

Dr. Luna

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The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 51

"Also, about the memories, you were just shown. He doesn't know that I have these memories and I don't think he should. I don't want him to think this is the only reason I accepted him. Because I already did before this knowledge." Lucy felt Derek squeeze her into his front as his hand brushed over her side. "Abaddon mentioned that Lilly here may be able to understand the energy build-up. But it seems you also understand this?" Derek said looking over towards the Great Sage.

"You're soul mates." Lilly said simply. "The energy is building up together and syncing with each other."

"It seems like the energy is waiting for something..." The Great Sage said in his gentle older voice.

"Of course it is. Have you accepted him yet as your future prince Lucy?" Lilly asked with a soft smile.

"I don't plan on being the fairy princess though..."

"Doesn't work that way. No matter what that part of you isn't going away now. You don't have to become a reigning heir to the throne but you are now and forever a fairy princess. The fairy magic has reacted and selected this to be true. Alexis will still be the ruling heir to the throne but you are still gifted the magic and abilities." Lilly looked over at Rhea who also nodded her head in agreement.

"Think of it as a power boost, Lucy." Alexis giggled.

"So this should all settle after that?" Lucy asked and watched Lilly nod her head. She turned to Derek. "Let's see if this works." She reached up on his shoulders and lowered him to his knees. He kept his amber eyes on her and let her guide him lower.

"I am accepting you as my present and future. Now a prince to fairy kind. They will be your people to protect as well." She leaned down and kissed his forehead and then his eyes.

Derek felt the warmth spreading through his chest and it flowed through his body. It was no longer being held compact inside of him. He could feel a surge of strength inside of him at a new energy he was being granted access to.

"With this, you'll be able to see those cave brownies now." Lucy giggled as he stood in front of her. The energy inside of her was also freely flowing. New powers were building up inside of her but it was impossible to know what they were at the moment. "There much better now." Lilly said and turned to Tyler who nodded his head with some silent talk.

"It's time for us to get back." Tyler said as he wrapped Lilly in his arms. A moment later a portal appeared in front of them.

"We have a lot of work that needs to get done and a premonition to stop. But with these portals we can get to each other quickly. Wyatt, you and Freya stay safe. I want you to avoid the fighting if at all possible." Lilly looked at her son with her momma eyes. Wyatt chuckled and nodded his head. "Don't worry mom. We aren't planning on doing anything unnecessary."

"We need to be getting back too..." Freya said with a frown. They have already left Sam in charge for too long with the new danger to the pack. And now that Lucy was fine they needed to leave as well.

"Thank you for coming... I appreciate it." Lucy smiled as she looked at her family. She appreciated how much they cared.

"Don't worry. I'll take good care of Lucy." Derek wrapped his arm around her waist. "I've decided to return back to the vampire kingdom. There are issues there that must be addressed. I won't have false rumors being spread. And it is time for everyone to know who their real prince is."

Lucy's eyes lit up. This must have been the first he decided because the thought never entered her head until now. She felt so happy knowing that he would be with her for a while.

They said their goodbyes and Lucy watched as her family went through their own portals that were created. Jason told Lucy to tell Justice to uphold the guardian name or else.

She was relieved with how her family was and their forgiving nature. Once they had more information about Abaddon they seemed to relax and understand. Though it was still his fault and his choices. But given his new attitude, they would judge him by that for now.

"So you are going to be leaving us already?" Alexis play pouted.

"At least for now..." Lucy looked up at Derek and smiled.

"I was wondering if someone could take Jasper to where I was taken from. I am going to need him on the front line while I am away." Derek frowned slightly. He wasn't sure how long he would be staying away. For now, he was going to test things out. But it meant sending Jasper to the front to take command in his absence. It wasn't an ideal thing to do in the middle of the war. But given the situation, he wasn't going to have his fiancé fighting off rumors. He needed to deal with Stella and with Ryan with the rumors with Amanda.

"I'll take him there." Lee said. "I need to check around the area a bit more for signs of Wicker. The coward is masking himself with crystals. It's the only explanation." "Same as Aken." Alexis snorted out.

"We will flush him out eventually." Rhea said with a faint smile and patted her daughter's back. She knew it was tough on her daughter during this time but there wasn't anything they could do. Lee would have to find Aken or he would have to show himself on his "So back to the vampire kingdom again?" Lucy felt Derek's lips land on her forehead.

own.

"Yes, it is time to show my face publicly. I won't tolerate rumors like this. The royal family is built upon a pillar of faith and trust. I won't allow there to be a weakness that crumbles it." Derek's voice was firm and authoritative. "Let's go and let the others know." Besides... I want to be in our own room for when round two begins. He said in Lucy's mind with a low gruff voice. A playful smile rested on his lips as his eyes rested on hers.

"Jasper you promise you'll be careful." Lucy said with a small frown. "If Abaddon had his energy restored I would send him with you."

"Hey! I'm insulted. No offense Aba (The Prince's nickname had officially stuck) but I am perfectly capable of handling the situation there. And it is my turn for some action." Jasper grinned widely. He was excited to be able to test his skills freely. "Tell my soldiers I will be back. Tell them who I am... the real me. They will understand." Derek rubbed the back of his neck. "Probably too much. I'm afraid they will be too protective over me when I come back."

"I'll handle everything. You just take care of the things in the kingdom." Jasper turned and slapped Aiden on the back. "Take care of yourself. And Justice... make sure you keep them on their toes."

"And when you come back we will stir up trouble for the royals." Justice placed his hand on Jasper's shoulder. "Kill some freaks for me."

"Ready?" Lee asked and Jasper nodded over to him.

"I'll see you all soon. And if I find this witch... well if I find her she will cease to exist." Jasper let a wicked grin form on his lips.

"I'll make a few rounds with a couple of my soldiers." Brian said and looked up at his father, Titus, to see him nodding his head in agreement. "So don't run in fear when you see our towering shadows above you." Jasper chuckled. "I'll try not to." He turned his head looking at Lucy one last time before walking out of the room with Lee.

It didn't matter who was going to fight, Lucy felt conflicted. Jasper was family to her. She couldn't bear to have something happen to him. She wanted to be with him so that she could help protect him. She hated people were out fighting to protect her. It felt wrong. She had a warrior's heart. She wasn't like her great-grandmother Alice. She was a fighter.

Derek pulled her back into his chest and wrapped his arms around her front. "He is going to be fine. And we have our own fight to deal with." He pressed his lips into the side of her temple and rubbed his nose in her hair.

Rhea looked up and met with Abaddon's eyes. "What happened before... let's leave that in the past. I believe that I got my family's revenge on what happened. We don't need to continue with this anymore. Protect her. Take care of her. And don't ever betray her..." "I don't deserve your benevolence. You don't owe that to me. I'm not sure killing me once makes up for everything-"

"It doesn't matter anymore. That part is over. There is only one thing we need to do with you..." Rhea tapped her chin thoughtfully.

"What's that?" Abaddon asked with a small frown.

"We have to change that scent." Cody said with a loud snort. He knew exactly what Rhea was thinking. "I have no hard feelings either... you know dying and coming back. You ever hurt my family though..."

Abaddon nodded his head in acknowledgment. "I know my word doesn't mean much but I wouldn't... and I can't. It's impossible for me to betray Lucy or Derek."

"Can we change his scent?" Lucy asked tilting her head to her aunt. After all, licorice wasn't her favorite scent either.

"Why do you smell like licorice?" Alexis asked with a scrunched up nose.

"It's just my scent..." Abaddon said quietly.

"Are you attached to the scent?" Rhea asked and watched him shake his head no. "Well then I think a change is in order. I think it would be better for mom if you smelled different."

"Oh I have an idea!" Brian said and looked up at his father. His eyes glazed over and Titus chuckled and nodded his head. "I'll be right back."

"Uh oh... I'm almost afraid." Lucy chuckled she turned and looked at Abaddon. "You don't have to change your scent if you don't want to."

"I'm not attached to it. I'm fine changing it to be honest." Abaddon said quietly as Brian ran back into the room.

"Here." Brian had a big grin on his face as he handed a small vial to Abaddon. "Hurry get it down fast. He's coming."

Abaddon didn't hesitate and shot the liquid down. Instantly his scent changed to the smell of smoked cedar. It had a very rustic and log cabin scent to it. At the same time the doors shot open.

"Brian you meddlesome little prince. Just as bad as your father. You got into my things again. You think it is okay to take advantage of an old man? Such a troublesome child." Grandpa Sage clicked his tongue angrily as Brian chuckled.

Rhea giggled. This reminded her of when she first arrived to the dragon kingdom. Titus and Grandpa Sage were always quipping back and forth with each other.

"Too late Gramps its gone. I fed it to the soul here." Brian said with a smug grin.

"Do you have any idea how hard that is to make?" Grandpa Sage snorted.

"Relax, you have a whole drawer of them. Besides Rhea is the one who wanted it." Brian said deflected to issue.

"Oh Rhea? If it was for you then you should have just asked. No problem then. You wanted him to have a different scent? Makes sense makes sense. Ho ho ho dear child just ask and its yours."

"Hey! Gramps!" Brian's jaw dropped. A completely different attitude for Rhea.

"What was it?" Lucy asked as she bit her lip hiding her smile.

"It's a potion that alters your scents. Usually, it is used for dragons who wish to leave the dragon kingdom and go rogue. They take on a new scent and identity. Each vial will create a different scent depending on the person who drinks it. It is nothing harmful." Grandpa Sage said with a chuckle.

"He is so much nicer to the girls." Brian folded his arms over his chest.

"That's because they are not sneaky rascals." Grandpa Sage growled. "Anyways I have important work to do."

Lucy looked over at Abaddon who had a faint smile on his lips. His eyes met with hers. "I... I like it."

"I'm glad." Lucy leaned into Derek's chest.

"Ready, Lucy?" Derek whispered near her ear.

"Ready. The portal will take us to where we opened it last. It's last connection that it held." Lucy watched as a large opening formed in front of them. Time to go back to the vampire kingdom.

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 52

The group walked out from the portal and were back in the hallway of the vampire kingdom. Derek took in a deep breath and a warm smile rested on his lips. He was home. And finally he would be able to act like this was his home. "You're back..." Ryan came from down the corridor his eyes immediately rested on Derek with Lucy still clinging to his arm. "Are you planning to make the announcement early?"

"I need to speak with my parents first. But that is my plan." Derek said and he watched as Ryan's eyes trailed to Lucy and back to him. He understood what he was thinking. "Mira."

"My lord." The small pale young woman appeared in a kneeling position.

"Tell my parents I request their audience in my chambers." Derek watched as the girl instantly vanished. "Let's go." He nodded to Ryan to join them as well. They were in a private hall that was reserved for the royal family so keeping Lucy at his side here wasn't a problem. He led her to his room with the others following.

They walked into the room and all made themselves comfortable except for Abaddon who remained standing.

"Please have a seat." Lucy nodded to another chair. She noticed how he hesitated until he locked eyes with her then he obediently walked to a chair.

"Hey if this works out you won't have to swap spit with Ryan again." Aiden's eyes flickered as he stared up at a very pale and uncomfortable looking Ryan. Derek squeezed his hand around Lucy's and sighed heavily. "You are lucky I can read Lucy's mind."

"That takes a lot of the fun out of it." Aiden said with a disappointed snort.

"Aiden! I thought we were bros." Ryan sighed in relief, shooting Aiden daggers.

Aiden chuckled. "We are, but tormenting my new family is sort of my thing. But with Lucy and him connecting memories it is hard."

"Speaking of bros..." Ryan turned and looked at Justice who had been quietly observing him. He felt like he had a predatory glance on him. "You must be Justice."

"I must be." Justice said, trying to hide his personality for a moment longer. "The word I have heard is that you happen to like the ladies... I am also one who likes the ladies."

"Once I am off the hook from playing pretend fiancé you want to be my wingman?" Ryan grinned widely.

"No. But you can be mine." Justice snorted and the two men chuckled together.

Lucy giggled and shook her head. She knew they would get along splendidly. The door to the room opened and King Alaric and Queen Willa walked in. They all stood up and Derek walked up hugging both of his parents.

"Is everything okay? We weren't expecting you." Alaric watched as his son nodded while adjusting Lucy more to his side. He was making sure they could notice the mark that was now upon her neck.

"Breaking tradition?" Willa said, clicking her tongue.

"Yes. And I need to break it again." Derek said firmly. "There is someone that is claiming the elite leader Ryan is their steady boyfriend. The girl doesn't know who I am so she doesn't understand how damaging her lies are. Furthermore, she has fabricated a video that isn't true either. I ask to announce myself to my people. I want to clear my name."

