nights in the future." "Mira," Jasper said simply.

"Yes, of course." Ryan said, snapping his fingers together.

"Um.. who is Mira?" Lucy asked, glancing at Aiden.

"Mira is the royal family's banshee. She is bound to their family and is unbreakably loyal. She can't ever betray them. It is hard to explain... but she is bound to the royal bloodline for all eternity. It is the price she had to pay for the sins she committed against them a long long time ago. Now she is harmless. Well to them. Banshees are hardly harmless. She is a fierce and dangerous guard dog. But she will be our ticket. Having her in the room at night will spare my neck. She would never lie to the royal family... she can't. And as Derek's fiancé, she will be bound to protect you as well. It is actually quite perfect. Good thinking Jasper." Ryan sighed with relief.

"I have never seen this Mira..." Lucy said as she tried to ponder about it.

"She keeps out of sight so no one knows where she is. She can move through walls except for the royal walls. She must be invited inside those rooms. But because of her abilities, no one knows where she is or what she could overhear. She has warned the royal family time and time again of things taking place that she felt they should be aware of." Ryan grinned. "And when she doesn't think they need to know... she deals with it herself." He made a motion of a knife going across the throat.

"For now let her be. We can ask her later how people are responding to you and Lucy." Jasper stood up from the couch and reached his hand out to Lucy pulling her up next to him. Ryan and Aiden both followed suit. "You will of course recognize the king and queen... just Uncle Alaric and Aunt Willa to me. My parents, Jester and Irene will be there as well. But there are always noble families who are rotated for the dinners. It is a way to keep connected. These will be the people you will be needing to fool first." "Yeah, and one of the nobles this week is Lady Camille... sooo..." Ryan said with disgust.

Lucy arched her brow up for someone to further explain.

"Lady Camille and her mother Pamala are blood seekers. A family who often marry upwards despite who their mate is. An equivalent to a gold chaser among humans only

they go after nobility. And Camille has always had her eyes set on me and Derek." Jasper scrunched his nose with disgust.

"Is there any danger here to my sister? That's what I want to know the most." Aiden finally spoke up. He wasn't interested in how Lucy had to play house. He wanted to get to the real reason he was staying by Lucy's side.

"None. The prince's bride is priceless. Especially among the noble families." Jasper was absolute in how he spoke.

"But that doesn't mean women won't be vying to be the next mistress or two." Ryan shrugged and looked at Lucy's darkening eyes.

"There will be no mistress. Anyone who touches what is mine will not live to see another day." Lucy's voice was chilled and cold.

"Oh look, she sounds just like Derek. That was basically his warning to me about touching you." Ryan chuckled and rubbed the back of his head. "Guess you two are perfect for each other."

"When did Derek talk to you? I'm confused about all of that to be honest." Aiden looked at Lucy and could see she was now curious about it as well.

"That would be...." Jasper said quietly, looking away a bit.

"What is it?" Aiden asked, feeling something big was being kept from them.

"Like the banshee who is bound to the family, there is also another servant who is bound to them. It is their more recent servant. In order to spare his soul... his soul made a deal with the vampires. It would bind itself to them as their loyal servant." Ryan looked up at Jasper. This was something he wasn't supposed to talk about.

"Look... this is a conversation for another time I think." Jasper said with a frown.

"Basically they have a servant who can appear when called for. And that is how Ryan here knew what was going on. The servant delivered messages to him."

"Why do I feel like you are hiding something big from me?" Lucy frowned and could tell by Jasper's eyes that it was because he was.

"Not today Lucy. Today the focus is about you pretending to be mated to Ryan... our known Derek here." Jasper looked at her and then gave her a small smile. "It's a long talk for another time, okay?"

"Alright... I don't know what the big deal is but okay." Lucy couldn't understand why this was such a big secret. So they had another servant bound to them like the banshee Mira. Why was that a secret?

"Okay Lucy." Ryan said and opened his arms to her. He watched her look at him like he was poison. "Can you do this or not, sweetheart? You need to be engulfed in my scent, my dear. It doesn't look well for you to smell more of Jasper than me... your mate." Then Ryan looked at Jasper and he frowned. "So... should we just get like a rag or should I lick her neck?"

"Lick my neck? Can't you just rub your arms on me?" Lucy was mortified. What was he talking about?

"Why wouldn't my mate have the scent of my saliva on her? It is different from my skin scent. You should be wearing it and I should be wearing yours. So how do you want to swap spit?" Ryan smirked and tilted his head down at her.

