

## Too good for the Troll Pt. 1

Lexi couldn't stop herself for telling Chase she was falling for him. I about fell over when Chase said he loved me. He loved me? For a very long time I thought those words were a lie, but when I looked in Chase's eyes; I couldn't deny his honesty. He did love me. I let those feelings wash over me. I searched myself. I loved him too, but I couldn't say it to him. Not yet. This was happening so fast. I needed a second before I could admit those words to him. It was silly, but somehow holding onto those words made me feel like he couldn't break me. It was an illusion, and I knew that. Chase Daniels had the ability to destroy me. The sincerity in Chase's voice when he told me I didn't need to be ready to say I love you back to him made the last bit of rubble from my walls that he'd broken down evaporate. Noah had gotten really mad when I wasn't ready to drop the love bomb. He didn't talk to me for a week until I went to him begging for him to talk to me. I told him I did love him. Then everything went back to normal for us. He was back to the kind loving Noah. I was starting to realize Noah's love had been conditional all along. He'd conditioned me. ASS! I told Chase I was scared. I was more scared than I'd ever been in my whole life. If Chase hurt me, I'd never climb out of that hole. Chase tucked my hair behind my ear and promised he'd never hurt me or let anyone else hurt me. My stomach dropped and I realized something. Chase was going to go after the group that had stabbed me. That meant Heath and Chase would meet. Heath would deal with Noah rst, and lock his family down. Then he'd go after the people that did this. Heath was angry, and I was hurt. That was not a good combination. Plus, Sally was hurt. It wasn't going to end well for the person who did this.

Chase said he was going to kill Noah, but Matt held him back. Part of me wished Matt hadn't done that, but it wasn't Noah's time, yet I supposed. His time was rapidly approaching if Bjourn agreed the tape was Noah causing a problem. If Haley got to Noah rst.... I shivered. Noah would be in for it. Haley might just give Noah to Bjourn to mess with rst. Bjourn was renowned for his skills at torturing people. Even if Bjourn disagreed, Noah's actions were leading towards his death unless he did a quick turnaround. We walked to my car together holding hands. I could tell we were being followed. Heath was very predictable when it came to me. I started the process of shaking our tail. I'd lost them well before Heath called. He got mad, but I knew and so did he that's exactly what I was going to do when he told them to follow me. Heath threatened to lock me up for the rest of the year. I laughed because I knew Heath wouldn't really do that. I looked over and Chase and he'd gone rigid. His eyes were closed, and his face was contorted in pain. I quickly ended the call so I could tell Chase that wouldn't actually happen. He released a threatening growl, but I wasn't worried. It wasn't directed at me. I quickly explained Heath was just upset. He was levelheaded when it came to everything and everyone except me. Me, he loses his head about especially when I get hurt. I don't get mad because once I gave him cause to worry. When I was on drugs, he was worried, and I'd shut him out. I couldn't fault him for being a little crazy about me. I'd started the trend. Maybe he would've been like this anyway, but we'd never know.

I parked at my house and Chase and I walked inside. I'd decided to cook a meal that a French chef taught me how to make. It was simple, but it was delicious. I loved cooking beside him. I had to correct him a few times, but I caught the glint in his eyes. I turned back to hide my smile. He was doing it on purpose, so I'd correct him. I had to smile to myself that he'd offered to help. Noah would just go turn on the TV and leave me to the cooking part of our dates. Once I'd put the chicken in the oven, he was on me. I had to smile. He didn't like that I got hurt. I can't say I enjoyed getting stabbed, but if I had to do it over again; I'd do the same thing. He wanted me to promise and I wouldn't do that. He set me on the counter and sparks erupted all over my body as he began lightly touching me with his ngertips. I grabbed onto him as he made me come. He still kept trying me to say I wouldn't get hurt. I couldn't promise that. I wouldn't lie to Chase, sometimes getting hurt came with who I was. He picked me up and put me on the barstool. He wanted another quickie. I was more than happy to oblige him. I needed this. The feel of us. It was addicting; it was every piece of my journey falling into place. Chase made everything worth it. Every lie, every hurt, all my past pain faded as I looked into his eyes. I wanted to mark him, and I almost did. Then I decided I wanted to do that together, and I wasn't ready for him to mark me.

