

CAC :: FORBIDDEN ECLIPSE ::

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Author Note: Please check out my main site at www.cpbunnyart.com for downloads of more samples of my stories. **Coming soon are:** character profiles and official, original hand-drawn artwork to 3D models of the characters. (Hoping to find talented people to help make this story into a comic or manga and/or an animated feature.) Enjoy!

CHANGE A CHANGELING (CAC) FANTASY SERIES :: FORBIDDEN ECLIPSE BOOK ONE ::

This saga is of three generations of troubled forbidden lovers and their offspring's hardships against hateful prejudice and injustice. The main story is about a young hybrid Fay warrior prince named Alayer (Alastar's grandson) discovering a dire painful secret about himself that was hidden from him most of his life and that he must find the cure for the curse of mortality.

The first background story is of Alastar Fay, the dark prince of the Bloodless Fangs, and Rosa, a Sun Maiden from the Light Fay clan, that come together in forbidden love. An ancient foretelling speaks of light and dark coming together to bring forth the Eclipse Fay, who will judge the deceitful Light Fay and have them destroyed for their falsehoods. The Light Fay army general, Blake Flamesear, desperately does not want the dreaded prophecy to come true, knowing his tyrannical rule over the Light Fay will be ended if it does. He also desires Rosa to be his, yet she despises him and to his horror, Rosa is madly in love with the dark prince instead. Blake does everything in his power to stop the forbidden lovers from coming together. Will he succeed or will the Eclipse Prophecy come to pass? Read and find out.

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Thank you and I hope you enjoy the story below.

FORBIDDEN ECLIPSE CHAPTER 1

"This is madness! Pure madness!" hissed Sohvey to Prince Alastar as the two friends approached the edge of the Gray Forest that separated the lands between the Vampiric Dark Fay and Light Fay. Neither of the clans were to trespass under any circumstances. It was the only way to keep them from having war after war, like in the past.

"We are *not* supposed to be here!" Sohvey complained, reluctantly following Alastar past the edge and directly into the forest, which lead straight to the Sun Maidens' lair. Sohvey scrunched up his less-than-handsome features.

Why, oh why did his sire have to go to spy on the Sun Maidens every day *and* night? This had become a habit of his out of the blue less than a week ago. In times before, Alastar would come dangerously close to the Sun Maiden's camp and despite all his searching, he had not yet found whoever he was looking for and then they would leave after an hour or so.

Sohvey begged his majesty and good friend to stop this hazardous hunt, but he could tell he wasn't going to give up. When Alastar had his mind set on something, not even his own destruction could deter him.

Sohvey feared that they would be eventually caught, tortured with iron and silver, and then beheaded by the Light Fay. And that would only be if they felt merciful at the time. There had been a time when the Light Fay were not so merciful and had started a two-year war over such trespassing after viciously eradicating the fool-hardy vampires that strayed onto their lands.

The dark prince ignored his friend's fussing and kept searching. No, not there or there. Where was she? Where? He had a dream earlier that day that the Sun Maiden he was looking for would be around a waterfall. There was only one waterfall in this Gray Forest and after much traveling, he and Sohvey were close to where it was now.

Alastar meticulously checked around the tangle of trees and luscious flora as Sohvey complained about the insects flying in his face as they came nearer to the waterfall. Suddenly, Alastar ducked down behind a large leafy bush, grabbing Sohvey down with him in a rough comical manner. Sohvey shot his majesty a savage angry glare.

"*Shhh...*!" Alastar put his clawed index finger to his lips and motioned with his eyes for his friend to look. Sohvey irritably peeked to the right side of the bush where he was at and from a good distance away, he saw some Sun Maiden combing her wet hair while sitting on a rock in the sunlight.

She appeared to have recently finished taking a bath in the nearby glittering waterfall. She was wrapped in a pure white cloth and trying to get the water squeezed out from her wavy locks with a shiny mermaid jeweled comb. The sparkling was what caught Alastar's sharp garnet-red eyes.

"She's the one..." Alastar breathed, eyes half-lidded as he spied at the lovely maiden on the left side of the bush. Just seeing her a second time made the dark prince's heart pound with intense excitement.

The first time he had seen her was by accident, when she came to the edge of the Gray Forest days before as Alastar was riding his dappled Gray Percheron, named Silver Striker, a few yards away. In fright, she had tried to flee, but stumbled over an upraised root of a willow tree and hurt herself badly.