Oh, he was having too much fun with this. The idea of having his saliva on her skin was repulsive. She hoped they had bleach here because she was going to be bathing in it.

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"You touch her neck with those lips and I will kill you myself." Jasper said in a low growl. He walked to the bathroom and came back with two rags. He handed one to Lucy and one to Ryan. "Here. Spit in these." "This is gross," Lucy said, frowning as Aiden chuckled beside her.

"You can't be upsetting the vampires' Lucy..." Aiden then looked up at Ryan and Jasper. "I know vampires are big on scents like wolves are." He watched them both nod. "Well some of us wolves can tell... after a wolf... you know..." He looked over at Lucy and watched her eyes widen. "So I am assuming you guys can tell that too, right?"

"Not until after the marriage would it become questionable. Vampires can be very traditional in a sense especially because some of them have been around for a very very long time. It isn't something we have to worry about right now. But even back then a heavy makeout session would not have been avoided. Especially after two lovers were reunited again after being apart..." Jasper looked at Lucy apologetically. "Well if I hurry and take a shower right now..."

"And be late for dinner? Haha no no no you can't be doing that princess." Ryan chuckled. "It's not like I want to wear your spit either... especially if it is getting transferred by a rag. Where is the fun there." He listened to Jasper and Aiden's growl and held his hands up. "I'm just joking and having some fun. Come on. I value my life too much."

"Will the rag work though?" Aiden asked with a frown. "I mean the scent of a wet cloth mixed with spit is what I smell from your cloth Ryan."

Jasper frowned. "s**t, you're right."

"Can't we just say he isn't the real Derek?" Lucy laughed nervously as all eyes rested on her.

"Derek is going to kill me... wait I can lick my hand and rub it on her. That will work. Right? Please... if my tongue touches her skin Derek will chop it off. I know he will. And I am going to need this tongue to show the ladies my magic."

"Ryan, stop talking. Yes. The hand should work." Jasper looked up at Aiden who also nodded. "Lucy?"

"Gosh this is just gross." Lucy licked her hand and walked into Ryan. He lowered himself down and smiled at Lucy.

"Claim me Lucy." Ryan chuckled.

She rolled her eyes. Another man-boy for the list.

"Brush it on his neck on both sides and again on his cheeks and lightly around his lips." Jasper instructed.

"What? It's the scent you need right? Why do I have to have an exact location?" Lucy asked but could see a weird look in Jasper's eyes.

"Just do it Lucy." Jasper instructed.

"Sorry about this..." Lucy said and then did as she was instructed.

"Well that was good for me, you?" Ryan said with a chuckle. "Okay, your turn."

"Just her neck and cheeks Ryan," Jasper said, fixing his eyes on Ryan. "Lucy is right, we don't really need the spit around the mouth."

Ryan chuckled and shook his head. He watched as Lucy closed her eyes tight. "Sorry, Lucy..." He knew she wasn't going to like this. And despite how he treated her and acted cold he actually liked her a lot. She was his future queen and he wanted to be on good terms with her. He licked his fingers and brushed some of his saliva over her neck then her cheeks. He then pulled her deep into his embrace. He felt her body tense as he gripped her head leaning it into his body. "Sorry again for this. I just need to make sure my scent is all over you." He then pulled her back from him and stepped away. "Well?" He looked at Aiden and Jasper.

"Once more but make sure you rub your arms on her and Lucy do the same to him." Jasper said.

Lucy sighed and did as instructed.

"I know it will be hard to think of another man after touching this body but you'll have to try to resist." Ryan teased and looked up at Aiden and Jasper. "Good now?"

"Yes, that is sufficient. If I didn't know any better and came in as an outsider I would assume immediately you two were hooking up." Aiden looked over at Jasper who also nodded in agreement. Lucy and Aiden had an intense sense of smell. While other werewolves would need to get close to smell another's scent they could pick it up from feet away... sometimes even from across the room. And some vampires were like this as well, like Jasper. He had an incredible sense of smell. And he knew there were others like Jasper with their sense of smell. It was best to be thorough.

"Alright, ready for showtime?" Ryan smiled at Lucy and held his arm out for her to walk into.

It went against her instincts. Her whole body screamed to get his scent off of her. But she was doing this for Derek and his people... her people. She could do it. She just needed to think of Derek. She walked into Ryan's arm and he pulled her into his side, walking her out the door.