When we were done, I rested my head on his shoulder for a second before our food was ready. I told Chase where the plates were, and he came over to give them to me so I could divvy up our portions of food. We talked about a lot of things. I found out I was addicted to the way his eyes crinkled in the corner when he laughed. I loved the spark in his eye when he talked about his family. I knew one day he'd have that look about our family. I made a mental note to check my drop box. My next three months of birth control would be in there from the healer in the shroud. I couldn't hide my smile when Chase said he was going to stay the night here. I was so happy he wanted to be here even when I wasn't. I was hoping I could sneak over here back when Sally and Ted passed out. In fact, I was positive that I could. I had to laugh at Chase's expression of surprise about me drinking them under the table. Of course I could drink more than Sally and Ted. It was a skill necessary in the eld sometimes. Both were actually decent at holding their liquor though. Chase took my hand and led me through the barrier. Kincade and Kevin were waiting. I saw Matt waiting in the distance and gave him a little wave. He nodded back to me, then basically told Chase to move his ass. I bit back my laugh. Leaving Ted made Matt very cranky. I told Chase I'd drunk text him later. The sparkle in his eyes, that was at this point practically my own personal drug, made me smile as he laughed. He was looking forward to my texts.

I turned to Kevin and Kincade. "I've got a few calls to make. I need to get pizza and other things." Both nodded and I walked back inside. I smiled when I saw Haley standing in the kitchen. Haley said, "So... who's the guy?" I laughed, "He's interesting. I think I really like him, so ... for now let's call him a good friend." Haley laughed, "Lexi has a secret lover. I like it. Good for you!" I glanced out my door. Kincade and Kevin were gone. I smiled. They'd heard her pop in. Haley said, "Can I join our get drunk and talk about what an ass the troll is party? I'll have to pop in and out, but I still want to come." I laughed, "Of course you can. I was about to order pizza. We need comfort food." Haley snapped twenty pizza boxes from her favorite place in Chicago. There was ice cream, wine, liquor, and a smattering of chocolate. I laughed, "What's all this?" Haley said, "Google said for a breakup we need ice cream, alcohol, and chocolate. We need dancing music for our dance party. We are all going to get dressed up and send Noah a picture of Sally so he can see what he's missing. Then we have a dance party while drinking. Then we move on to comfy clothes and talk s\*\*t on him and watch movies. Google listed all the steps for getting over someone with girlfriends." I bit my lip. "Of course it did." Haley nodded and closed her eyes. I laughed, "Did you just conjure it to Ted's house?" Before she could answer my phone rang. It was Ted. I opened my phone, "You had fairy help. This is like an entire bar and ice cream shop." I laughed, "Google listed out steps for how to get over a breakup." Haley nodded in armation. Ted laughed, "Oh girl, you have to love our literal fairy princess. Can either of you get into my house?" I said, "Haley can. She created it. Me you'll have to invite in." Ted said, "Well get over here!"

