

## **The Dragon's Fated Bride Chapter 8 - IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE - PART 2**

### **Chapter 8: IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE - PART 2**

Terrewell thicket had gone dark, the sun was now below the horizon.

Wind pushed the leaves over the forest floor, making a rustling noise, and the sound of crickets chirping filled the night air. Stirling could smell the musty scent of damp earth mixed with the sweet fragrance of pine tar. There was a cool breeze blowing and rain drizzled, sending a chill through his body.

It was time to leave this place quickly. The Duke could see Faye was ill and in shock. Not to mention she was not dressed for this environment. The elements in the thicket were unforgiving and would kill her quickly.

Sterling's glowing red eyes surveyed the surrounding area, taking in the dense forest and rugged terrain ahead. He worried that there would be more monster attacks before he could get them out of this godforsaken place. He wrapped Faye's icy, unconscious body in his cloak as he prepared to carry her from the woods.

4

Taking a deep breath, Sterling prepared himself for the weight of Faye's body in his arms. As he lifted her, he was surprised by how light she felt, almost like a feather. He couldn't help but notice the strange energy that surrounded her, repelling him like an invisible force field. It gave off a warm electric-like tingling through Sterling's arms as he clutched her closer to him.

Despite the strange energy surrounding Faye, Sterling felt a sense of calm wash over him as he gripped her tightly. It was as if the force field was protecting her and him, cocooning them in a warm, safe embrace. He couldn't help but feel grateful for this odd power, although it felt weird to hold her and keep her safe. He still could not rationalize why he was saving this weak, pitiful creature. If he had any sense, he would just leave her to die.

6

He moved forward and backtracked, using his footprints to find where his horse and men were waiting. Even on the main road, things were still not safe at night. The Duke did not like leaving his men to fight on their own if there was an attack.

With each step he took, he could feel his boots sink into the damp earth beneath his feet, reminding him of the recent rainfall. The wind increased, and the light drizzle from earlier turned to a torrential downpour.

It was becoming more difficult to see his tracks as the water washed them away. For a moment, Sterling thought he might have lost his way until he heard one of his men's hearty laugh. He could see the lights of carriage lamps. They were lit, their incandescent glow leading him closer to the road and his entourage.

2

As he pushed forward step by step through the tangled vines and thorny brambles of the thicket that raked at his armor, his keen sense of awareness warned him something was following behind them, tracking them like prey.

A low, guttural growl pierced the silence, causing the Duke's keen eyes to snap toward the sound. There it was, a Girox, a repugnant goblin, slimy and gray-skinned. Its glowing green eyes barely hid beneath a tangled mop of dirty wet hair that fell over its forehead. The stench of rot and decay emanated from the beast, making the Duke's nostrils flare in disgust. He could feel the hair on the back of his neck stand on end as he felt the Girox's sinister aura.

4

Before Sterling could place Faye on the ground and draw his sword, the Girox clumsily lumbered forward and began its attack. The monstrous beast raised its gnarled boney fist and flung it toward the Duke.

However, they both got an unexpected surprise. Sterling had braced himself in anticipation of being struck, but the impact never came, and he watched as the filthy Girox was thrown backward in the wood's darkness when his fist connected with the barrier that Faye was emitting.

2

The beast shook its head and regained its footing, and once more launched to attack. It met the resistance of the invisible barrier again. Sterling laughed at the unforeseen turn of events. He looked down at Faye, still unconscious in his powerful embrace.

"I don't understand what this is, but thank you."

Looking over his shoulder, Sterling could see the Girox's eerie, luminous green eyes gazing at him in puzzlement. The beast bared its jagged teeth and furiously roared.

2

Sterling muttered as he smirked at the demon.

"Stupid beast, you've done it now."

There was a loud sound of men shouting and swords leaving their scabbards as the hills around the Duke and Faye were overrun with paladins. They bore down on the Girox, and Sterling watched as one man easily sliced through the shoulder of the monster, causing it to shriek in pain. Then another came from behind and cleaved the head of the beast. It hit the forest floor and rolled to a stop at Sterling's feet. A black substance oozed from the severed head, and he quickly backed away from it. The blood from the Girox was toxic and would cause hallucinations and death.

He chuckled at the sight of the dead creature. It was a miracle that he and Faye had not been seriously injured or killed by the filthy beast. Although, there was not a lot that could harm Sterling. He had a few secret abilities of his own. He smirked as he inwardly pondered that maybe one day, he would show Faye his special powers. His grin widened as he imagined her startled expression when she found out.

4

Maybe being married to this petite waif in his arms would not be so bad after all.

3

The group of men hurriedly made their way toward their commander, their footsteps thudding against the hard ground. Each of their faces was lit up with delight as they caught sight of him returning with his wife in tow.

However, there was still an uneasy silence, As Sterling cradled his wife's unresponsive body in his arms. Despite the joyous moment, there was an unspoken tension, as if something was amiss.

3

Sterling addressed his men.

"Do not touch us. It will not be a pleasant experience if you do. Now, someone go find Merrick."

No one questioned his command. The man backed away from his gruff warning and went in search of the knight named Merrick.

The\_Sweet\_Sparrow

Your gift is the motivation for my creation. Give me more motivation!

Thank you for all the reads and power stone votes!