"No. You can't announce this until you are crowned. The day you are back here permanently will be when you are announced the crown prince. You know this is for a purpose." King Alaric said firmly.

"And I have accomplished that purpose, haven't I?" Derek said in exasperation. The purpose was to find faithful allies and he had with his soldiers.

"You must finish the task you set out with and bring your soldiers home." Alaric said firmly.

"I already told Jasper to tell them who I am." Derek said and watched his father's eyes turn dark.

Alaric sighed angrily. "Well, what is done can't be undone. But I still won't allow it. If there is a rumor go and dispel it as Ryan. It is not time for you to join us here at the palace."

"I fail to see why not. Could you explain this to me? Other than breaking tradition, what is the problem with him announcing who he is?" Lucy met with the king and queen in a confident stare. Her eyes pierced against them. "Derek must prove himself." Willa said quietly.

"And he hasn't? And he can't if his identity is revealed?" Lucy felt irritated. She could feel how upset Derek was and yet he felt trapped. Well they couldn't trap her. "Furthermore, this is the price I demand for keeping the soul Abaddon a secret." "Lucy." Derek hissed and tugged on her arm.

"No, Derek. You may have made a deal for the prince and Ryan to put on a charade but you never made this deal with me. You have chosen to show me a fake fiancé. And want me now to continue to play this role. I should have been made aware from the beginning. I went through a lot... feelings of being unwanted. And not being good enough. When had I been made aware from the beginning all of that could have been avoided. What is being asked of me isn't fair. I won't wear another man's scent anymore. I am not letting someone else bathe me in their spit. And I am not going to pretend to be another's mate." Lucy's green eyes attacked them. She could feel how nervous Derek was and he was waiting for his parent's reaction with bated breath. But not Lucy. This was enough. Everything that had happened to her recently was because she couldn't simply have her mate by her side.

Finally, Willa smiled. "Lucy, you are perfect. Isn't she perfect dear? If only I could have had a daughter but I imagine she would have been so much like you." She looked up to Alaric and a small smile escaped from his lips as well.

"You have a leader's heart. You are right we should have thought things through better. And my guess with you as the new queen a lot of traditions will be getting broken." Alaric said with a quiet sigh.

"Yes. I will not have any son of mine participating in some quest where he has to prove himself. I understand the identity thing to find loyal soldiers but having to prove themselves? No. Won't be happening. No child of mine will have to prove themselves to me." Lucy felt Derek pull her into his front as he beamed down at her. She blushed slightly as his thoughts entered her head. She could feel his pride, adoration, love, and lust. "She is perfect." Derek leaned down and gently pecked at her lips.

"I am so happy that you two ended up being mates." Willa said with wet eyes. "This is more than I ever hoped for. And seeing you two together makes me so happy." "Alright son. Do what you feel you need to. But how do you plan to handle the situation?" Alaric asked curiously.

Derek smiled. "Just leave it to me. I'll handle everything. I just need you to organize a formal event for tonight."

"We can do that." Alaric looked from Derek to Lucy. "You two are a good match together. You will have strong children together."

Derek chuckled and watched as Lucy's ears turned red. Her embarrassment was adorable. "I couldn't agree more. There will never be anyone else for me but my little mate."

Lucy put on a long formal black sleeveless dress and put the finishing touches on her face. She was left alone to get ready but was to meet Derek in the main ballroom. She wasn't sure where that was but Abaddon and Mira were left with her. She walked out of the bathroom to see them both dressed nicely as well.

"Princess, you look stunning." Abaddon said with a half bow.

"My lady." Mira said, curtsying low to the ground.

"Nuh-uh, you two. Don't you dare! It is a friendship relationship with me, you got it?!" Lucy tilted her eyes at them sternly and watched as they both smiled at her.

"Now... do either of you have any tips for me? What should I expect? Derek disappeared so fast before I could read the plan in his mind. So I guess he is surprising me too, huh?" Lucy watched as they both shrugged slightly.

"We weren't told anything. Probably so you couldn't order it out of us." Abaddon chuckled.

"The king has arranged for a formal dance tonight. It is considered a ball of sorts. People will be dressed in their finest. And will be waiting for some special news. Usually, these things announce a new mate, visitor, or an expectant pregnancy..." Mira gave Lucy a side smile.

"Oh my gosh. They will be thinking I am pregnant." Lucy slapped her forehead with her hand. She could hear the gentle laughter from Abaddon and sweet giggle from Mira. She looked between her fingers at the two of them before laughing a bit herself. "I guess it may not be entirely wrong though." She watched as the two of them immediately quit their laughter. Their eyes darted to her stomach and back to her eyes.

"Are you pregnant my lady?" Mira suddenly asked with a protective air about her.

Lucy giggled. "Well, I hardly can know that after just a couple days. Just after my heat, I can't say it isn't a possibility."

"We should maybe take precautions then," Abaddon said with pursed lips. His eyes wandered over Lucy with protectiveness. He could feel himself reacting to the possibility of there being a life growing inside of her. And it made him want to shield her to protect her and the future.

"Don't be silly. You know you fought my grandmother while she was pregnant. And she ended up being just fine. I am from a strong and resilient bloodline. And I am not about to be locked away. Which makes me think..." Lucy grinned and looked at Abaddon. "Can you block the mate link if I ask you to?"

Abaddon furrowed his brows and set his jaw. "I wouldn't want to do something like that."

"But you can?" Lucy asked raising her eyes.

He let out a loud sigh. "Yes, I probably can...but-"

"Relax." Lucy giggled. "I'm just thinking that when the day comes and I am pregnant I would like to surprise Derek. Instead of him just knowing I would like to tell him myself." She watched as Abaddon smiled and shook his head. "Okay. Yes, I can do that." Abaddon relaxed.

"So are you going to be my escort?" Lucy asked, looking at Abaddon.

"No. Mira and I will be doing our job and keeping an eye on things from the shadows. Your escort is waiting for you in the hall." Abaddon motioned his head to the door.

"Speaking of which..." Mira said with a smile. "You should probably get going."

"Yes I know..." Lucy inhaled deeply to settle her nerves. She wasn't a big fan of these public events especially when she felt a bit in the dark over it. She walked over to the door opening it. In front of her Justice stood dressed in a black tuxedo. "You look amazing Lucy." Justice beamed and extended his arm to her.

She glanced behind her to say something to Abaddon and Mira but they were already gone. "I hope you were shown the way because I don't know where I am going." Lucy turned back to Justice and bit her lip smiling.

"Yes, I know where I am going and I already had a nice peek. There are some delicious specimens here... and maybe I have a chance being the mysterious new guy." Justice winked down at Lucy who only shook her head with a laugh. He may be her guardian but he was still her same lecherous Justice. She walked with her arm on his down several halls that led to two double doors where two guards were waiting. She wasn't exactly sure what was being planned tonight but she was curiously excited.

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 53

The large black metal double doors opened as they approached. All eyes were on Lucy as Justice led her inside. She felt Justice pat her hand on his arm and he winked down at her. She scanned the room but didn't notice Derek or Ryan anywhere. Towards the front of the room her eyes met with Aiden. He was also wearing a black tuxedo and was talking with a few gentlemen. He gave her a small smile as he continued his conversation.

Justice led her through the curious eyes. They were looking at the stranger next to Lucy and were probably wondering where the prince was. Yeah... she was wondering that too. A man approached in front of her. One she had never seen before. His eyes set upon her neck and his lips curled up in disgust. "So he really did it? He really claimed a pup as his mate... No offense to you. But to preserve our kind only the purest have been mated to the throne. This whole concept of you having pure blood just doesn't make sense and is mind boggling. As if we need a treaty with the wolves anyways."

Justice pulled Lucy behind him slightly with enraged eyes. No one would disrespect her. He felt a strong hand land on his shoulder and he turned his head to see Jester standing there. "I'll handle this. Continue on." Jester nodded his head to them before turning a dark gaze on the man in front of him. "I see you think you know more than the royal family? Above all of that she is his soulmate. You know our rules about that."

Lucy wanted to hear the rest of the conversation but Justice led her away. She looked up at him and his tense expression on his face.

"You don't need to be bothered with that stuff Lucy. That's not the point of tonight." Justice said firmly.

"And what is the point of tonight?" Lucy asked with a small smile. She watched as Justice chuckled and shrugged.

"I guess we will find out." He winked down at her.

For a moment Lucy was also looking for Jasper. And she frowned as she remembered he wasn't there. This witch business was taking longer than it should. Why hadn't she been found? She must be shielding herself well. After this long, she was probably really good at hiding.

"Lucy." Queen Willa said and motioned for her to join her at the center of the front of the room.

Lucy looked up at Justice and he nodded at her. "I'll be waiting right here."

Okay, there was something being planned here for sure. Lucy walked up beside Willa who smiled down at her. She watched as Alaric stepped forward and the crowd came to a hush.

"Today is a day I have been waiting for... for a very long time. Not only has my son claimed his mate... but I am happy to introduce you to the real face of my son." Alaric's voice rang with clarity. The double doors opened and both Ryan and Derek walked in side by side. Ryan was wearing a formal military suit while Derek was wearing the colors of the royal family. Derek's suit was black with gold and purple mixed into it while Ryan's was purple with gold and black. The crowd's voices whispered as they watched the two men walk to the front.

"I would like to introduce you to the first knight of the elite soldiers, Ryan. Who you have all thought to be Derek. And to my son who has been leading the elite soldiers in battle up to this point. Today we make his face known to all." Alaric moved to the side as his son reached the front.

Derek's eyes met with Lucy's and he reached his hand out for her to join him. He squeezed her hand gently and turned his attention to his people. "As you know, the elite soldiers must be the most trusted and loyal soldiers to the royal family. To ensure this I have been undercover since I was young. I have discovered many things this way but most importantly I know the sincerity of the loyalty of my soldiers. I am showing you my real face now in light of some disturbing news I have heard. Know this. I have loved Lucy since I was a child. Even before I knew she was my soulmate she was in my heart. She is the reason I live. My everything." He looked down and smiled at her.

"At no point was there ever anyone else. Anyone who claims otherwise will be saying treacherous words. The banshee and our newest bound servant will deal with any treachery according to our laws. We will forgive only this once. Because any accusations were not done knowingly about your prince." He scanned over the area until his eyes found Stella's nervous eyes. A clear warning was shot at her then he continued to look over the crowd.

"I know many of you were concerned about the strained relationship. Well, that's because it was a feigned relationship." Derek chuckled and looked over at Ryan then back to his people. "I don't want there to be any doubt in your mind at how important my mate is to me. None. Not only have I claimed her as such but I have already marked her as my own. Furthermore..." He spun Lucy to face him. His eyes trailed over her, landing on her soft lip and inviting neck. "I will publicly show you our committed unbreakable bond." He leaned his head down and bit into Lucy's neck. He knew she wouldn't be shocked since she could already read his thoughts and what he was planning. Vampires don't just mark, they also signify their unbreakable bond through the exchange of blood. Those who exchange blood can never take another mate again. It is more permanent than just marking their mate. It makes it that only your mate could ever satisfy you. And it is something done quietly and privately among only the most devoted

couple. But by doing this publicly a very clear statement is being made. And that is there is no future to the vampires without Lucy.

He licked her neck clean before smashing his lips into hers desperately. He panted against her lips and kept his eyes on her. Now it was her turn. She also had to do the same thing now. He smiled as he felt her bashful emotions coming forward. To make it easier he lowered himself in front of her.

A heads-up over all of this would have been great. This was like the public marking with dragons. Only they at least knew what was coming ahead of time. And Lucy had never drunk blood before. Sure, she marked Derek but it wasn't the same thing. She inhaled gradually and gained her composure. She leaned forward to his neck and brought her fangs forward slowly sinking them into his flesh. She felt the warm liquid trickle into her mouth and was surprised how her insides filled with desire. It was as if his blood was an aphrodisiac and it made her lower part heat up with desire. She had heard about how vampires crave the taste of their mate's blood. It made no sense to her before but it did now. And she knew no other blood could ever quench her thirst but his. How was he able to break apart from this? She felt like she wasn't getting enough and she wanted to devour the rest of him.

She expected his blood to taste bad but it was nothing like that. It was like drinking pure insatiable desire. She felt Derek's desire flowing into her while he drank from her. Hers was more intense. And what she was wanting from him now she couldn't get this instant. No... wanting wasn't right. It was what she NEEDED from him now.