Alastar had rushed to her aid and healed her ankle with his Fay magic. Their eyes met and the dark prince felt an instant attraction that he had never felt before. She shyly left, giving Alastar sweet timid looks that enticed him even more.

Ever since then, he could not stop thinking about her. He knew he had to find her again without being killed. And after a week of diligent searching, he did locate her at last! He felt so happy and kept on admiring her from a far.

How so very exquisite she was to the dark prince; her beauty haunting him in his dreams and tormenting him when he was awake. His desire to be with her was strangling him, for she was the oxygen he needed to breathe. She was his other half and he needed her so much that he could think of nothing else, but of how to be with her.

The Sun Maiden's wavy reddish light brown hair was like the flaming red bark of the phoenix trees and her richly tanned damp skin shone in the now setting sunlight. He remembered her gentle green eyes and how they twinkled, delighting his black heart endlessly. She was absolutely perfect!

On the other claw, Sohvey failed to see what was so wonderful about this girl. She was nothing like the attractive vampiresses back home that Sohvey found very interesting, except they didn't find him interesting, not even a little.

If only his nose wasn't like a parrot's beak, he might attract some vampiric lady, but so far, no such luck. Instead, he got to go on frightening adventures with his royal friend and today, see some boring Light Fay female after seeing so many like her days before.

"Her? You like *her*?" Sohvey whispered loudly, confused and disturbed. He was also shocked. "You can't be serious!" he cried even louder.

"Would you just- *shhh!!!*" Alastar clamped a claw over his friend's big mouth. "She might hear you!" he hissed angrily. He waited a moment before releasing his loud companion and peeked over his side of the bush again. The Sun Maiden was nowhere in sight.

"Sohvey, you fool! She has gone!" Alastar growled, shoving past him as he got to his feet in a hurry and started to survey through the many tree trunks of various widths and lengths. The Gray-green foliage proved to be difficult to see past as it seemed to be getting thicker on its own. Sohvey took this as a sign of doom.

"Oh, *no!* They *know* we're here! *They know!!!*" he cried out, so loudly making Alastar cringe.

"Will you be quiet! If you keep on screaming like that, we will be caught for sure!" the dark prince snarled, baring his pearly white fangs. Sohvey didn't reply since vines were trying to wrap themselves around his legs. That was it for him. He took off like a frightened hare, screaming bloody murder as he transformed into a bat and left quickly, fluttering like mad.

The vines were also being friendly to Alastar and they nearly had his ankles until he yanked a short dagger from its sheath attached to his right thigh and sliced the vines away. But the vines kept coming. Using the larger sword strapped to his waist, he made quick work on the increasing vines.

Still, it was no use, the vines were never-ending and they were there to destroy intruders. They would not let up whatsoever. The dark prince scowled as he pushed back his extremely long black hair from his long pale face and looked mournfully towards the waterfall where he had last seen the Sun Maiden.

'Another time, my love.' Alastar thought sadly as he reluctantly teleported back to the edge of the Gray Forest. He wished Sohvey was quieter back there. Even if they were captured, he could have teleported them both to safety, well, he was pretty sure he could have. He just needed more practice in teleporting others was all.

Maybe Sohvey didn't have much faith in his abilities yet. Alastar would show him. He'd show them all that he was the master of teleportation and never be captured by the enemy. Someday, that is.

In a few minutes, he heard Sohvey flapping towards him, huffing and puffing. He transformed back into his humanoid form and shoved Alastar roughly. Even though Alastar was royalty, Sohvey didn't really see him too much as a prince; he was more like a brother to him and they treated each other as such many times when the royal court was out of earshot. Their outings would never be permitted if Alastar's parents became wise to their son's risky adventures.

“What was that for?!” Alastar growled, forced to back up from his friend’s unhappy push.

“For nearly getting us caught!” replied Sohvey, growling back.

“And whose fault is that? Yours, Sohvey!” Alastar shot back, baring his fangs.

A sudden hissing match between the two vampires only lasted several seconds. Then, they glared at each other angrily in silence. Sohvey looked away to check for any leftover vines on his wiry thin body.