Ryan tightened his grip around Lucy as they neared the dining room. He glanced back at Jasper with a scowl almost. Lucy didn't know what was wrong but she could tell they were mentally communicating about something.

"Lucy, after this I'll have to give you a tour of my bathroom. It has a wonderful spa in there where I can help you freshen up after dinner." Ryan winked down at Lucy as they walked into the room.

Lucy wanted to hide as all eyes were on her and with their vampire hearing heard what Ryan had just said. Which she knew was the point but it wasn't any less embarrassing. Some of the people chuckled, some eyed her curiously, while another seemed to be studying her. Then there were two women who seemed to be shooting daggers at her with their eyes. Camille and Pamala she presumed.

"Everyone, this is my precious fiancé Lucy. She will be staying with us until after the welcoming ceremony and shortly after will be moving in as my adorable bride." Ryan tugged her lovingly into him more and brushed his lips over her head.

Even though Lucy wanted to rip his lips off his body she instead tilted her head up to him. She smiled as she looked at him with fake adoration. He winked down at her pleased with her reaction before turning his attention to Aiden behind them.

"This here is the prince of the werewolves. He is here as our honored guest and as an escort to his sister. I expect everyone to treat him with the respect you would treat me.

And of course, you all know Jasper." Ryan motioned for Aiden and Jasper to each take their seats while Ryan led Lucy towards two empty spots next to the king and queen.

"Lucy dear, so good to see you again." The queen, Willa, said with a friendly smile. "I'm glad you'll be staying with us for a little bit. It will help make the adjustment easier."

"I'm excited to be here as well. Derek has promised to show me around too and I am excited about that." Lucy batted her eyelashes up at Ryan with a sweet smile.

"Whatever my Lucy wants she gets." Ryan wrapped his arm around Lucy's shoulders.

"Lucy." A sweet-sounding delicate voice said from a few seats down across the table.

Lucy felt Ryan's grip on her tighten as he glared at the girl with lethal eyes. She could tell there was some history there that she didn't know about. Even the girl met with Ryan's eyes defiantly.

"It must have been hard this whole time being away from your betrothed. I'm sure this isn't the most ideal situation for you."

Lucy met her brown eyes and smiled. "I'm sorry... I'm afraid I don't know your name..."

"Amanda." The girl replied smiling.

"Amanda, yes being away from Derek is very hard. He's my person after all. What wasn't ideal was having to live apart this long... after all who wants to live apart from the person you love." Lucy could see the girl's eyes almost bulge open. Meanwhile, there were soft murmurs of awes and nodding their heads in approval of what Lucy had said. Ryan rubbed her shoulder and smiled down at her. She must have answered appropriately. But she answered honestly so it was easy. She was talking about her Derek, not imposter Derek. "Oh wow... I didn't realize. I mean I just thought it was a marriage of convenience so who could have hoped for love. That's... amazing. Almost too good to be true." Amanda's voice sounded almost poisonous as her eyes darkened looking at Ryan.

"No, what is too good to be true is that Lucy and Derek are fated mates." Jasper spoke up loud and clear and took a sip of his drink. The people around the table began to quietly discuss this shocking news that they hadn't heard about before. Amanda's eyes darted between Lucy and Ryan. So did another young lady who was sitting further down. That young lady was holding a glass in her hand and gripped it tightly with the news of them being fated mates. Too tight since the glass shattered in her hands making everyone turn to look at her.

"Camille, are you all right?" Her mother Pamala asked.

"Sorry, I'm a bit clumsy... I was going to propose a toast to our new fated couple." Camille smiled sheepishly trying to recover. Everyone seemed to nod their heads in understanding.

After that incident, the food arrived and everyone ate fairly quietly. A few whispers here and there about normal gossip. Anything juicy would have been mind-linked not wanting to offend the royal family. After dinner, Lucy was surrounded by a group of women including Camille and Amanda. Ryan was talking with a group of men on the other side of the room with Aiden and Jasper. While the king and queen were chatting with some other prominent guests.

"So... you must have had other boyfriends. How do they compare with the prince?" Amanda asked with her venomous smile.

Okay, Lucy was getting the mad jealousy vibe from this girl. She wondered what her deal was? Did she have a crush on Ryan or was she also after his position?

"No... I have been betrothed since birth. There was never anyone else but Derek." Lucy watched as Amanda's eyes flickered slightly.