Goddess Lucy if you don't stop those thoughts I will take you right here and right now. Derek's voice rang into her mind. She could feel his lustful thoughts that were only fueling her more.

The only thing that was able to snap her back was knowing how many people were watching them. And that she was really afraid he would publicly cross the line in front of them. So, with great restraint, she pulled her fangs out and licked his neck clean of any blood droplets.

He rose back up and she wrapped her arms around his neck bringing him into her face. She pressed her lips into his as their two types of blood mixed together. She dug her nails into him slightly, she was having a hard time fighting the desire inside of her off. It was Derek who pulled away from her. Though she could see from his eyes it was the opposite of what he wanted. His thoughts were screaming in her head and promising her of everything he planned to do to her.

The sound of cheers and applause snapped Lucy from her unquenchable hunger. She turned to face the crowd shyly and felt Derek's arm come around her, pulling her deep into his side.

"We will be having a formal wedding ceremony at the end of the summer. However, as you can see this is now a bond that will never be broken. I know as my subjects you will both respect and support our relationship. I trust you will also protect any future heirs with your lives. I plan to well secure our future lineage." Derek said with a wry smile. The crowd chuckled and Lucy felt the heat spreading over her face.

"I'm sure many of you would like to speak with your prince now that you know who he is." Alaric spoke up, giving his son a glance. "Derek will now come among you so you can each get to know him." He knew this wasn't what his son had immediately planned but it was important. Regardless of how badly he wanted to escape privately with his mate.

Derek sighed inwardly but kept a warm smile on his face. He and Ryan had already addressed Stella. She was shocked seeing the two of them at her door and immediately knew the jig was up. She was mortified hearing that she was actually implying about being with the prince. She was feeling left out hearing about her friend's trysts. So she decided to make up having a boyfriend. And Ryan was perfect since the elite soldiers weren't around. Not to mention he was incredibly attractive. It was all too perfect. So she took some pictures of the two of them and during her video she edited voices in. The camera wasn't on his face when she reached in to give him a hug goodbye.

What wasn't shown was how Derek immediately pushed her back and told her it was inappropriate for her to hug him. In the video, she froze the scene to look like they were hugging for a long time. And she played with the sound and audio to make it all look and sound real. She went all too far for her elaborate lie. And now she was humiliated. Her friends would know she was lying now after the speech the prince had just given. They would also know he was referring to her. This is what she gets though. It was her fault for not just being honest about not wanting to mess around with others.

Derek leaned over and pecked Lucy on the side of her head before leading her out into his people. As they walked through the crowd Lucy noticed the man from earlier. She felt Derek's grip tighten around her as he saw her memories from before. With the soul mate bond, everything flowed between them when they were close. It just happened. And instantly he knew everything while they were apart and the same for her. She knew what happened with Stella as well.

"Count Basil..." Derek's eyes pinned the man down as his voice let out a lethal chill. "I know my uncle already spoke with you some but I won't tolerate anyone not approving what is mine. And just so you know... I've tasted her blood. It is a miracle but the purity is unquestionable. My bond with her is securing our lineage. And if you have a problem with my bride you know you can always go rogue. Your position can be filled by another. I don't need anyone part of the kingdom who is not completely loyal." Lucy watched as the count's face fell. He lowered his head and almost shrank himself down. "Forgive me, my prince. I won't misspeak again."

"That's not good enough. I need more than you not speaking. I will need your blood oath of loyalty to the family. You'll give it to my father or you will leave." Derek wasn't going to play around with the chance of betrayal. And a blood oath would prevent him from ever betraying the family. This was the price the count would pay for his words. He wasn't forgiving when it came to Lucy.

"Of course my lord. I'll give it to him immediately." Count Drake Basil said and slinked away towards the king.

Not into making friends? Lucy tilted her head up to Derek who rubbed his hand lovingly over her side.

I am their leader. They don't follow me for my friendship. They follow me for my wisdom and protection. I will guide them into the future. And I can't have anyone around that I don't trust. And anyone who would dare speak to you like that... calling you a pup... he is lucky I didn't shred him. Derek looked around as people started lining up seeking an audience. This was going to be a long evening. And after the moment he had shared with Lucy the thoughts were plaguing his mind. The desire she had for him was overpowering. Knowing she wanted him so much at that moment showed how much they were meant for each other.

It is true drinking the blood of your mate binds you together. But the more you desire your mate the deeper the connection is. Derek purposely put some vervain in his system to help weaken the effects. He was going to give some for Lucy to drink as well but Abaddon came and warned him it wasn't a good idea. Not after she just finished with her heat. Which made sense to him. But she had to experience the full onset of want and desire. And through her, he felt it too. Knowing she wanted him that much though showed just how much they were meant for one another.

He loved her so much. He watched as her eyes twinkled up at him and he felt her love flow into him. She was feeling the exact same way. And now finally everyone could know she was his. No more hiding. No more her having to pretend to belong to another. She was HIS and he was hers.

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 54

Derek led Lucy through the crowd and onto the dance floor. He spun her as the band started playing and pulled her back into him. He watched her with adoration as he twirled her around on the dance floor. Other couples were soon joining around him. Lucy noticed Justice, Aiden and Ryan had escorted women out to dance with them on the dance floor. They all seemed to be enjoying themselves and looked at ease. She looked back into the eyes of her mate. Everything was just... perfect. So perfect that she almost forgot about the witch causing problems. And she maybe could have, had Jasper been there too.

"He's fine, Lucy. I'm sure of it." Derek smiled, pulling her body close to him. "Jasper is really strong and these voidless aren't that formidable." He leaned in and brushed his lips over her forehead.

"That is what is worrying me. There is more to all this. The witch didn't plan all this time to just keep launching wave after wave of weak armies, right? I know she made some weird potion but there has to be more to it."

"Or the armies were supposed to lure you guys out in the open and because of us it hasn't happened. I don't think the witch was anticipating the vampires taking the lead in this." Derek could feel her restlessness over the situation.

"And Wicker?" Lucy sighed as she could see Derek was also not sure about him either.

"He has his own agenda in all of this. But he can't be our problem. There isn't anything we can do about him. That is someone your uncle will have to worry about. All we can do is focus on what we can take care of. And we are doing just that. Once we find this witch our part in this mess will be done." He held their bodies tight together as they slowly swayed to the slow music. His hand played over her back with the tips of his fingers. "No Lucy." He said quietly but firmly.

She frowned and sighed. She looked to the side avoiding his eyes.

"Lucy..." Derek's tone was quiet and low. There was a slight threat in his voice. He was reading her thoughts loud and clear. And on this issue he would not budge.

"We don't even know how that potion would affect me. I'm not like the others..." She snapped her head back at him and listened to his soft vibrations from his chuckle.

"I would never be okay with it. Even more because of the unknowns." Derek watched her frown but could feel she hadn't given up on the idea.

"Lucy... Your parents forbid you and Aiden to fight. And they are right. I also can't allow you to fight Lucy. You are the future here. Even more so now. With our exchange, we could never be with anyone else. Which is the purpose of it. I don't want anyone but you and can never be forced to be with another now. But this is a real problem for the vampires if something happens to one of us."

"Well if that is the case then you shouldn't be going to fight either. And I can see that is exactly what you are planning to do. You are planning to leave me again already." Lucy felt a bit agitated when she just wanted to stay by his side.

"You know I don't want to leave you Lucy. Now more than ever you know it. I need to see this end."

"Keep Jasper with you then." Lucy pinned her gaze against his. "I have Aiden, Justice, Ryan, Abaddon and Mira here around me. I'm safe. So if Jasper is so skilled he should be at your side." She could feel how he didn't like the idea. "As you can tell this is one point I won't be budging on. I'll die on this bridge, Derek."

Soft rumbles reverberated from his chest. "Yes my little mate, I can see that. Okay... but let's not think about that right now, okay? Let's think about how we can escape so I can do what I really want right now." He greedily stared her over like a predator. His fingers trailed over her intimately as his mind began making promises to her.

"My lord." A muscular man said tapping on Derek's shoulder. "May I?" He asked and looked over at Lucy.

Derek inwardly growled but forced a smile over his face, stepping aside to allow him to dance with Lucy. It was customary to dance with other partners at such an event. Especially so they could get to know their royalty. And soon Derek had a line of ladies wanting to dance with him. He gently took one of the lady's hands and began to dance with her. He glanced at Lucy longingly as he watched her being led around the dance floor and away from him.

Lucy smiled happily as Ryan was the next to cut in. She was getting tossed from stranger to stranger and finally ended up in the arms of someone she was familiar with.

"Ready to dance with your fake fiancé?" Ryan chuckled and guided her expertly across the floor.

"So now that you are free are you beating the ladies off with a stick?" Lucy giggled and watched him flash her a wide white smile.

"Surprisingly I had more interest when they thought I was the prince. Shallow creatures didn't want me for my body only for my title." Ryan clicked his tongue in fake annoyance.

Lucy giggled. "Oh, you poor thing not to have women wanting to use you now."

"Thank you for the sympathy. It is a tragic blow but I'll manage. But you know..." Ryan said as he spun Lucy out and back into his hands. "I think what you and Derek have is much more appealing. I want that too... someday. But until I find my mate I might as well be well seasoned for her." "Of course it would be horrible if you weren't, right?" Lucy giggled and he pouted heavily.

"We can't all find this early in life. My mate might not even be alive right now. I want to live and experience my life. There are no guarantees, right? I could be dead tomorrow. I mean no one expected the vampire king to die when he did." "How did that happen by the way? I never pried into the events..." Lucy watched his amber eyes turn sad.

"It isn't a pretty story Lucy..." Ryan's voice was quiet and he pulled Lucy closer to keep the conversation more private. "The previous king and queen were a marriage of convenience. The queen was of pure blood so the king chose her to be his queen. One day though the queen met her fated mate. She originally dismissed him and kept a secret of his existence. But soon the temptation of her mate became too much. And they began meeting in secret. Alaric and Jester were young adults at this time. The king and queen had fulfilled their obligations to one another. But the king really adored the queen. Even though she wasn't his fated mate she was still his and he loved her."

He looked at Lucy and sighed quietly. "The king ended up catching the two of them together and in a rage, he killed her fated mate. He was hurt but loved the queen so much that he gave her benevolence. He pushed the betrayal away and even defended her publicly when the secret was leaked out. Alaric and Jester had a hard time with the news and their relationship with their mother became strained. I think the pain of losing her fated mate became too much for the queen... One evening she turned on the king while he was asleep and killed him to get revenge for her lover. Then she killed herself."

Lucy gasped and felt tears threatening her eyes. Ryan gave her a gentle smile. "Like I said it isn't a pretty story and one that the kingdom isn't proud of. That was a long long time ago though. Alaric has been the long-standing ruler for centuries now. And the kingdom has flourished under him."

"You know this is the first time a soul-mated couple will ever be taking over as rulers to the kingdom. I can feel it..." Ryan looked around him with a faint smile. "Everyone has high hopes for the two of you. And already because of your bond and your blood bond they are all at ease. I guess you can probably understand the worry about Derek taking you as a bride. They were all afraid that you would end up finding your fated mate. That what happened in the past would be repeated. They are comforted with your connection to one another. It makes for a strong kingdom."

"What about Willa and Alaric? Are they..." Lucy was interrupted by Ryan mid-sentence.

"Alaric refused to take a queen unless she was his mate. I guess after what happened with his parents he wouldn't risk it. But he found her. And together they also exchanged blood binding them to one another. I guess he wanted to be extra cautious so that she could never cheat on him. But then she couldn't conceive. Which was a big problem for the kingdom. Usually, the king would find a suitable substitute to procure a future heir. But with their blood bond, it was impossible not to mention Alaric could never have done that to Willa. Luckily with a bit of fairy magic, we were given our prince." Ryan looked off in the distance where Derek still had a line of ladies waiting for their chance with the prince.

"I thought it wasn't unheard of for the king to have a mistress? I have heard this several times."

Ryan chuckled. "That isn't how things are here. But there is another vampire kingdom on the other side of the world that is run very differently. The king keeps a harem of women at his disposal. And it wouldn't have seemed wrong for Alaric to take a mistress when Willa couldn't conceive. No one here would have batted an eye at it. An heir is the most important thing and all that matters. So it isn't unheard of. It just hasn't happened here during the last two generations."

