

The Dragon's Fated Bride Chapter 7 - IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE - PART 1

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She soon regretted her decision. When Faye opened the door, she was snatched from the carriage by several scaly red hands with enormous claws.

2

Trembling with fear as she tried to fight off the beasts, Faye shrieked in terror.

"STERLING!!!!!! PLEASE—HELP ME!!!!!"

There was a sinking feeling in her stomach. Faye cried out once more for the Duke's help as she realized the gravity of her situation. The monstrous creatures easily overpowered her fragile body with their immense strength.

When she tried to scream again, she felt her lungs seize, gasping for air as the fear of being attacked by the demons took over. Faye struggled to inhale, feeling as though an unseen force was squeezing the air from her body and causing her chest to ache. The sensation made it feel like her lungs were burning.

2

The coven of demons snatched Faye away from the safety of the carriage and the Duke's guards. They dragged her through the dense, thorny vines of the Terrewell thicket. The jagged branches of the gnarled trees clawed at her dress. Faye's skin stung as the prickly thorns pierced her flesh, drawing blood that dripped down her arms and legs.

1

The sound of her labored wheezing and the knights calling out her name resonated through the silence of the thick forest. The lack of oxygen to her body left Faye weakened and unable to answer their calls. It was hopeless. A pungent smell of decayed leaves and rot filled her nostrils as the horde carried her deeper into the heart of the woods.

Her vision blurred, and the world around Faye seemed to spin out of control. The pain and terror caused her body to go limp as she lost consciousness, succumbing to the darkness when it enveloped her.

1

It had been several hours since the horde's attack. The sun was setting, and darkness descended in the Terrewell thicket. Sterling tracked the Osvol deep inside the forest that seemed to go on forever. The Duke's mind raced as he envisioned the gruesome fate that awaited Faye if he failed to reach her in time.

1

However, he was lucky that the primordial demonic creatures were ignorant and didn't bother to cover their tracks. Their footprints were like following bread crumbs.

Upon hearing the rustling of leaves, Sterling halted his movement. He crouched low to the ground, trying to avoid detection. There was a clear view through the brambles. He could see the demons gathered around something on the ground. Upon further inspection, he discovered it was Faye. Her unconscious body did not move.

Sterling perceived a sense of frustration among the red scaly beasts that hovered over his stolen bride. He observed as one of them reached out to touch her and was repelled by some invisible force. It was so powerful that it threw the creature ten feet back. Sterling watched as its body smashed into an enormous tree on the opposite side of the clearing.

9

The surrounding woods were quickly becoming dark. There was little time to waste, the sunlight would soon be gone, and there were worse things in the thicket than Osvol's.

Sterling untied his cloak and let it slide from his shoulders. He expertly unsheathed his sword in a stealthy motion so as not to alert the monsters to his presence. Then, in less than a blink of an eye, Sterling advanced forward into the center of the clearing.

The forest was faintly lit, and the small horde of Osvol's had no chance against Sterling's blade aura. As he swung his massive fiery blade, a bright-red glow illuminated the area around them. The sound of his swift movements carried through the trees, and the demons hissed and screeched in terror at the sight of him. They lashed out to attack the Duke with their razor-sharp claws, only to meet their demise at the end of his deadly sword.

The smell of burning flesh filled the air as his blade sliced effortlessly through the beastly creatures, leaving behind a trail of smoke and ashes. With each swing, Sterling's blade created a heated burst of wind that brushed against Faye's skin, causing her eyes to flit open and see what was occurring before her. She watched while the demons fell around them one after another with ear-splitting shrieks.

As Sterling clashed with the Osvol, Faye lay unmoved on the ground, fighting for her life. Her lungs felt like fire with each excruciating inhale, as though she were gasping for air underwater. Faye's palms ached painfully from where she had tightly clenched her hands. The fingernails digging into the soft flesh made her bleed.

1

Her body felt frigid, coated in the gritty residue of blood, dirt, and cold sweat. She strained her bleary eyes toward the towering knight, watching as he whirled his blade and sliced the monsters in half. The metallic tang of blood filled her nostrils, mingling with the acrid scent of smoke and charred flesh.

2

The fight ended before it ever began.

2

Once the fray with the demons settled and there was an assurance they were no longer in danger, Sterling rushed to Faye's side and knelt before her. He reached out to touch her and felt the unusually intense energy that was like a protective barrier.

He noticed her ghostly complexion and the frailty of her body. The putrid stench of sickness and sweat emanated from her, causing his nose to wrinkle in disgust.

As he surveyed her deplorable state, his eyebrows furrowed, creating deep creases on his forehead. The silence was only broken by the sound of her wheezing, which seemed to get worse with each passing moment. His heart strangely sank at the sight before him, and a confused sense of sadness washed over Sterling. He did not understand why he should feel sorry for this pitiful girl before him.

4

When his moody gaze met her soft blue eyes, he felt the tension from the barrier drop. He bent closer and asked,

3

"Can you speak?"

A small shake of her head conveyed her inability to do so.

After she answered him, Sterling glared down at her in ire.

"I can't believe you disobeyed me, my little elusive butterfly. I thought I told you it was too dangerous and to stay in the carriage. Now, look around at the trouble you have caused."

1

Faye's mouth dropped open. She was shocked by his indignant chiding. Here she was dying before his eyes and he was not worried for her at all. The man's frosty and detached attitude made it feel like he was doing everything possible to make her miserable and push her away. Faye feared that the unsaid rift between them would never be mended.

1

She observed Sterling's armor as he leaned closer to gather her in his arms. That was when her tired eyes fell on the ornate design etched into his breastplate. She was well acquainted with the engraving.

It was the same image she saw the day her father was murdered before her and her mother by another Paladin from a strange land.

5

Faye's entire body shook, and her eyes widened. She was in disbelief as she desperately tried to protest Sterling touching her. She attempted to move away from the powerful knight that was about to clasp her in his arms.

She stammered through her wheezes a few incoherent words.

"I-I-I w-w y..."

The strain of what she was seeing and her current condition was more than Faye could take. Her body gave in and collapsed, and her mind lapsed into unconsciousness without Faye speaking another word.

2

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A/N: Hi readers! Are you enjoying this story? If so, please help the author during the contest this month. Leave reviews, comments and power stone votes to let others know about this awesome new novel.

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