"Oh wow. That is amazing. Well as long as you don't hold it from our prince for maybe have a fling here and there. I mean, after all, he is a young vampire male and those urges are hard to control." Amanda's lips curled up maliciously. Her toxic smile stayed on her face as she batted her eyelashes.

Lucy could see she was trying to allude to Ryan having partners. Like she cared. She honestly didn't care who Ryan saw since he was not her Derek. But how should she respond here? She remembered the idea of a mistress wasn't completely unheard of... so she needed to at least squash that now.

"What matters to me now is that Derek is mine. And I don't share what is mine... even if it is his idea... the penalty for cheating on me is death." Lucy raised her eyebrows and smiled. "I can't go and kill the prince so any woman who touches him will face this punishment. I hope the women here are smart enough to stay away from him or the population will soon be dwindling." She smirked slightly as she watched Camille's mouth drop open in shock. So much for her thinking, she could be a mistress. She soon felt arms slide around her waist... and she had to force herself to relax into his touch.

Ryan leaned his head down into Lucy's neck inhaling her scent and pulled her back into his front. He let his nose drag over the side of her face before he left a small kiss on the top of her head.

"It's only you Lucy. There will never be anyone in the royal chambers but you." Ryan said glancing up to the woman in front of them. He could see Amanda's face getting red from how intimate he was acting with Lucy. And he nuzzled his nose into her head once

more.

Lucy tilted her head up and smiled at him. "Of course it will be only me in there. After all... just because I can't kill the prince doesn't mean that I wouldn't make him suffer in the most excruciating ways possible." She batted her eyes innocently up at him as his lips curled upwards in a Cheshire cat grin.

"See this is why you are perfect." Ryan chuckled. Amanda snorted air out from her nose making those around them turn their eyes to her. Ryan's eyes darkened as he glared at her.

"Oh forgive me. I am just shocked is all. I never heard his highness speak like this about his fiancé before. I never knew he felt this way about you." Amanda's sickening sweet smile curled upwards as she batted her own eyelashes towards Ryan.

This Amanda wasn't being subtle at all and she wasn't trying. She was trying to let Lucy know that 'Derek' had been talking and hanging around her. Enough that they had talked on a personal and more than likely an intimate level. But it wasn't her Derek... it was Ryan. Still, she was annoyed at Ryan because he was responsible for maintaining Derek's image. Lucy narrowed her eyes at the girl. This had to get shut down before rumors spread.

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Lucy's eyes returned to her serene green and she plastered a smile over her face.

"You know Amanda... we can be friends if you want... But if you would rather instigate a problem I am happy to put you in your place as well." Lucy started pushing her aura from her body. It was just supposed to be some minor pressure to show Amanda her strength. But Lucy didn't count on one thing... that she was also now recognized as the fairy princess. It wasn't just her lycan strength pushing forward but her fairy aura radiated invisibly around her. It was enough to make Amanda and Camille wince and take a small step backwards. "Lucy." Ryan's hot breath whispered over her ear. She felt him squeeze her body deeper into his chest and could feel small vibrations on her back from his laughter. "This side of you makes me even hotter for you."

Yeah... that shut her down. Gross. She knew they had to pretend but that made her body shudder and not in a good way. She took in a deep calming breath and met with Amanda's eyes. "Please don't say things in an insinuating way about my mate. It isn't a wise or a healthy thing to talk about... in more ways than one."

"Forgive me. I was too forward." Amanda said with a small curtsy.

"Nothing to worry about. I just hope that is something you have kept to yourself... for your sake." Lucy didn't like this person but she supposed she must be important in the vampire kingdom. She guessed she couldn't completely blame her if Ryan was maybe fooling around with her. She probably felt wounded now. Something she would need to discuss in detail with Ryan later. A dark powerful aura soon hit Lucy and she was shocked as she turned to see the source.

"Lucy... is everything okay?" Jasper's dark eyes were locked onto Amanda and Camile.

"Everything is fine." Lucy watched as the two women began to tremble slightly at the sign of Jasper's anger. More so than when she was asserting her aura. There was a real fear of Jasper and all he had were darkened eyes. She looked up at Jasper curiously... what kind of person was he here to elicit that much fear? "We still on for roasting marshmallows tonight?"

Jasper turned his gaze from the two women. His eyes were back to his gentle brown and a small smile rose on his face. "Wouldn't miss it."

"Will you roast my marshmallows for me?" Lucy said with a grin.