"It wasn't going to happen now even without the blood bond," Lucy said with a small shrug. "I don't share. Before I knew we were mates I already knew that he wasn't someone I would share. I'm worth more than that. I am not just a breeding machine." "You are worth more than that. You both are. Honestly..." Ryan glanced around before dropping his voice to a quiet breath. "Derek was worried about it. He was afraid you wouldn't want him and it terrified him. He has loved you since you were kids and the idea of you not feeling the same way had him anxious... You know... It was a very tough decision for Alaric and Willa to arrange the marriage between you and Derek. Because of what happened in the past. This weighed heavily on them. But it was a necessary gamble. Let's face it, it is only a matter of time before our two species come to a head and the outcome... it would be devastating both ways. You and Derek being together was a necessary risk. The relief of you and Derek being mates was felt among a lot of us. And I know Alaric and Willa are incredibly relieved."

"Well maybe if you men weren't morons we could have known a long time ago that we were fated mates." Lucy smirked as a gentleman tapped Ryan on the shoulder.

"Guess my shift is up." Ryan said with a slight bow to Lucy. He turned and eyed the man curiously as he watched him begin to dance with Lucy. He didn't recognize the man.

Lucy stared at the face in front of her. She studied his facial features looking from his brown eyes to his sleek white hair that was pulled back. Realization hit her as he gripped her tighter.

"Shhh shh shh... such a clever girl but you wouldn't want me to kill everyone, do you? Just behave and I'll spare their lives." A crisp light baritone voice came out from his smiling mouth as he showed his experience on the dance floor. He danced with her beautifully and gracefully.

Lucy tried to control her heart rate as she watched the man in front of her. The man she wished she had the power to kill for what she saw him do to Alexis. Why was he here? What did he want with her? He had such confidence about him even being in the midst of the vampire kingdom. This man was powerful. And according to Derek, he was just as strong as her Uncle Levi, the deity Leviathan. If this is the case he could easily destroy everyone here. With determination, she gazed into his eyes and faced evil head-on.

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 55

So my dear..." His brown eyes were almost smiling at her. "Do you know who I am?"

Lucy knew that this was the man she saw in her premonition but he didn't know she knew who he was. Only that she knew he didn't belong. She kept a confident gaze on his eyes. "Judging from your energy I only have one guess... and that is you are the one they refer to as Wicker."

The man chuckled darkly. "I hate that nickname. It was given to me by the demons... of course I am no demon though. But you already know this... don't you?" He arched his brow slightly as the smile continued to rest on his face. Meanwhile he continued to twirl her over the dance floor. "No matter. My name is Erebus. I am the god of darkness. So while I am not a demon it does feel more like home around them."

"And what do I owe the honor of this visit? You here to bring me to the witch?" Lucy asked and listened as he let out a genuine laugh.

"Oh how adorable. No, I only want one thing from that witch and that is her soul. She made a deal with me and upon her death I will devour her soul... The faster she dies the better but I can't physically harm her because of the agreement. The last thing I want is to assist her. No, I am here for a different reason. I heard that the fairy princess was here and that she was the vampire prince's mate..." His eyes narrowed on her trailing to her neck. "Now how is that possible?"

"How is what possible?" Lucy felt his intense gaze upon her. He was studying her. And a realization hit her. He doesn't know there are two fairy princesses. Because it is rare... unheard of. It has NEVER happened before.

"I was under good authority that the fairy princess had another mate..." Erebus' voice trailed low as he studied the magic around the girl in front of him. "Yet, there is no denying that you are the fairy princess... I feel like I am missing something important here.... I guess this is what happens when I stay in the dark for too long. Things that happen in the light escape me. Guess it is possible you had two mates..."

Lucy wanted to mind link to someone to warn them... but she couldn't. Her mind was being blocked from reaching out by a strange energy. Her eyes stared back at his as he continued to look at her.

"I wanted to break you... I wanted him to see you broken. Of course if you have taken another mate he must be pretty broken already..." Erebus mumbled to himself, seeming somewhat disappointed. "Break who?" Lucy asked innocently.

"Your other mate. The one who is pretending that you aren't his mate. Well... maybe I got my sources wrong... Because you aren't exactly what I was expecting. I thought the fairy princess was... different. Hmmm I'm going to have to think about this... you know this is his fault." Erebus looked upward to his head with a scowl. "My hair used to be darker than ebony. You could get lost staring into the darkness. But that damn Kraken... He destroyed something I loved so I must return the favor." "Wait... you wanted to break me because of what he did to your hair?" Lucy continued to play her part.

"I don't love much. But I loved my hair. But I suppose I may have another reason... in either case you seem to have already ruined my fun." He pursed his lips together and stared at her. "What to do now?" He clicked his tongue as he twirled her out and back into his chest.

Lucy felt like a mouse who was being played with by a cat. He was batting her around helplessly. She didn't stand a chance against him; all she could do was try to think. She wanted to alert the others but at the same time she didn't want them getting killed. Erebus was a tier one deity. The whole might of the vampire kingdom meant nothing to him. It would be too easy for him.

He stared back into her defiant eyes. Where was her fear? It aggravated him. She should be trembling in his arms and yet she looked at him with those damn confident eyes. Whatever happened to the days when the fairy princess would shriek in fear of demons? Though he wasn't one he was still part of the darkness. Yet, she challenged him. And he felt annoyed.

"Let's play a game..." His lips curled upwards as a cruel smile rested upon them. "Yes... a game. That's what we will do."

One second Lucy was dancing in a ballroom surrounded by others and in the next second she was whisked away. She looked around the old gray stone surrounding her with bits of moss growing over them. She was surrounded by these stones except for a window that let in light. She felt the man let her go from his hands. The scent of musty mildew hit her nose and another scent. The smell of salty air and the sound of waves crashing. She turned her head to peer out the window and could only see water as far as the eye could see. She looked up at Erebus in confusion.

"What kind of game is this?" Lucy watched his face that continued to hold an arrogant smile over his lips.

"Let's see if someone finds you. If someone finds you I'll let you go. Simple. Just like that."

"You're trying to lure out the man you said is my other mate...the Kraken." Lucy watched his eyes flicker as he looked at her.

"Even if you've taken another mate... if he is your mate he should come for you."

"And what does that do?" Lucy was trying to figure him out but she was in real trouble here. She had a feeling escaping would not be an easy task. And how do you escape from a deity? They can just appear right in front of her. She can't fight him, it would be impossible. So how does she get out of this mess?

"I want to see his pain."

"Are you planning to fight him?" Lucy watched as his cruel smile spread over his lips.

"I'm not collecting souls for no reason. It's a nice little power boost to give me the edge over him. But I'm not quite ready for that yet. No... right now I just want to see his pain."

"What if someone else comes for me?" Lucy asked. His eyes trailed over her slowly.

"If someone comes for you here you have my word that you are free to go. No matter who comes for you. But my lady... who can find you out here?" Erebus nodded his head to the window.

Lucy clenched her hands together tightly and walked up to the opening. She peered outside and her eyes widened. There was no land. She was in a tall tower in the middle of the ocean. What the heck was this place? But she was a fairy... so she could call the marine fairies for help, right? "Oh and another thing..." Erebus said with a chuckle. "You can't use your fairy magic in here. And there is a barrier in front of the window... can't have you jumping out now can I?" Erebus chuckled as he watched Lucy's green eyes lift to meet his. "You planned all of this just to capture me?"

"Don't look at me like that. I have eternity. An eternal life. What is time to me? And you... a future vampire queen... what is an eternity for you? You haven't even tasted life yet." His dark eyes bore into her. His eyes traveled over her body and the black dress she was wearing. "I can see how you would have been fitting as a deity's mate... Maybe the Kraken just wanted to make sure you were immortal. Yes, that must be it. Aken isn't about to let anyone take what is his. It isn't that lunatic's nature."

"You call him the lunatic yet you abducted me." Lucy said with a quiet chuckle.

"You have spirit fairy. I wonder... how long that fire inside of you will burn before it is extinguished..." His arrogant smile returned as he rolled his shoulders back. "Let's see how you handle isolation. I wonder how long it will take for Aken to find you out here? He will find you eventually though. Oh and don't worry. I'll send food and drink to you. I need to keep my precious prisoner alive... Well, I will check on you soon." Erebus gave her a smug grin before he vanished from her sight.

She ran to the window and tried to push through it but she hit an invisible barrier. So he wasn't lying about the shield. She looked around the round stone room. There were no doors. No way out but the window. But... Maybe he only shielded the window. She

walked up and touched the cold stone wall. She would have to break through the wall and hope there wasn't a barrier on the other side. It was her only chance.

Damn I am really in a situation here...

Loud gasps echoed in the ballroom the moment Lucy vanished. Derek spun his head in the direction where he had seen Lucy last to discover she wasn't there. And he heard the murmuring of voices and the words that the princess vanished. Derek looked around frantically dropping the hands of the girl he was dancing with. He rushed over to the other end of the room meeting up with Aiden, Justice and Ryan.

"What happened? Where is she?" Derek asked in a panicked voice.

"She vanished. The guy who was dancing with her just vanished with her..." Ryan shook his head. "Damn it, it's my fault. I didn't recognize the guy... I shouldn't have let him..." "Shit... who could have done something like this." Justice looked up at Aiden's dark eyes.

"To bypass the vampire army... only a high-level demon or deity has this type of power." Derek clenched his teeth. "Abaddon!" Derek growled and the man appeared in front of him. "Can you feel her? Can you use your connection to go to her? She's been taken..." "I..." Abaddon shook his head. "I can feel her. But the connection is muffled. I can't get an accurate reading... I won't stop. I'm going looking for her." Abaddon said darkly as anger flashed over his eyes. He was livid. The damn deity masked himself to have a vampire aura. There was no way anyone could have known. Still... he was enraged that his master had been taken. And the djinn inside of him burned in contempt.

"Wait. We need to think about this. Whoever took her... what if it was Wicker and he took her to the witch? Ryan, I need you to go to the front and find out how things are going with Jasper. If the witch has her now..." Derek felt his heart racing. He couldn't lose her. "If a deity has her there is only one person who can help." Aiden looked at Derek. "Where did Lucy put her piece of the pearl? We need to get to Uncle Levi."

"Wait... I'm coming with you. I'm going to have my father put out a high-alert distress order. My mate has been taken. This is not something we can take lightly. I will have him march his armies to the witch. If she has her..."

"No matter what we need my Uncle Levi... march your armies but have them wait with Jasper. We will consult with the others and form a plan. We need to think this through." Aiden knew his family was experienced in these matters. And it was best to seek their counsel. Plus no one else could fight on par with a deity or an upper-level demon.

"You guys sit around and think things through. I'm going looking for her." Abaddon growled and vanished. To hell with waiting. He wouldn't wait for something bad to happen to her. He would follow the connection the best he could. Maybe he could map

out a general area of where to search. He had to find her... No matter who had taken her... It didn't matter to him if he was risking his soul. All he wanted was her safety.

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 56

A large group gathered outside the palace of the west dragon kingdom. The king and queen of the fairies, Tyler and Lilly were there along with Tristan. The King and Queen of the werewolves, Wyatt and Freya stood there with Jason and Jin next to them. The dragon King of the west Titus (His queen Lila was still at her brother's kingdom) stood next to The Great Sage, Leviathan and Rhea along with Cody and Kelsie. Then there was a very angry younger generation in the group. Aiden, Derek, Justice, Raine, Micah, Alexis and Brian. "Everyone needs to relax." The Great Sage spoke in an authoritative calm tone. "I know everyone is ready to go to war but remember what we are dealing with here. The only one who can do anything in this situation is Levi here." "I won't sit around and do nothing!" Derek yelled angrily. "I can't, I'm going crazy right now."

"Easy Derek. We all feel the same way. That's my baby out there." Wyatt said in a low growl. "We saw the devastation from both an original demon and from a tier one deity. We are nothing to them. I've even sparred against Levi here... a group of us... he didn't even break a sweat."

"If it is who I am suspecting it is then you are no more annoying than a gnat. That's why this is something the deities have a problem with. It is why they originally had a problem with me being with Rhea." Lee rubbed Rhea's anxious shoulders. "The problem will be finding her. Where is that demon soul at? The one with the djinn connected to her?"

"He went off looking for her on his own." Derek sighed angrily. But at least someone was searching for her. They were just sitting here. And he couldn't take it.

"What are you going to do? Just go running around blindly? You'll never find her like that." Levi said seeing Derek's agitation. "We also need to be smart here. This could all be a clever diversion for the witch. I'll go looking for Lucy."

"Let me come too. Please, I can help." Alexis watched as her father's eyes darkened looking at her.