I turned to Haley, "I have to get something out of my car, then I'll be ready to go." Haley nodded and I ran outside. I grabbed a piece of paper and wrote down a note for Kevin and Kincade with the address of Ted's house. I grabbed a jacket out of my car and put the note under the windshield wiper. I hoped they didn't get in trouble. I ran back inside, and Haley laughed. "I could've snapped you a jacket silly! Or I could've conjured it." I smirked. "True. I'm not a fairy though so running to get stuff is not a big deal for me." Haley nodded and grabbed me. We popped outside Ted's house. He reached a handout and dragged me through, and Haley followed. Sally's eyes were red from crying and Haley spoke in faelish. Sally's eyes were no longer rimmed red or puffy. Sally touched her face. "Thanks Haley." Haley smiled, "Anytime. Gunner is working away, but while he does that. We are going to get you over the f\*\*\*\*g troll." Sally laughed, "Bring it on. I'm ready to move on." We all walked in the house together. Haley went over the alcohol then snapped eight shots. Sally laughed. Haley said, "These are jolly rancher shots. We each take two, and then I have to go back to my house for a bit until the triplets go down. I WILL be back for pizza though. It will stay warm until I get back. Fairy charm." We all laughed and took two shots each. Haley said, "Enjoy! The Ice cream is charmed not to melt. I didn't know what avor everyone liked. There is a brand that's wine avored... so that seemed really f\*\*\*\*g awesome. Be back later!" She popped out. Ted laughed, "What else did google tell her?"

I laughed, "That we needed to dance while dressed up. Send Noah a picture of Sally all dressed up to see what he's missing. Then we get in comfy clothes, talk s\*\*t on him, watch movies and get drunk. Ironically, she's the one who can't get drunk, but I imagine she will get as close as she can." Sally said, "I'm in for that entire plan." Ted poured us more shots. He raised a glass, "To fairy's nding google, and us getting pizza that never gets cold, unmeltable ice cream, and basically an entire bar of liquor." We all laughed and down our shots. We all jumped when a card game appeared with a note. Sally walked over and read aloud

Hey guys,

1. Winner of the round: Prank call the Troll (yes, I realize this will blow up his messages. He f\*\*\*\*g deserves it.) Phone on the counter to use. It's untraceable with a voice distorter. I'm not even remotely f\*\*\*\*g sorry.
2. Second Place: Pick a tree inside the barrier. Shoot an arrow at Noah's face. (I already got a giant picture of him ready for practice. It's on the deck)
3. Third place: You have to run around the outside of the house in your underwear screaming THE TROLL IS NOT WORTHY OF SALLY f\*\*\*\*g QUAID

I mean... my rules are just better.

Haley

Ted was on the oor laughing. "She... has a picture... of him... to shoot.... Arrows at. I love her. We are going to have to warn the wolves. An arrow can get through the barrier."

I laughed and ran outside. "Hey guys. Haley left for the time being. Can you come out?" Six people came out and bowed their heads to me. "Luna." I sighed, "Yes, we are going with Lexi not Luna. Can you all introduce yourselves? We didn't get to meet earlier." Everyone smiled. Ted and Sally came out and joined me. Kevin spoke, "Hello Beta Male Ted and Sally. We are Lexi's guards. I'm Kevin and this is my brother Kincade." I smiled at them. Ted snorted, "Ted or TeleTed will work. That goes for all of you." The next two guards stepped up. A woman spoke, "I'm Joanie. I'm one of TeleTed's, which is the best name ever, guards." Ted quirked an eyebrow. "I've heard your name before. I think we will get along just ne." Joanie smiled. I said, "You've heard her name before? What's that story?" I told him. Ted laughed, "She's a potential co-parent with my Matt and me. She's his rst choice." He clapped a hand over his mouth. "Well damn. Those shots went straight for the barely existent iter I have. Please dear goddess tell me Matt talked to you before I blabbed." I laughed. Joanie smiled, "He did. He'd like for us to get to know each other better." Ted smiled, "Well...I can manage that. I already like you. She's gorgeous, isn't she? Matt calls them pups. He and her would make a cute adorable little pup. Don't you think?" I laughed, "You would think this means he has no alcohol tolerance. I assure you this is just Ted. Continuing on." Sally was giggling. The male guard spoke, "I'm Mark. I'm also Bet...TeleTed's guard." Ted said, "Good man." Two more women stepped up. Sally gasped, "You.... you stopped Noah from grabbing me. You bumped into him by accident." The woman laughed, "It was no accident. I apologize we were not in time to stop the incident that occurred today. I am your guard Sally. My name's Willow." Sally had tears in her eyes. "I really have a guard?" Another woman stepped forward, "You do. Handpicked by my brother. I'm Opal. Gamma Derrick is my brother." Ted said, "My pal Derrick picked you guys out?" Opal and Willow nodded. Opal said, "He linked me before I showed up that I had a guard duty. He told me it would mean a lot to him if I accepted." I raised an eyebrow then shrugged, "I haven't met Derrick yet."