"Lucy Locke, you can roast your own marshmallows." Jasper shook his head smiling. She was always trying to get him to roast her marshmallows because she lacked the patience to cook them how she liked them. "But Jasper... I can't cook them like you can. I need that yummy crispy golden cover where the marshmallows are crispy and all melted in the middle." Lucy pouted, sticking her lip out playfully.

"I'll cook them for you, Lucy." Ryan said, rubbing her arm slightly. "Let me show you some real roasting skills

She giggled and turned her head up to him. "If you think you can do a better job..."

"Oh I know I can." He winked at her and met his eyes with the women in front of him. "Well if you will "Later?" Jasper said, raising his eyes curiously to Ryan. "I thought the plan-"

us, I haven't seen my mate for a while. And we have a lot to catch up on." He turned and looked at Jasper. "You and Aiden planning on joining us later?"

"To hang out later tonight? Yep, that's still on. I'm going to take Lucy back and let her get freshened up now. Then we will see you guys in about an hour?" Ryan didn't give Jasper a moment to respond as he tugged Lucy away with him. Lucy could see her brother's eyes shoot up towards her.

Lucy...

I'm okay Aiden. Do your political thing. I'll see you soon. She could see the minor annoyance in her brother's eyes as she was pulled out of the room.

When Ryan shut the door to his bedroom she stepped away from him and looked at him curiously. This wasn't what they had talked about. So why was he changing it up now.

"Shit... Okay Lucy... let me explain about Amanda."

Oh... so that's why. She could see the real fear in his eyes as he looked at her. She lifted her hand and waved him off.

"You aren't mine Ryan. I don't need to know the details of what you did. The only problem here is that it is my mate's name you are playing with. And you should have been more careful." She rubbed her forehead and sighed slightly. "It should be fine now. After what I just did to her I don't think we have to worry about her talking anymore."

Ryan chuckled. "That was intense princess and impressive. I never realized how strong you were. Though you shouldn't go all out like that-

"I didn't..." Lucy said quickly. She looked up at Ryan's shocked face. "I only pushed a small fraction forward... it just ended up being more intense than I thought. With my increased fairy magic, it seems like even a small push of my aura is strong."

"That's very impressive Lucy." Ryan nodded his head in approval. "You are going to be a powerful asset to the vampires." He rubbed the back of his neck and looked away. "Thanks... for, you know... Jasper won't exactly go easy on me over something like this." "Don't worry. I'm not mad and I'll deal with Jasper. What you have been doing isn't fair to you either... You are a young guy and shouldn't have to act tied down... almost free, right?"

He grinned widely and nodded. "I'm really glad you are going to be my future queen. I promise as long as I am around I will always be your person. I'll always have your back."

Lucy smiled at him. "I never doubted your loyalties. I figured for you to be in this position you must be someone Derek trusts a lot."

He smiled. "What I meant was... I'll always have your back, Lucy. You as in you, not you as in you and Derek. I just wanted you to know you can also trust me. And if you ever need anything I'll help you, however, I can."

"Thank you... that means a lot to me actually. It seems like I may have irritated some of your nobility, huh?" Lucy bit her bottom lip and smiled slightly.

"Don't worry about it. Amanda needed to be put in her place; she was purposely trying to instigate trouble. She knows how important this treaty is and even still she went there. I need to set her straight and-"

"No." Lucy's voice rang firm as she met with Ryan's amber eyes. "It is best for you to avoid her at all costs. We can't afford any more rumors or accidents... After Derek is back then you can have your chat with her and let her know how stupid she was being. Then she can know you as Ryan and whatever happens then can happen."

"No, I'm done with Amanda. Nothing else will happen there. I can't ever even entertain someone who would risk putting a wedge in the treaty. What if you had reacted differently? She wanted you to call it off." Ryan shook his head angrily. "But I understand what you are saying. We do not want any more misunderstandings to spread in secret. So I will not see her privately at all."

Lucy smiled. "So you wanted to talk about this without Jasper around because you were afraid of his reaction?" She giggled and looked at him curiously. "It seems Jasper has a bit of a reputation here, doesn't he? The way those women looked and acted... there was real fear in their eyes."

His eyes looked at Lucy. "Jasper isn't just a strong vampire... he is lethal. And he is the prince's right hand man. NO ONE could even insult the prince without him acting. And I am not just talking about rebuking. There is a darkness to his temper. One that you don't want to know. There are two things in the world that have brought this darkness forward..." His gaze held with Lucy's green eyes. "Derek... and you, Lucy."