"Absolutely not. For all we know he is trying to lure you out. Remember the premonition. You are grounded and are to remain inside the castle." Lee said as he watched Alexis shake her head angrily.

"I can't just sit here. I can't take this. You have to let me help. You can't go off on your own. If something happens to Lucy..." Alexis looked up as warm salty water trickled down her face flowing freely. "We can't risk something happening to you too." Lilly said calmly.

"Screw the fairy princess role. I feel like that is all everyone cares about." Alexis snapped.

"That isn't true. We can't ignore the premonition Alexis. Your father is right. You are not to leave the castle." Rhea understood how her daughter was feeling. None of them wanted anything to happen to Lucy. But Alexis over all of them was one who couldn't get involved.

"If something happens to you because you went looking for her... Lucy would never forgive herself." Freya said with a sympathetic smile.

"I'm not weak or fragile. I'm the second strongest here. I shouldn't be getting locked up." Alexis hissed angrily as she swatted the tears away from her face. She looked at everyone's eyes. No one was in agreement with her. Even Derek and Aiden disapproved of her going. "Lucy wouldn't be looking at me like this. She would have let me help." She looked over at Micah and Raine who dropped their heads to not make eye contact with her. "Wow... so I have no one in my corner." She grit her teeth and yelled angrily, "If something happens to Lucy you might as well kill me as well because I'll be dead inside! Knowing I could help and you didn't let me."

"Lex, calm down. We aren't going to let anything happen to Lucy. You aren't the only one who feels that way." Justice growled. He was Lucy's guardian and he failed her. His existence was now about protecting Lucy... and he already failed during his short time as a guardian.

"So what is the plan for now?" Titus asked, looking at Levi. Everyone knew he would be the one making the call here.

"Derek, see if you can call the half-demon. Maybe with his help he can give me a general location. A master-servant relationship is bonded. So much that you can usually summon them from any location. So we know she is in some sort of a barrier... she must be right?" Levi dropped his shoulders with a sigh and looked up at Derek.

"Abaddon, if you can hear me please we need your help." Derek hoped his connection to the servant would be enough to override his drive to find Lucy. And to his surprise, the man appeared at his call. "Aba! Any luck?" Abaddon shook his head sadly. "But I can feel her so I know she is alive and okay."

"Come with me. Help me search for her." Levi said with a commanding tone.

Abaddon looked at Levi, the deity who wanted to join forces with him. "I'll try... but the connection is distorted. It's like when I try to appear to her I get bounced to a random place that is even farther."

Levi scowled hearing this. "Maybe I can bypass it... Come. Let's find your master."

Lucy charged into the brick wall and her fawn-colored wolf collided with the bricks again. They still weren't budging but she wouldn't give up. Her body was battered and she was exhausted.

"I've always wanted a pet... much to my surprise I now have a lycan." A voice snickered out.

Lucy lifted her gaze at the man and snarled, baring her teeth.

"Now now. You shouldn't bite the hand that feeds you." Erebus chuckled as food and water appeared on two large silver trays. "Now, if you would be so kind as to shift back..."

It wasn't like Lucy could do anything to him in this form. And she knew she needed to play her part here. Her goal was to survive and escape. She shifted back to her human self still wearing the black dress from the ball. "Here you go. You can wear these." Erebus tossed her a large shirt and joggers. "You're going to be here for a while so you might as well get comfortable."

"I've been marked by another. There is no way this other mate will still come for me." Lucy said as she gulped the water down. She needed to keep her strength up if she was going to escape. And it didn't make sense for him to poison her when he could easily kill her. So she grabbed the food and bit into it.

"You are an interesting one. I figured you would starve yourself for days in protest." Erebus leaned onto the back wall. A glint of humor flickered in his eyes as he watched her fearlessness.

"Why bother poisoning me when you could easily kill me?" Lucy watched his lips curl upwards.

"Clever fairy... Like I said before... this is a game. I don't know if he will come for you or not. But it is something to pass the time. And like I mentioned, he may have just wanted you to be immortal." Erebus studied her. "You really aren't what I was expecting at all..." "I'm curious why you are here? You said you were curious about how I would handle isolation."

Erebus chuckled. "I am... but I am also curious about you. And after watching you throw your battered body into the wall again and again... well you've piqued my interest. Which is hard to do." He pushed off of the wall and walked over to her. His eyes trailed over her body. He watched as she stood there unwavering looking at him with defiance. "Are you going to change?"

"Not with you in the room." Lucy looked at him as if he was crazy.

"Princess... you don't have anything I haven't seen before." Erebus said with an arrogant grin.

"Perhaps not but you haven't seen me." Lucy said flatly. She watched as his eyes darkened. He suddenly reached his hand out and grasped onto her lower jaw holding it in place firmly.

"You know... women don't act like this around me. They are either cringing in fear or throwing themselves at me to take them." He growled, closing the distance between them. He squeezed her jaw and pressed his lips into hers roughly.

Okay... Lucy knew she needed to survive and be as compliant as possible. However, on this issue she couldn't. To hell with the consequences. She tried pushing him off of her but it was futile. So she did the only other thing she could think of and she bit onto his lip roughly drawing blood.

"You b***h!" He growled, swinging the back of his hand to collide with her face.

The force flung her to the wall with a thud. Lucy could feel her face swelling and the taste of her blood trickling in her mouth. She lifted her eyes up at him and struggled to her feet.

"What? You expected me to just allow you to touch me?" Lucy turned her head to the side and spit her blood out bitterly.

"I think you fail to remember who is in charge here." Erebus growled lowly.

"Oh, I know. I know you can kill me. But if it is a choice between dying or letting you touch me... I'll gladly accept death." Lucy raised her hand to her split lip and wiped it. The sound of his laughter filled the room and she stared at the maniac who seemed to be enjoying himself.

"Oh what fun you are Lucy. I wonder if I should just keep you for myself."

"You gave your word that if someone comes for me then I am free to go." Lucy reminded him coldly.

Erebus clicked his tongue. "I did, didn't I? But that doesn't include escaping and finding help princess. There is nowhere you can run where I can't find you. So your choice is just to wait here obediently."

Lucy touched her cheek and wondered why she wasn't healing. She could still taste the blood trickling in her mouth and that wound should have healed. That's when the realization hit her. She stared at the food and drink then and back at him.

"Such a clever girl. You are right. I wouldn't poison you. However... I can't have you shifting and hurting yourself either. It is just a minor block. Nothing major. But you may not heal like you are used to. Given your situation, you can hardly refuse to eat and drink. I think we are going to be together for quite some time. And who knows... soon you may want me." Erebus said smugly.

"I made a blood pact with my mate. I won't want anyone but him." Lucy spat at him watching his eyes dance in amusement.

"Oh well if that is all that is stopping you I can fix that. I am close with some witch doctors who could easily break a blood bond. They specialize in dealing with blood potions." Erebus watched Lucy's eyes that had a fire in them. He grinned widely and chuckled. "Oh, Lucy. You just don't get it, do you? IF I decide I want you, you are already mine. I can easily have those sweet memories of yours altered. I can even have you looking at me as your mate." He cackled loudly as his eyes looked wildly at her. "But what is the fun in that? I would much rather see if I can tame you...first. Lucky for you I haven't decided how invested I am yet. Besides... breaking you would also be breaking him... and that sounds like a lot of fun."

Lucy swallowed hard at this. She was trapped by a crazy deity and was powerless against him.

Erebus winked at her. "Well princess, I'll be seeing you soon. Sweet dreams."

She watched as he vanished and collapsed to the floor. Where was the moon goddess at now? If she was really on her family's side couldn't she help her out here? Or is she afraid of getting overly involved again? The situation was becoming more and more desperate. The only thing she had going for her was her Uncle Levi. It was clear that Erebus didn't know that she had a deity in her corner and wouldn't be counting on him looking for her. And she knew he would but even then... how long would it take for him to find her?

This Erebus must be obsessed with the Kraken. So much that he knew nothing about her. Nothing about the fairy princess or her lineage. Had he done any research he would have known that the fairy princess would be a demi-god. This worked out though... he thought he had the one and only fairy princess. She just had to have him keep thinking that. She would protect Alexis by becoming her shield.

She lowered herself to the ground and wrapped her arms around her knees pulling them up to her chest. She was powerless. She was worried about Derek and how he was holding up. She hoped he wasn't thinking of doing anything stupid. He couldn't come for her. He needed to stay far away from this lunatic deity. Thinking about her mate made her heart hurt. Would she get to see him again? She leaned her head down onto her knees and felt her eyes burn. Quiet tears trickled down her cheek and for the first time... she was all out of ideas. All she could do was wait for someone to find her and hope the lunatic kept his word.

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 57

Erebus clicked his tongue. "Just look at you. Covered in blood and bruises. You are very unsightly." "And whose fault do you think that is?" Lucy said tiredly struggling to her feet when the deity entered the room.

leave it on."

"Yours of course. Your disobedience is the cause of your pain and suffering. Like now... you still refuse to put the clothes on that I have given you. I'm sure your mates' scent has almost disappeared completely from the dress you have on. No sentimental reason to "I'd rather wear this old dress that smells than to wear your clothes with your scent on them."

"Oh, Lucy... I'm going to have to teach you another lesson..." Erebus walked up to her, grabbed her by the neck, and slammed her back into the wall. "I hate doing this to you princess... but you need to be trained properly." He took his free hand and traced it over Lucy's lips. "I think I am going to make this a new hobby of mine. Finding a spirited woman and seeing how long it takes to break them. I'm afraid none will compare next to you though." He gripped her tightly now with both hands forcing her to hold still. Then he licked her neck all the way up to her cheek. He chuckled as she struggled against him in vain. "Still being disobedient I see... I'll have to discipline you again."

He took his hand and slapped her across the face. He curled his lips up angrily as she shot her defiant green eyes right back at him. He growled and clenched his teeth. "Quit fighting me!"

She felt his hot humid breath and spit beat against her face. She continued to look at him challengingly. "I'll never stop fighting you."

Erebus chuckled. "You will, though princess. I just haven't broken you enough yet. But... You. Will. Break." His lips curled up as he pressed himself against her. "You feel that... you are making me excited princess. The more you fight... the more I want you. So keep fighting. Keep exciting me. It will make the release all the more worth it."

Lucy felt bile rise up in her throat. She could feel his excitement pressing on her and it repulsed her. She turned her head away from him. It had been a week since she was taken. A week of being in hell. Every day he worked on breaking her and training her. Her body was bruised and bloodied. She was dirty. Yet, she continued to fight. She wouldn't let him see how affected she was actually getting from all of this. The emotional toll it was taking on her. And she was beginning to feel dirty.

Erebus has forced his kisses on her. He had trailed his hands over her. He hadn't forced himself on her more than that... yet. He is still banking that she will eventually want him.

He wants her to ask for it. Like hell, she ever would. But she wasn't sure if she was still worthy of her mate anymore. Another man had touched her body and her lips. They were supposed to only ever belong to Derek... She still wanted to escape this place. But she wasn't sure now about where she would go. She couldn't become Derek's queen now. He deserved better. She could make a deal with the witch doctors and break the blood bond. It was probably better that way. She was tainted now. How could he want her after this? She could imagine his thoughts after seeing hers and what she had been through. She didn't want to feel his disgust. She didn't want the man she loved more than anything to feel repulsed by her.

"Well, I guess that is it for today's lesson. See you tomorrow." Erebus gave her a smug smile and stepped back from her. Then with a wink, he vanished.

Lucy tried to get her breathing under control as she felt herself panicking slightly. There was no escape. No one would find her. And she felt disgusted with herself for feeling so weak and desperate.

She slid down the wall as her heart raced wildly. She had never felt so vulnerable and weak. Her chest squeezed tightly together making it harder to breathe. Her lungs were constricting and she wasn't getting the oxygen she needed. Her vision began to tunnel until finally, darkness overtook her.

Another week has passed...

"Damn it." Abaddon cursed as he and Levi stood in an empty building. It had been two weeks since they last saw Lucy. TWO WEEKS! They couldn't find her though. He could feel her but couldn't get close to her. During that time he and Levi had been searching nonstop. They had been spending a lot of time together and they had formed a passive-aggressive relationship. But there was a trust between them now.

Lee groaned and leaned his hand against the wall. "We can't keep going on like this. The family can't continue like this either."

"Neither can Derek. He is leading the vampire army viciously looking for the witch. He is breaking with every day we can't find her. I can't imagine what Lucy is going through. I can only tell you she is alive. But that's all I can feel." Abaddon sighed, the creases on his forehead showed the worry he was feeling for Lucy.