Ted laughed, "Oh he's great! We had ourselves a chat. He even sent me on a recon mission with cookies. I got the deeds. It was invigorating! He says I have the gift of gab and making people gab." Sally laughed, "You do. That's very true. I can't believe Alpha Chase already got me guards. I want someone to love me like that Lexi, the way he loves you." I said, "Someone will love you like that. You're going to get snatched up." Ted cleared his throat and gestured. I said, "Oh... right. We came out here to tell you we will be shooting arrows at a target. We might miss it. So... You should stay on the east side." Joanie laughed, "You can shoot?" Ted said, "Not a lick." Sally said, "I'm alright." I just shrugged. Mark said, "Oh boy. This is going to be interesting. We can hear you all when you're outside, but not inside. We can't see input arrows could just appear out of thin air, going around." I laughed. Ted did too. Sally smiled, "We will try our best not to disturb you guys." Opal laughed, "Disturb away. Seems like we are in for an interesting ride with this assignment." We went back inside and closed the door. My phone rang. It was Heath. I groaned, "Hello big brother. I feel like we've talked a lot today." Heath's voice was hard, "Get to our place. Now Lexi." I sighed, "Alright." I hung up. Ted frowned, "He sounded more pissed off than usual." I sighed, "Who knows? He did see me stabbed today. Start the game. I'll catch up when I'm back." Sally laughed, "Heck no! Heath said love a movie and drink some...." she walked over the stash of alcohol. She squealed, "I LOVE this wine!" I laughed, "Rose. Good choice." Sally said, "We will crack this open, and wait for you to play the game."

opened the back door and took off. I found Heath at our place. He hung up his phone. "Did you know Haley protected our presence here as she did in your house?" Heath asked me. I nodded, "Yes." Heath said, "Alright, would've saved me a call. I think I'm growing on her, deep down. Tell me what happened with you and Noah." I took a step back. "Heath... I..." Heath said, "No, I've let this go long enough. Tell me what happened. It's obviously more than what I thought. I thought you needed to heal and be away from seeing Noah and Sally together." I said, "No... that wasn't it. Heath, he's your best friend and lieutenant. Heath said, "He's no longer my lieutenant. I stripped him of the title when we got home. I can't have a gambler looking at our nances. I can't trust him when he hid this from me." I gaped, "What?" Heath leveled me with a look, "You heard me. TELL ME what happened Lexi. Why did you run from your home?" I said, "I didn't run from home. Don't make it sound like I ran away. I did a ton of missions for OUR home and people." Heath said, "Yes you did run. You went to the Hackura realm. You didn't even come back to tell me you were taking missions more seriously. You asked me to assign you one over the phone, and you left." I sighed, "Heath..." Heath said, "Lexi... I need to know." I sat down on the grass, "He came to me the night before the ceremony." Heath punched a tree. "I TOLD him not to go to you." I said, "He didn't listen! He told me he'd felt the pull to me since he was eighteen." Heath yelled, "HE WHAT?!" I nodded, "We had s\*x. It was my rst time, it wasn't great. He left to go meet with you." Heath frowned, "We didn't have a meeting that night." I snorted, "So he lied. What's new? Anyway Suranna had come to talk to me and heard the whole thing. She told the girls before I'd arrived that Noah was my string, and that we'd had s\*x once he revealed that fact to me." Heath said, "But... then Sally." I said, "Sally knew all along. She's been staying with him, so he'd leave me alone, and for herself. So she'd know she gave the relationship everything she had."