Lucy remembered Derek saying something similar back at the cave. He said Jasper had a hard time controlling his temper when it came to who he considered precious. But she didn't really understand what he meant then... and she doesn't quite get it now. "So he is just really protective?" Lucy was trying to understand this deeper. Aiden and Justice were protective over her too. So what was the difference?

"He almost can't control himself, Lucy. It is like his emotions take over..." Ryan sighed. "You might as well know... Jasper is so invested in you and Derek that it isn't a matter of if he will kill for you but when. Someone will cross the line and heaven help them when they do. He isn't merciful. How he is with you... that is special. Jasper is a killer, a well-trained assassin. If someone does something to upset you..." He looked at Lucy with a frown. "I don't know if he can control his rage..." He shook his head. "He can't control his rage." "Well if I am there-"

"Lucy, Jasper would never hurt you. But even if you are there I don't know if you can reach him when the darkness takes over. Derek has had to physically hold him back at times. It is almost like... he blanks out and just reacts." Ryan chuckled nervously. "That's why you saw the reactions you did in there and that's why-"

"Why you talked to me about this privately first." Lucy whispered out quietly. It was hard for her to picture Jasper in this light. She had seen how quickly his eyes change colors when it came to her but he never seemed unmanageable.

"This isn't just a Jasper thing though. His father, Jester, was like this as well. Anytime anyone did anything towards his brother he immediately took care of it. It was like he couldn't help himself. It was the reason he left for as long as he did. He knew he was making things harder on his brother. And that was one person he couldn't bear to hurt. And somehow he has learned to control his demons better. I don't know the details but he doesn't react like that anymore. Maybe it just took him time to learn to adjust? Or it is something else..."

"If it was time...that took him a very long time, right? Like hundreds of years..." Lucy's eyes were wide and she felt her chest humming. What if Jasper decided he had no choice but to leave because of his temper. No. She wouldn't allow it. She would figure out a way. If she had to subdue Jasper herself she would. He was never leaving like Jester did.

Lucy went to take a shower as she thought about what Ryan had told her about Jasper. It was weird for him to lose himself so much to almost blank out. Like the rage was controlling him and taking over having a subconscious of its own. It sounded like her father's blood potion situation only reversed. It was in a protective way. She felt her chest hurt for Jasper. What an incredible burden he must be carrying and he never talked to her about it. He should have told her about it. Was he afraid she would look at him differently? She would never. He shouldn't carry this burden alone. Yes, Derek knew about it but she should too since she was also the cause of his dark anger.

What was the best way to combat darkness? Yes... it was light. And she didn't have just an ordinary light now... she was a fairy princess. A very special and unique light to the world. She stepped out of the shower and decided... she would find a way to help Jasper. She wouldn't know exactly the extent of it until she actually saw him in action which she hoped she never would. But according to Ryan, it would definitely happen at some point. And when it did she would watch his energy and see what exactly she was dealing with.

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him down.

As Lucy finished getting dressed she heard yelling from outside of the room. She heard Jasper's sharp voice and she quickly opened the door. She looked into the room to see Jasper growling in Ryan's face. Aiden had his hand on Jasper's shoulders trying to calm "What is going on?!" Lucy said angrily as she stormed over towards the guys.

"I want to know what that crap with Amanda was about?!" Jasper snarled again as Ryan looked away avoiding eye contact with him.

"Ryan and I already talked about it, Jasper. It's all worked out. So no need to shout. We can talk about it civilly." Lucy watched as Jasper's gaze stayed focused on Ryan. She cleared her throat and gave Jasper a wry smile. "That part was said as your friend... Do I need to give you an order as your princess?" That did it. She watched Jasper's eyes return to normal as a wide smile spread over his lips. "You going to start ordering me around princess?" Jasper chuckled with a wide grin on his face.

"It might be fun, yes? Though I would much prefer you listen to me as your best friend, right? Of course... I don't know if you deserve best friend status after the crap you pulled." Lucy watched his face go from angry, happy to now that of a wounded puppy. It seemed like his emotions were more connected to her than just anger.

"Lucy I..." Jasper started but she held her hand out and grabbed his hand.

"Jasper, see? Even you made a mistake, right? And I am not going to punish you for it. You are my closest and dearest friend even if you do screw up sometimes." Lucy smiled. "So have a seat and we will talk about this whole Amanda issue."