"Alexis isn't speaking to any of us. She hates being locked up but she isn't alone. Aiden is stuck under house arrest with her. I think he is also getting more and more agitated by the day. It is only a matter of time before they both rebel." Lee sighed angrily.

"Damn it where did he take her?!"

"What exactly is the separating factor between deities and demons? Just curious because it looks like there isn't much of a difference. One is considered automatically evil just because of their name."

"You know I don't know anymore. I really don't." Lee shook his head sadly. He was working with a half-demon. Jin was the sweetest demon he ever met. And Harley, who was the son of an original demon, had been a great help and mate to his niece Destiny. "What do you think he is planning by taking her?" Abaddon asked quietly.

"If Wicker is Erebus..." Lee frowned and shook his head. "He probably took Lucy because he thinks she is Aken's mate... thinking about the premonition he must already know Aken is mated to the fairy princess. And Lucy is a fairy princess... Lucy would never tell him she wasn't the one he was looking for either. No matter what he does to her..."

Abaddon looked darkly across the room. They needed to find her but how. All they could keep doing is searching in the area that drew him the most. He knew she was in a general direction but that was it.

"Let's keep looking. I can't take even taking a breather." Abaddon growled out and watched as Lee nodded his head in agreement. "What will you do if you find this Erebus?"

"I'll disintegrate him. A dark deity, even a tier-one, can't be stronger than a light deity. At least not on their own merit."

"What is the Kraken... Aken?"

Lee frowned. "He was a light deity who went dark. And ended up cursed and forced to remain bound to the sea. He is only able to roam the earth now because his life is still linked to Tyler. He was cursed to remain in the sea from the other deities. Aken rose up against the other gods... but before that... well he had some run-ins with Erebus. There is a history there between the two of them. This has become a personal vendetta for Erebus. But that bastard is involving my family in his feud with Aken." He balled his hands together. "He doesn't realize it yet but he just created another enemy. I don't forgive those who mess with what is mine. I'll kill Erebus or he will have to spend eternity running from me. For what he has done to Lucy... and what he plans to do to Alexis I will end him."

"What is going on here? Why have the vampires and dragons descended upon us?" Beryl asked angrily from her hidden location.

"I don't know but they seem angry. We haven't even done anything yet but the way they are fighting now is different. It is merciless and unyielding." A dark elf said nervously seeing the witch's anger.

"I am so close. I didn't go through everything I did for nothing! And of course, those damn cowards haven't shown themselves yet." Beryl clicked her tongue and paced madly across the floor. "What set them off? Something must have happened..." What was she going to do now? It was only a matter of time before she was found. If she was

going to go down then she might as well at least take one member of the Locke family down with her. Yes... even if it was only one of them...

She just needed to hold out and stay hidden. The opportunity would arise to at least destroy one of them. She had waited so long already and she wouldn't lose out now. She would disappear until things calmed down some. Yes... she just needed to disappear for a bit longer.

"Deploy the next two units. Let's keep them busy." Beryl said with a smirk looking at the dark elf. She would use this moment to escape deeper into the darkness... for now.

Jasper wiped the damp beads off his forehead. They have been scouring through the lands looking for the witch and any sign of Lucy. It was all they could do. They could only continue to fight and wait. It was t****e. He looked at a nearby tree where Derek was leaning his forehead against it. He was worried about him. He was breaking little by little. He walked up to him and placed his hand on his shoulder.

Derek glanced at the hand for a brief moment before closing his eyes. Where was his Lucy? How was she? Was she okay? It was his job to protect her... he failed her. How could he have let her fall into dangerous hands? What kind of mate was he? It hurt so much. It hurt that he lost her when she was right in front of him. It hurt knowing how weak he was that he couldn't get her back. It hurt. It hurt. It hurt.

"Hey... we are going to get her back." Jasper said gently.

"We? We aren't going to do anything because we aren't strong enough to get her back." Derek spit out bitterly. "Don't do this to yourself..." Jasper whispered out.

"If anything happens to her..." Derek stifled a sob and felt Jasper's arms wrap around him.

"Don't. Don't think like that. She is coming back to us. So let's get rid of this witch. It will be one less thing for her to worry about, right?" Jasper felt Derek's body tremble slightly. He had been forcing himself in front of everyone to look strong. Their strong and fearless leader was actually shattered.

"Jasper... listen to me." Derek straightened up and turned to look at his cousin. His wet eyes met with him head-on. "Just listen, okay?" He watched Jasper nod slowly. "If... if something happens to her... I'm giving you the throne. No words Jasper. I can't go on without her. I won't go on without her. Gosh, Jasper do I even deserve her anymore? I let her down. I told her she was safe with me."

Jasper's face was crestfallen as he stared at the red watery eyes of his cousin. "You didn't let her down Derek. There was nothing anyone could do. Who could fight against a deity?"

"Another deity. Maybe that's what Lucy really needs. Someone strong enough to protect her." Derek swallowed bitterly the sting of his own failure burned him.

"Derek!" Jasper grabbed onto his cousin's shoulders gripping tightly. "You need to be strong right now for her. She is going to need you and your strength when she comes back. Be the man she needs. You can't afford to break. I know you want to because it sucks. And it hurts like hell. I want to destroy the world looking for her." He gripped Derek's shoulders tighter as his own eyes watered up. "I depended on her too much. I took for granted that I would always have her light around." He grit his teeth and shook his head slowly with his eyes closed. "We don't know what kind of hell she might be going through and when she comes back she is going to need our light this time."

Derek's bottom lip quivered and he nodded his head as wet droplets escaped to the ground. "My poor little mate..." He breathed out in a whisper. When Jasper looked up the two men locked eyes. "You're right. I'll be whoever Lucy needs me to be. I just need her back."

"I know you do." Jasper gave him a weak smile. "We all need her back."

Derek straightened up. He would do everything in his power to fight now. It was the only way he could fight for Lucy. And if something tragic happens to her... he already decided. He wouldn't go on either. He would also die. Because life without Lucy would not be a life at all.

"Incoming!" Chaz yelled from the distance. "And there are a lot of them." "Good." Derek said coldly. "I need to take this aggression out on something."

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 58

Lucy opened her eyes to the darkness of her mind. She had been here before, she looked around expectantly. Sure enough, a familiar glow appeared. "I didn't think you actually cared." Lucy spat out angrily.

"Not now Lucy, this isn't the time. Where are you? What does it look like?" Selene asked quickly. "Hurry, there isn't much time. I can't find you. I am barely able to visit your mind now."

Lucy's breath caught. She was trying to help her. "I'm surrounded by the ocean. I'm in a tall stone-like tower. There is only one window but all I can see is the water." She watched as the light of the woman flickered and vanished. Did she hear her? Was she able to make out what she said? It seemed that Erebus made this area very well sealed. Especially if even Selene was having a hard time.

Lucy blinked her eyes and was no longer in the dark. The sunbeams from the window streamed onto her face. She winced as she tried to sit up. It had been two and half weeks since she was taken and yesterday's lesson had been incredibly painful. She was pretty sure she had a couple of broken ribs that were not healing because of whatever he was giving her.

After she first found out he was lacing her food she refused to eat. But that only got her punished and he forced it into her mouth. She didn't have a choice. She would ingest it by choice or by force. She eased herself against the back of the cool brick wall. She listened as the water crashed against the tower she was in. She closed her eyes and inhaled slowly because of the pain in her side. She wondered if that was a desperate dream or if Selene really did try to reach out to her.

"I've decided today is the day." Erebus said as he appeared in the room with an arrogant smirk resting on his face.

"The day for what?" Lucy snapped her gaze up at him indignantly.

"Today is the day you are changing your clothes. Your dress is disgusting." Erebus sneered at her dress in revulsion. It was getting hard to find her appealing in her stinking dress.

"I told you I don't want to wear anything that smells of you." She growled as she stood on shaking feet. She held her side to support her broken ribs.

"Oh, what fun... that's what I hoped you would say." Erebus said as he walked up to her. He slapped his hand across her face making her split lip start bleeding again. Yet, she snapped her defiant gaze right back at him. "It's like this. You'll wear these clothes... or none at all."

He reached his hand in front of him grabbing the fabric of her dress. With a quick movement, he ripped the material exposing the strapless bra she had on through torn pieces. And he ripped it again... this time shredding her lower half of the tattered gown away. The gown lay shredded around her waist. Her bare legs trembled slightly but she continued to stand against him defiantly. "We can do this the hard way... or the easy way. Either you take the dress off or I will. Of course, the hard way is more fun for me..." Lucy saw red and swung her fist up connecting it with his chin. She knew she shouldn't have done it but this man had disrespected her in more ways than one. When his dark eyes set on her she knew she was in for it. She was slammed back into the wall as his foot collided with her stomach. She heard the sound of a crack... another rib had broken. She coughed out fresh blood and spit it onto the floor. She watched as he marched towards her to hit her again. Then a loud thunderous noise was heard. And the next second the whole top of the building was gone. Pieces of stone crumbled around her and there was a gray cloud of dust blurring her view slightly.

She watched as someone crashed into Erebus sending his body into the stone floor creating a hole below him. A man stood over his body breathing heavily. It was a young-looking muscular man with brown hair and green eyes. His green eyes bore straight into Erebus with a malicious glare.

"Sooo you've finally found us. I've been entertaining your mate here for you." Erebus said as he looked up at the man.

"What exactly do you think you can do here? You think YOU can beat me?" Aken scoffed with an arrogant smirk. "You've lived among the demons for too long. But I can remind you which one of us is stronger."

"I don't need to be stronger than you Aken. I just need to be stronger than your weakness." Erebus gave him a smug look and nodded over to Lucy.

Aken's eyes fell onto Lucy. His eyes softened as he met with her green weary emeralds but as he trailed over her his jaw clenched. He took his shirt off and marched over to Lucy gently placing it over her body to cover her exposed skin. She whimpered slightly as he pulled the shirt on her and he squeezed his fist together. His eyes stared at her battered face and he felt his anger rising.

"You'll never be able to touch her again, Erebus. Do you have any idea who you just provoked? You didn't just mess with me moron." He turned and faced Erebus. "Selene has gone to Rogio... because you have interfered with the vampire prince's promised bride. Why do you think I haven't claimed her as my mate?" He smirked as he watched Erebus eyes widen in fear. "He will be hunting you now... he will kill you when he finds you. But why should he get the honors?" Aken glowered at Erebus and watched the flighty reaction of the despicable deity.

"No... I have a better idea. I'll just kill you now." Aken snarled and shot a powerful wave of energy towards Erebus then met his fists into the man's body.

Erebus retaliated back with a strong blow of his own. Both men rose into the sky and a colorful battle ensued. Lucy watched from the bottom but through the clouds, she often lost track of their movements. She watched as Erebus connected a powerful punch into Aken. Crashing colors of energy smashed together creating strong winds that beat down on Lucy. A black energy surged towards Aken who skillfully avoided the blast. It hurled downward into the ocean creating a dark hole. The energy managed to part a section of the ocean in that moment. The waves splashed backwards in retreat and a loud noise rippled into the air as it made impact. Soon the hole was swallowed up by the waves again. This was a deity's strength. This was a power she had no way of defeating. She could only helplessly watch from below.

Aken sent his own blast of white blinding force towards the other man. Erebus shot his darkness into the light energy making it split into two sections away from him and into the sky. He charged behind his darkness using that moment of blindness to reach his

opponent. Erebus smashed his fist laced with energy into Aken. This was intense and terrifying. They were both incredibly strong and Lucy was worried now for Aken. She looked at him in horror but was surprised to see a resting smug look on his face. The man didn't look the least bit affected by the hit. In fact... there was enjoyment in his eyes now. As if he was only testing out Erebus.

Aken reached up and touched the small droplet of blood that emerged from his mouth. A smirk rose over his lips as he kept an arrogant gaze on Erebus. "Not bad. Someone has gotten stronger... and yet... not strong enough." He flashed into Erebus grabbing onto the man so he couldn't escape. He would show him the real difference in their strengths now and began to beat him mercilessly.

Aken didn't give Erebus a chance to fight back; he just kept the barrage of deadly attacks coming. "You like hitting women? How does it feel to be hit, you sick bastard!" He landed another powerful punch that ended up sending Erebus flying down through the sky almost hitting the ocean below. Aken followed after him but Erebus used this moment to escape. He vanished. Damn. Aken clenched his jaw angrily and shook his head. He was hoping to kill the a*****e right there.