Heath sat down, "I'm so sorry." I said, "He knew at the ceremony. He walked towards me on purpose. He smirked at me right before he turned to Ted. I didn't realize Sally had seen it along with a few others. Why did you decide you needed to know?" Heath held up a recorder and hit play. It was the same recording I'd heard earlier with Sally. Heath said, "You've heard this." I nodded, "Sally has the tape too." Heath closed his eyes, "Sally heard this?" I nodded, "She's done with him Heath. Haley took it to Gunner to see if it had been tampered with in any way, but..." Heath cut me off, "It's not. She'll reject him then. Is she sure she's not pregnant?" I said, "She was never trying Heath. She went to an outside doctor for birth control." Heath nodded, "That's good then. She won't have to deal with him for the rest of her life. I could kill him for this Lexi. I might kill him. He promised me he'd never hurt you then he did it on purpose. He tricked you. He knew Sally was his string, and he knew you'd never sleep with him, so he lied. THAT FUCKER!" I sighed, "I know what he means to you Heath. I never wanted you to know." Heath said, "YOU are NOT an island. You should not have kept this from me. You should have told me everything. I would've believed you. He had me believing if I brought you home, you'd turn to pills again. I missed you Lexi. I missed you so damn much. I had shadows on you to make sure you were ok." I said, "I know. It's why I didn't lose them. I knew you were worried." Heath put his face in his hands. "How can I believe I'm a good leader when I can't even protect my own sister?"

I went over to him, "Hey, you are a good leader Heath. I didn't let you in about the whole ordeal. I wanted you to have your best friend." Heath said, "I should've known I couldn't trust him. I trusted him with the most valuable person in my life, and he hurt you." I said, "I'm ne now Heath." Heath said, "I think our shadow killed the man that went after Sally." I frowned, "Why would our shadow care about Noah's debts and going after Sally?" Heath said, "Because you got stabbed, Lexi. Someone is going to great lengths to lead a trail to... dad." I gaped, "Dad's dead." Heath said, "I know that. Someone wants me to believe he is not. I think they want to set a trap for us now that we are looking. They don't seem to understand that I know our father would never have left us willingly." Hope bubbled in me, "Could he have been.... What if someone took him against his will?" Heath shook his head, "And now he's walking around not talking to us? No Lex. He'd march back into the shroud. He'd come up to you. He'd demand to talk to you. You were his little girl Lex. He adored you. He would never do this to us. I refuse to believe he would. It's cruel and our father was not cruel." I said, "What are you going to do?" Heath snorted, "Appoint Isaiah as my lieutenant." I said, "Heath Scott... don't you dare knowingly walk into a trap alone." Heath laughed, "I won't. I have other ways to smoke this person out. I'm going to code a message only our parents or us could uncode. I'll scout the area. Then I'll know if it's someone trying to make us think it's dad or not." I said, "You truly don't believe it could be dad?" Heath said, "No I don't. Because if it is...everything means nothing. Dad is over there in the ground. If he's wandering around not approaching us, and has been out there all these years... I'll kick his ass, but no. I do not believe it's dad." I sighed, "Alright Heath. I believe you."

Heath said, "The Alpha of this territory and I met." I forced myself not to react, "Ted's Alpha?" I asked. Heath laughed, "Yes, he surprised me. He came to deal with the goodie. Who is not really a gambling bookie." I said, "Now I'm lost." Heath said, "He had a good smokescreen, but I spied on the wolf. The wolf knew there was more to the story. They don't seem to know exactly what's going on, or if they do, they were vague. I will dig into it." I said, "So... Noah doesn't have a gambling problem?" Heath said, "I don't think he does. I think he owes someone a great deal of money. That now he nor his family has access to. I've put out the word that anyone who wants to collect has to come through me to get it." I said, "You'll be careful?"