Aiden chuckled and plopped down on the couch. "Better do what mom says or you're going to get hurt."

Jasper smiled. "Alright, Lucy. I'm calm. You can let go of my hand now."

Lucy pulled him over to the couch and kept holding on to his hand. "No, I don't think I will. If you don't control your emotions then I plan on breaking your fingers."

Ryan busted out laughing. "You are way more interesting Lucy than I ever imagined. Derek is getting a fun one, for sure."

"You'd really break my fingers?" Jasper gave her a wry smile.

"Would you care to put it to the test?" She challenged back and listened to Jasper chuckling beside her. She was just doing some minor tests of her own now. The hand connection wasn't to break his fingers... though she felt like it was an extremely clever idea. But what she was doing was trying to feel his energy. She was hoping she would notice something different when he got agitated. Something she could use as a sign in the future.

She looked up at Ryan and smiled. "So we don't need the details... as I have already told Ryan. He isn't my Derek so I don't care what he does. He made a mistake since his face is the prince's face. It is something that isn't going to happen again. And I don't think we will have to worry about Amanda saying anything anymore either. Not after I made my stance clear and after she saw you..." Lucy looked up at Jasper tilting her

head to the side with a faint smile. She could see the shades of his eyes going from brown to dark to dark brown. She couldn't feel anything different in his energy level but he was definitely trying to control his anger.

Jasper's eyes were fixed onto Ryans. "Do you realize what could have happened here? What if Lucy hadn't met the real Derek? The implications alone... and the rumors?! Damnit Ryan." His tone was growing lethal as he grit his teeth.

"I'm really sorry. I have no excuse. I drank too much and-"

"Like I said we don't need details Ryan." Lucy pinched Jasper's hand directing his attention to her. His eyes turned back to his golden brown and she smiled at him. "And I told you I already handled this, right? Now would be a good time for you to decide where exactly you are ranking me at here. Am I still the werewolf princess where this isn't my business? Or am I your prince's mate and your vampire princess?"

"Yeah but Lucy..."

"No buts Jasper. I let him off the hook. He understands and is sorry. We aren't going to rehash it and dwell on it. We are moving forward fresh. Now... who is roasting me my marshmallows." Lucy watched as Jasper relaxed. He never seemed out of control there and she never noticed anything different. She would have to witness one of these dark moments herself in order to assess it better. But for now, he was just Jasper, the guy who was like a brother to her.

Time was going fast, surprisingly, and all too soon the day of the celebration was upon them. Lucy really missed Derek but she was kept fairly busy. She was able to meet the banshee, Mira, who always joined her at night. It was a way for her to be able to stay in the royal chambers that wouldn't be inappropriate. She took the bed while Ryan stayed on the couch.

To Lucy's surprise, she found that banshee's belonged to the fairy family. Mira instantly took to her as the fairy princess and prince's future bride. She got the feeling that something was being kept a secret from her but she couldn't figure out what it was. And Jasper... he never had any black-out anger moments. Maybe he had it more under control than everyone thought?

Lucy walked out into the courtyard holding Ryan's arm. There were hundreds of tables set up to accommodate all the guests. When they walked out together the people stood clapping and cheering loudly.

"See nothing to it." Ryan said quietly winking at Lucy. "Now comes the worst part... mingling..." He frowned and silently groaned. This was always the part he hated the most.

Lucy could see Jasper and Aiden sitting together near the back. They seemed content to stay out of the spotlight but still keep her in their sights. She agreed with Ryan... this part was the worst. They went table to table greeting everyone before Ryan left her with a group of young ladies while he went to talk with some younger men.

"So what is the prince like? We don't really know him on a personal level he keeps to himself." One of the young ladies asked.

Lucy smiled politely. "He is a great guy. He's fun, has a good personality, and honestly everything I could have ever asked for." The girls around her all gushed over what she was saying.

"Sounds like you found a boyfriend as awesome as mine." A shorter girl with dark raven black hair said. She had deep green eyes and ivory skin. And was honestly gorgeous.

"Geez Stella... no one wants to hear about your perfect boyfriend again." One of the other ladies pouted. "I feel so lonely all of the sudden."

"Don't worry I'm sure you will find your mate soon enough," Lucy said sweetly.

"Stella hasn't found her mate either. They are just exclusively together until they do find their mates."