Aken returned to the exposed tower and landed his feet on the ground. He looked at Lucy quietly for a moment. His eyes traveled over her battered body and he walked over to her. She had blood running from the cut on her lip. Her right cheek was red and swollen from where she had been hit. And before he put the shirt over earlier he noticed the deep angry purple and crimson skin around her ribs. He reached his hands out to her and very carefully lifted her body into his. He could feel her body shaking from the pain. As carefully as he could he fully lifted her form into his arms. In another instant, they were surrounded by woods.

"I don't understand... why?" Lucy whispered out as she leaned against the heat of the man's bare chest.

"Alexis..." He whispered out quietly "I can't stand her pain. She is a wreck right now. For her... I would part the seas... I would give her everything. I had to find you."

"He thought that I was Alexis. I didn't tell him. I just let him believe..."

"Shhh shhh shhh. Good girl. You did well." Aken said in a calm soothing tone.

"I had a premonition that he would kill her." Lucy said in a whimper, feeling the muscles of the man tense.

"As long as he thinks you are my mate he won't touch her. I need to make sure I stay away from her and keep her safe from him. And as for you..." Aken said as he effortlessly held Lucy in one hand and used his other to wipe some of the fresh blood from her face. "He won't ever touch you again. Selene has gone to Rogio. He is the deity that protects the vampires and let's just say he is someone you don't want on your

bad side. He has the council in the palm of his hands. Trust me... I know... I angered him once and it got me cursed... Rogio had been sleeping for a while now though so no one has felt his wrath lately. However, Selene has woken him up and his rage will be directed to Erebus. And you will now be under the direct protection of Rogio."

"Why did Selene go to you? And..."

"Well she didn't come out and say it but I know why she came to me and not Leviathan. It is because she is still protective of your aunt. And just in case Erebus got the best of him it would kill your aunt as well. I was the one she deemed an acceptable casualty. Especially since I have been refusing to claim my mate."

"You know she wants you right? She plans to have you one way or another." Lucy took in a calming breath. She was free. She was safe. And having a normal conversation felt incredible. It was helping to keep her thoughts away from what had happened... Aken chuckled. "Yes, I know. I hear her talk sometimes. She comes out and talks to the darkness thinking I can hear her... well I guess she isn't wrong. I watch her often. But I need to keep my distance from her. Even more so now. Right now Erebus thinks you are my mate. I can't have him knowing who my mate really is..." He frowned as he gently eased Lucy back to her feet. "Are you okay?"

Lucy looked up into his green calm eyes. He just had to ask the question that would break her tough exterior. Her eyes began to blur as they filled up with water. As she began to sob quietly he pulled her into his arms patting her back.

"I'm so sorry. Thank you for what you did for Alexis. I'll never forget it ever. Ever." Aken looked up as two people materialized in front of him. His eyes met with the cool blue eyes of the dragon deity.

She felt a hand land on her shoulder and she looked back to see her Uncle Levi. Aken lowered his arms from Lucy.

"Gently with her. She is beaten up pretty good. I think she has a few cracked ribs. He must have been giving her some sort of block."

"Aken... thank you." Levi wrapped his arms around Lucy's trembling shoulders.

"Don't thank me... the bastard managed to escape. But Rogio will be after him now. Selene has seen to that..." Aken looked down at Lucy. "She will be safe from him now. And as long as Erebus thinks she is my mate Alexis will stay safe." Lee nodded his head in understanding. "We need to hunt him down then. Because my daughter needs you."

"She doesn't know what she needs. I'm the one who needs her... but I will protect her. She deserves better than me." Aken sighed. "Take care of her for me."

"Aken wait..." Levi said, causing the man's green eyes to flash up to his.

"I know about the premonition. Even more reason for me to avoid her, especially now. Lucy could have freed herself by saying who her mate was. Erebus would have had no interest in her then. Instead..." Aken squeezed his eyes shut tight and shook his head. He opened his eyes looking at Levi. I don't know what he has done to her. But from the looks of her clothes...

Levi clenched his jaw and squeezed his eyes tight. She was wearing Aken's shirt, it was obvious from the smell and the man's lack of shirt. If that is the case... He couldn't think of what she must have gone through. And he felt guilty because she was protecting his daughter.

"How did you find her?" Levi asked quietly.

"Selene. Apparently, I am more expendable than you are." Aken chuckled. "Get her the medical attention she needs...I'll be around."

"Aken!" Levi shouted but the man had already left. "Damn him..."

"Lucy..." Abaddon whispered as he slid to his knees next to her. He looked down avoiding her eye contact. "I'm so sorry. I couldn't find you. I'm sorry."

She peered away from the chest in front of her to look down at the half-demon. Her servant... and her friend.

"Don't... this isn't your fault." She gave him a weak smile. She could see how exhausted he was. It was obvious they were searching tirelessly for her.

Lee stepped back from her and looked at her face. His eyes flickered darkly as he examined the handprint across her swollen cheek. Her bloodied lip... "I wonder if your grandmother can heal you through this block..."

"If it is blocking her own healing abilities I don't think we can heal her magically at all. The demons used similar blocks against other demons... we have to wait until it drains from her system." Abaddon rose up to his feet. Lucy's eyes looked dark and tired. Her aura was dull and there was a sadness in her eyes.

"Let's get you back," Levi said as he took hold of Lucy.

"Uncle Levi... I can't handle a crowd right now. Honestly... I just want to be alone." Lucy watched as her surroundings changed. She was now in a wide room at a place she recognized.

"It's my pad at the top of the palace. No one will come up here. Okay? Your parents will want to see you. They need to see you, Lucy. And your grandmother is a doctor... so

let's have her take a look at you. And I'll have Derek brought here as well. You both need each other."

She turned to object but Levi was already gone. She held her side and felt Abaddon come next to her, helping support her. He helped her over to a chair and then he grabbed a blanket off the back of the couch. He lowered the blanket over her to help cover her better than the shirt and almost nonexistent dress that clung to her. Then he sat next to her quietly.

She appreciated him. He wasn't trying to talk to her he was just being a comforting presence. Who would have thought that the demon who her aunt killed would end up being the one who was giving her the most comfort right now? Her body hurt all over and was fatigued. And her eyes drooped with exhaustion.

Abaddon felt her head plop onto his arm. He glanced down seeing her closed eyes. His eyes wandered over her bruised face and split lip. He felt liquid flowing from him and he reached up with his other hand in shock. There were tears. It was like the first rain after a drought. His heart was broken and the liquid flowed down in constant streams. For Lucy... he cried.

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 59

The voidless kept marching and marching. The bodies piled up and yet there was no stopping them. The vampires were beginning to tire. It was fatigue that was becoming the real enemy. Derek knew something seemed off but there wasn't time to think as they continued to smash against them.

A blue energy shot over the voidless. And the exhausting battle instantly came to an end. Derek watched as Levi materialized in front of him. This was the strength he was missing. This was the strength that took Lucy. Who could battle against that? What was tiring his army out, Levi instantly combusted them. Damn... deities were scary. "Levi!" Jasper called as he ran over to greet the deity beside Derek. He glanced over at Derek and could see he was anxious as well. If Levi was here that means he had news of Lucy. But he didn't have her with him... Which didn't seem like a good sign. "Thank you. We were starting to wear out." Derek said as he panted to catch his breath. His amber eyes were locked onto Levi studying his face.

"We have her." Levi said quietly.

"You found her! Thank goodness." Jasper sighed and patted Derek's back.

"Aken found her. He saved her." Levi answered quietly while keeping eye contact with Derek.

"Take me to her."

"I will... just..." Levi frowned. "Derek... I want to prepare you."

Derek felt his chest squeeze in pain. And he waited with bated breath for what Levi was going to say. He felt Jasper squeeze his shoulder showing him that he was there for support.

"I don't know what she has been through. But physically she is in bad shape. She has broken ribs, bruising and cuts. She has something in her that won't allow herself to be healed by her magic or any magic. And... I don't know what else he did to her. Aken had to give her his shirt to wear... As her soul mate, you are going to see and know what happened to her. You need to be prepared for what you see... Lucy will need your strength. I've never..." Levi shook his head and closed his eyes at the memory of seeing his niece. "I've never seen her look like that..."

Derek clenched his hands together so tight his knuckles turned white. "What about the man who took her?"

"He got away. But he won't come back for Lucy. Selene has woken up Rogio... Rogio will make sure nothing happens to her or your kind. Erebus will not dare come near you because that is one deity he does fear. He fears his power over the council. Don't worry Derek. I will continue to hunt Erebus down for what he did to Lucy. And Aken will as well. Lucy protected my daughter... if she would have just confessed that she wasn't Aken's mate... But she didn't. I'm sorry Derek. I'm so sorry..." "Derek!" Ryan jogged over from the side. "Has she been found?" He watched him nod his head. "Thank the heavens. I've got things covered here. You and Jasper go." When Derek had ordered the full assault on the witch Ryan took his rightful place as the head of the elite soldiers. And now they had built up a relationship. It was his job to lead the soldiers and they already respected him before thinking he was the prince. It was a bit of an adjustment to realize who is the prince and who is the soldier. But now Derek could take care of what was important.

"I can bring you both back but... Lucy doesn't want to see anyone." Levi said quietly.

"Wait... when you say anyone..." Jasper said, glancing over at Derek.

"As I said... we don't know what she has gone through. But if there is anyone she needs it is Derek. If you are ready to handle that..." Levi met with the amber eyes of the young prince.

"Whatever happened doesn't change anything for me. I'll be there for her and will help her through this. I'll give her the time she needs and just be there for her. This soul bond will really come in handy. She won't be able to hide what she is feeling. I'll be able to give her exactly what she needs."

"It's also why you need to be prepared and careful. Expect the worst. And you know what I mean by that... Your feelings flow through each other. And if you feel like you need to walk away to let your feelings out then do it." Levi watched the calm amber eyes in front of him.

"Levi, whatever happened would never have me thinking anything bad about my Lucy. I may feel like killing someone. But none of that matters. I just want to be near her and smell her. I can't help it though. I'm probably going to bawl like a baby when I see her." Derek rubbed the back of his neck with a small smile. He already felt like crying just in relief hearing they found her. "Ryan... take care of things here. I'm going to Lucy."

"Don't worry. Everything is in good hands." Ryan said as Derek nodded to him appreciatively. He wasn't too worried since Levi had wiped out the voidless army. It would probably be quiet for a while.

"Okay, Levi. Take me to her." Derek said firmly. Instantly Levi had taken them back to the castle. He brought them near the bottom stairs to his upper pad. Standing there was all of the family except for Lilly, Freya and Wyatt.

"Jasper, wait here." Derek said with a small smile.

"Take care of her for me..." Aiden said quietly. He didn't know how she was but for Lucy not to want others around... she must be pretty bad.

Derek nodded his head and Levi immediately transferred him up the stairs.

"I'll be at the bottom waiting with Rhea..." Levi said and left Derek standing in the room. He glanced up to see Abaddon standing there staring at a closed door.

"How is she?" Derek whispered. He was shocked to see Abaddon's red puffy eyes. It was obvious he had been crying. And this made his stomach turn anxiously.

"She's been beaten up pretty bad. She hasn't talked to anyone about what happened... but some of it is obvious." Abaddon shook his head. "She fell asleep on me. She was so exhausted that even when her parents arrived she didn't wake. Her father carried her into the room there. Her grandmother is examining her." He nodded to the door.

"Go and relax. I know you have been searching non-stop for her. I'll handle everything from here. Jasper is downstairs. Why don't you go and stay with him?" Derek watched Abaddon nod his head and turn to leave.

Derek took in a deep breath and slowly pushed the door open. Freya was sitting near a bed while Wyatt had his hand leaning on the wall with his head pressed into it. Lilly was finishing wrapping a bandage around Lucy when she lifted her eyes up to his. He walked in closer and his eyes landed on Lucy.

She laid there in the bed with her eyes closed. Her lip was cut and she had a red swollen mark across her face. Her lower body was covered with a sheet but her arms had bruises of all different shades. From older-looking bruises to fresher colored ones. To the side of the bed, he saw the shredded dress that he last saw her in. He turned his eyes away from it and walked closer to the bed. Lilly immediately got up to make room for him to be closer.

"She has four broken ribs and needs to stay still until she can be healed. When she wakes you'll be able to see what happened through her thoughts. Instead of us talking to her about it you can come out and tell us later. It will be less stressful on her this way." Lilly watched as Derek sat on the bed next to her.

"Wyatt... Freya... why don't you two come back with me. Let's have some tea. You two need to rest as well. There is nothing more to be done here. Let's leave the rest in Derek's hands. He will come and talk with us when things are settled." Lilly understood the soulmate bond. Derek would know everything and he would know exactly what Lucy needed. And they couldn't help her more than he could.

Wyatt looked at Lucy, his eyes full of pain. He was also struggling with not being strong enough to rescue his own daughter. It made all of them realize that no matter how powerful they were there was another level of strength above them. He felt Freya's warm hand intertwined with his and she nodded at him in understanding. Slowly he allowed her to lead him out of the room.

The door shut leaving Derek alone with Lucy. He shifted slowly in the bed so that he could lie next to her. He just laid there staring at her. He missed her so much. His sweet precious little mate. He felt his eyes burning as hot liquid began to seep from his eyes. The tears kept coming as he looked at her. Deep down he was terrified he would never see her again. And seeing her now flooded all of the weeks of worry out of him.

He reached his hand up and smoothed her hair back from her face. His fingers ever so slightly brushed against her face and he felt the surging tingles rush from the contact. Lucy had felt it too because her eyes fluttered open.

Green stared into amber. No word. Just silence. Their lives, their hurt, their pain... their everything flashed between them. She knew his pain and his worries. He knew hers. He saw her memories and how she was beaten. How she fought and how Erebus forced his kisses on her. But that was all he had forced on her. He didn't take her completely. And yet he could feel how Lucy still felt tainted because of it. Instantly they knew it all. And they knew how the other felt about it. Absurdity from both ends. Lucy didn't blame Derek and Derek didn't think any less of Lucy. They both wanted the other completely.

"I love you, my little mate." Derek brushed his thumb against her cheek. "Everyone is here. They are all worried about you."

Lucy reached her hand up and met with his hand. Their fingers tangled together and she closed her eyes enjoying the touch of her mate. "I didn't know if I would ever see you again."

Derek squeezed her hand and breathed in deeply. He understood her feelings there. He had also felt them.

"I would kill for a shower." Lucy said with a chuckle.

"Sorry baby. I'll get a washcloth and wash you but you need to stay still. You have four broken ribs." Derek felt his heart sting. His sweet Lucy had endured so much. A smirk played across his lips as Lucy's thoughts entered into his mind. "Don't even you little temptress. Strictly a pure wholesome sponge bath. That's it. But once you are healed... I plan to make sure I mark every single part of your body. Leaving my scent on every inch of your skin."

He watched her close her eyes as she rested quietly. He scooted into her more and leaned his head against hers. He kept a hold of her hand with their fingers interlaced together. This was enough. They both just needed to be near the other. All their worries and concerns instantly vanished. They could see exactly how their mate felt. They needed this quiet moment together. Breathing in one another's scent and feeling the other's touch. Something so simple and yet so powerful.

Derek leaned up and brushed his lips over her forehead before leaning it back into her to watch her face. He felt as her body drifted back into unconsciousness. His eyes watered as the flood gates released. All of his emotions flowed out of him as he watched over her. And for the first time since Lucy had been taken he also felt relaxed. He had been tirelessly fighting and hardly sleeping. So with his head against hers, their fingers intertwined they both slept. Two halved souls... finally reunited.

The Vampires Promised Bride Chapter 60

Derek opened his eyes to see Lucy still peacefully resting. His eyes wandered over her swollen face and he felt his chest tightening. She had endured so much. He wished there was a way he could take it on himself. Let him take the pain and the wounds. If only the soul mate bond would allow such a thing. He would do it in a heartbeat. He stayed there watching her for a few more moments before he eased himself away, crept to the door, and shut it quietly behind him. "Aba." Derek said quietly.

"I'm here." Abaddon said as he materialized in front of him.

"I want you to watch over her in case she wakes up. I'm going to go and talk with her family. I'm sure they are anxiously waiting to hear how she is. If she wakes, come and get me immediately." Derek watched Abaddon nod his head. "Thank you, Aba... for

going above and beyond trying to locate her." He smiled at Abaddon and walked past him patting the man on his shoulder. A simple gesture but spoke volumes between both men.

Derek made his way down the winding stairs and back to the main floor. His eyes widened in surprise, shocked to see all of her family sitting there waiting. The younger generation took to the floor on bean bags and blankets. While chairs were brought in for everyone else. Everyone was waiting for him to tell them about Lucy. They did even want to leave the lower door because of their concern for Lucy. A smile crept over his face. They all loved his little mate so much.

Jasper jumped to his feet followed by Aiden and Justice. Wyatt and Freya also stood up and stepped closer to Derek. Everyone was quiet and was waiting anxiously to hear his report.

"She's resting again." Derek said softly. He sighed and rubbed the back of his neck. He had seen Lucy's memories and it made him nauseous having to recall them. Better him though than Lucy.

"He had been forcing her to ingest a magic blocker. And when she fought against him or was disobedient he punished her. His punishments mainly consisted of hitting her and choking her. He was trying to condition her... He did force his lips on her as well..." Derek shook his head as he breathed out angrily. "But thankfully he was so conceited that he didn't force it more than that. He expected her to want him and was waiting for that. She stayed defiant and spirited though. All the way up to the moment Aken rescued her." Derek watched as Alexis' lips quivered and she turned into Raine. Her mate had saved Lucy. He risked his own self to save her cousin and all because he knew Alexis was hurting. And Lucy endured all of that just for her. Derek was sure that this was emotional for Alexis in more ways than one. Especially since Aken had stressed again he would be avoiding her.

"She's okay though. Besides her physical wounds... surprisingly her mental state seems much better. In fact, it felt the same... at least as of now. The moment everything flowed between us she was okay. She's strong... stronger than me." Derek said with a quiet sob. To see everything she went through and he couldn't have done a thing about it. Even if he was there he wasn't strong enough to save her. The punishment his sweet mate took... it was senseless and cruel. And seeing her memories of what happened... they hurt him. And now that he was away from Lucy he was letting some of that pain out.

Jasper walked up to Derek and clutched the back of his head. He leaned his forehead into him and they just stood there quietly like that.

Cody pulled Kelsie into his chest as other couples quietly held their partners close. Freya leaned into Wyatt and quietly cried. Jin also wept into Jason's chest while Rhea stood there with Lee holding her close. Lilly and Tyler stood next to each other holding

hands. There was a wide range of emotions. Relief and anger being the primary ones. They were all worried about how Lucy would be affected after what happened. No one knew exactly what she had been through and how she would handle it.

Brian, Aiden, Micah and Justice were angry. They didn't like the idea of having to wait until this Erebus was caught. They all wanted to see the man dead now.

"I know there is a lot of anger about what happened to Lucy. But we must leave that up to Levi and the other deities." Titus finally spoke slowly but with a deep resonating belief. "But there is something that the dragons can focus on now. And that is this witch. I will be heading up a small group and going to search for her. I will also have Brian leading another group. I know he has some pent-up frustration to let out."

"Hell yeah I do," Brian growled.

"You wolves continue to stay out of this fight. Our family has had enough pain these past two weeks. We won't risk anymore by something happening to any of you." Titus looked over at Wyatt. "I'll send Reese and a couple of others to the Diamond pack for now... so please stay here while Lucy is recovering."

Wyatt didn't put up a fight. Reese was a strong dragon and right now he couldn't leave his daughter already. Not yet, not after everything that had happened. "Yes... we will stay here." He felt Freya nod her head against his side. She didn't want to leave Lucy either. "One more thing. It seems Erebus plans to claim the witch's soul after her death. We are going to have to think about how we wish to handle pursuing her..." Derek looked at the nods in the room.

"Well, we at least need to capture her by any means necessary. We can't have another threat on the loose." Wyatt sighed this was something else they would have to think about.

"I want to see her," Aiden whispered out looking up at Derek.

Derek nodded his head. He knew everyone wanted to see and talk with her. "I'll talk with her and I'll let you know when she is ready. We could use some button-up shirts for now while she is still mending. As well as some other clothes so I can get her cleaned up. How long will it take for her to regain her healing or for someone to be able to heal her?"

"I tried to heal her and it wouldn't work at all. I honestly don't know. But we will keep trying. My best guess is it should only take a couple of days. But Abaddon would probably have more experience with this stuff than me." Lilly admitted. It was weird referring to the half-demon and even depending on him for information. But she had seen the difference and this Abaddon was not the same. This was not the demon that had hunted the fairy princesses. And after seeing his back story she actually felt sorry for him. "I want to get back to her before she wakes up... Jasper... for now you can stay here. I know you want to be able to see her too. In a few days though I would like for

you to return to head up the vampires in battle and the search for the witch." Derek watched as Jasper nodded his head in understanding.

"In a few days, he won't need to be in battle. I'll have that witch's army burnt to ashes and have her captured." Brian snorted with a smirk.

"I hope you do." Derek said with a tired smile as he turned to head back up the stairs. Upon entering the room again he saw Abaddon sitting next to the bed watching over Lucy who stirred. Her eyes opened and she glanced around the room. Derek quickly made his way over to her. "Is there anything I can get for you?" Abaddon asked, wanting to be of some assistance.

"Food." Lucy said with a smile. "I'm starving."

Derek chuckled and brushed her hair back from her cheek with the back of his hand. The satisfying sparks and tingles surged through him. He had really missed that feeling. "Food sounds incredible. Everyone is wanting to see you whenever you are ready that is." "I'll see anyone who gets me out of bed rest." Lucy said with a cheesy smile that both Derek and Abaddon were not amused by.

"Sorry, Lucy. You have to heal the human way for now." Derek grinned as he listened to her aggravated thoughts.

"I'll bring up some food and fresh clothes." Abaddon lowered his head in a slight bow before he vanished from the room.

"It feels so weird not having my powers. I can't even shift right now." Lucy said with a pout.

"It will be good for you to rest and take things slow for a couple of days. And I will be right here by your side. I promise." Derek eased onto the bed next to her and helped adjust her upwards into his chest.

"Don't do this Derek, please. There is nothing you could have done. And if anything you could have gotten killed. I'm not glass. I'm okay. I'm angry and frustrated that a deity can be that powerful. But I'm okay. We are okay." Lucy whispered as she played with Derek's fingers. She could feel his protective vibe seeping into her. He was going overboard with it. Thinking he would never leave her side. It wasn't practical. Though for now having him constantly next to her was exactly what she wanted. It was what they both wanted and needed.

"I can't ever lose you, Lucy. I can't live without you. I won't live without you."

"I need you too." Lucy felt him lift her hand up to his mouth. He planted delicate feather-like kisses over her fingertips. "You know I have been moving around just fine even with broken ribs. I don't need to lay in bed."

"Nice try, little mate. But it isn't going to happen. Besides, you have an army of family members down there that will kill me if I let you up to walk around." Derek chuckled. "You have an amazing family Lucy. They are all just sitting at the bottom of the stairs. All of them. Just waiting to hear how you are doing. They are all here for you. They love you."

"I know." Lucy smiled. "They really are the best. After I get cleaned up they can come up. I'd at least like to get this dried blood off of me. And to have clothes on. Besides... I have something I want to give Alexis." She looked up at Derek and he chuckled slightly already knowing. That soulmate bond was simply amazing.

"Here are your clothes." Abaddon said, appearing in the room. "And they are having dinner prepared for the two of you."

"Tell them to have a family dinner prepared. I'd like to eat dinner with everyone." Lucy said and watched as Abaddon's eyes lit up.

"They will be very happy to hear this. I'll let them know."

"That includes you too, Aba." Lucy watched as his eyes flickered slightly. They appeared to have watered but that quickly it was hidden. He nodded his head with a smile.

"Aba. I'm going to be getting Lucy cleaned up. So if you need us make sure to use the door." Derek winked at him and Abaddon chuckled, nodding his head before flashing out again.

"Are you sure you are up for everyone at the same time?" Derek asked.

"Yes. It will be nice for everything to feel normal." Lucy sighed and looked at herself. "I really want a bath bath."

"I know you do. Let's start with this for now okay? You'll be healed in no time and will be able to get that bath you are dreaming about. I'm feeling a little bit jealous. I think you missed the bathtub more than you missed me."

Lucy giggled and winced. "Don't make me laugh."

Derek leaned forward and kissed her forehead. "I'll be right back."

Derek brought back a basin with water and sat it near the side of the bed. He pulled the sheet down from her and unbuttoned the shirt her father had left for her when Lilly was tending to her wounds. He sucked in air through his teeth as he looked her body over. His eyes met with hers and began to water again. His poor little mate.