"Oh. Sorry about the misunderstanding." Lucy bit her bottom lip and smiled.

Stella giggled. "Don't worry about it. It's an easy mistake. We don't always find our mates right away so a lot of us pair up with a steady partner until then. We both know once we find our mates it is over... but it is nice to have someone to belong to now." She brought out her phone and began flipping through pictures. "See." She said turning the phone to Lucy. "This is me and my Ryan."

Lucy felt the air get knocked out of her. It was a selfie picture of Stella with... Derek... HER Derek acting as Ryan. She watched as she flipped through some more pictures.

"This is my cousin Sabrina. She is the one who introduced me to Ryan and we both just hit it off." Stella gushed over a couple more pictures.

"Please spare our princess the intimate details that you weren't kind enough to spare us." One of the women said with a groan.

Stella blushed and waved her hand over her face. "Stop, you're making me blush thinking about it."

Lucy tried to rationalize what she was hearing. This girl didn't know that it was Derek. So she had nothing to gain by saying what she was saying. She had no idea that he

was Lucy's mate. She needed to go somewhere and think. A picture is worth a thousand words... but there are also so many unspoken words there.

She felt her body feel sick. Inwardly she was a mess but outwardly she continued to hold a composed posture as she listened to Stella gush over how sweet Ryan is. It didn't make sense. She asked Derek outright if there was anyone. He could have easily admitted it then right? Did she trust Derek or not? The problem was why would this girl lie about it? She also had pictures of them together. They were smiling looking at the phone... their heads were close together. Of course, their heads were close Lucy. It is a damn selfie. She scolded herself inwardly as her emotions raged against herself.

Why would Derek lie? Maybe because he was ashamed he didn't wait? Or that he wanted to keep Stella as a mistress as accustomed. Her blood boiled thinking of that. In that situation... maybe she could m**m the prince. Nothing major. Just enough that he would have to eat from a straw for the rest of his life. Yes, something minor like that.

Then there was Stella... she knew nothing about her but why would she lie? She even had pictures and from the sound of it a couple of these other ladies seen them together too. This was getting confusing. And honestly, she couldn't listen to Stella going on and on about Ryan, who was HER DEREK.

She has been having the feeling that something was being kept hidden from her. Was this it? Was this the secret? That Derek had Stella? He had a girlfriend even though he knew he was promised to her? And what about all the stuff about him being in love with her since they were kids? Was it all a lie? Did she want love so badly that she became that naïve wimpy fool she hates so much?

"Well, it was nice talking to you ladies. I'm sure I will be seeing you again." Lucy felt her chest squeezing tight as she struggled to breathe. Images of Derek popped into her head. The precious moments they had shared together. Then the pictures she had seen from Stella.

She walked through the crowd trying to escape. She had to escape. She needed away from everyone. Princceeeeeessssssss.

A voice slithered in her head. This way princessssssss. Quickly go into the garden passage while no one is looking.

Okay. The first rule of thumb. Creepy voices in your head are people you shouldn't listen to or follow. They rarely have good advice and more often than not it is a trap. However, with the mood Lucy was in, bring on the trap. She slipped pasted a waiter whose back was turned and she entered between two parted pushes.

She looked in front of her. Tall green leafy bushes surrounded paths that led off in various directions. It was like a maze. This was too much like something she would

have seen in a movie where she was shouting at the lead to turn their a*s around. Are you coming princceeeeeesssss?

The voice hissed into her head making her shudder slightly. There was something deep inside of her that wanted to run. But an even bigger part wanted to know who this person was. Besides if this person wanted a fight she would give it to them. She could feel her fairy blood tugging on her to turn back. Almost as if warning her not to continue. But her lycan felt bloodthirsty and wanted a face with the voice.

She followed one of the paths and walked through the twists and turned of the maze. Finally, she reached an open area where a fountain spit water up into the air. There, by the fountain, was a wolf... a dark charcoal color with white ticking. Finally... Princessss.

Lucy looked at this wolf curiously. A strong breeze blew her way and with it the smell of licorice. There was something familiar about a wolf with the scent of licorice. She furrowed her brows as she tried to recall the stories. The stories of a half-demon wolf who hunted the fairy princesses for his own and he smelled of licorice. But he was dead. Her aunt killed him. They took his heart out of his chest. This couldn't be him... it could not be...

The wolf's tail wagged slowly as he took a small step forward.

We haven't meant but we have a history together. I am Abaddon.