Those vines were hazardous to Dark Fay such as Sohvey and Alastar. Light Fay often used their vines for defense and as a poisonous deterrent to destroy Dark Fay intruders. The plants would try to bury into their pale white flesh, often without detection, and leave seeds of Light to grow inside them that would ultimately rob them of their lives.

Once a seedling had sprouted inside a victim, it would send itself deeper to make it that much more difficult and painful to remove. Usually by then, it would be too late for the sufferer and death ultimately would follow.

Alastar thought it wise to inspect his medium-built muscular body for any stray killer vines. Suddenly, Sohvey shrieked out a shrill growling roar. He found a small vine digging into his thigh and he had yanked it out, flicking it back at the forest in a rage.

Sohvey turned his head so sharply at Alastar that his shoulder-length, dark violet-black hair splashed over his face, which he viciously swiped away to continue his glaring onslaught.

“That’s it, Alastar!” he shouted, pointing a claw at the flung vine crawling back into the forest. “No more hunting for this Sun Maiden! I’m *not* going to get killed because you have this silly desire for a dangerous girl! I can’t take it anymore! I’m through!”

“Fine! If you were not with me, I could have had a chance to talk to her! But no! You had to scream like an accursed banshee the entire time! You inane loud fool!” Alastar shot back, growling. He tossed his left claw in the air as if he was shoos Sohvey away like a common fly.

“Be gone,” he ordered, closing his eyes and turning his head off to the right in a haughty manner.

Sohvey gave the dark prince a strange ominous glare that Alastar didn’t see. The beak-nosed vampire transformed back into a bat and flittered away in a rage. Alastar opened his garnet-red eyes and drooped his pointy long ears dejectedly. He didn’t want to quarrel with his best friend like that, but Sohvey did mess up the dark prince’s chance to talk to that lovely Sun Maiden.

Alastar’s mind instantly wandered off back to the first time he met her and he remembered the beauty of her sparkling green eyes that allowed him to see into her soul, full of desire to be freed from... something.

The dark prince didn’t know what that was, but he wanted, no, needed to set her free from whatever it was that was jeopardizing her precious freedom. He was so lost in thought that he failed to remember to thoroughly examine his physique for stray vines.

He decided to go right back into the treacherous Gray Forest to search for that Sun Maiden that very night, alone. He was certain Sohvey wouldn't dare alert the royal court, since he would have to admit that he was with Alastar in prohibited Light Fay territory.

A sudden maddening itch to the prince's right ankle caught his attention. He went to inspect and gasped in shock. He was arguing with Sohvey so much that he didn't even feel the one tiny piece of vine that had already planted a Light seed a little above his ankle.

The itching was a signal that the seed had sprouted and was releasing its poison steadily into his bloodstream. He tried to claw it out, but it was too late.

The seed had already imbedded itself deeper in his muscle and he'd have to cripple himself to possibly remove the seed now. His blood was definitely poisoned at this point, so there was no sense in ripping up his leg.

Alastar stood there, bleeding from his futile attempts at seed removal, his mind racing. He swallowed hard as a terrible icy dread washed over him, slamming into him like an unforgiving ocean wave, panic threatening to drag him under the sea of his terrified emotions. Alastar realized he had to find the Sun Maiden for immediate aid or he would waste away within a day. Maybe even sooner.

With his father and mother off in the human world, they expected him to keep their kingdom in order until they returned. They were testing him to see how well he performed as a prince which represented how he would rule as king later.

Should he perish due to the poisoned vines created by the Light Fay, Sohvey would most certainly tell his parents of what had happened and his father would wage an all-out war against the Light Fay, including the Sun Maidens.

Alastar's troubled mind imagined his parents, the dark King and Queen, viciously killing off the Light Fay and his mind's eye displayed the worst part, the Sun Maiden he longed for, being tortured and then slaughtered savagely before the dark Fay court.

No! He wouldn't let any of that happen. There had to be a cure for the Light seed's poison and he was going to find it, right now. Tonight. Alastar wanted to heal his leg, but he was concerned that would seal in the poison and make matters even worse, so he left it to ooze.

He patched it up with salve leaves that grew almost everywhere in the Fay world and looked back towards his home to the south, swallowing hard again. His mouth felt drier than usual and that was a bad sign since it meant the poison was working quickly against him. With troubled eyes, he faced the forest and concentrated on teleporting back to the waterfall where he last saw the Sun Maiden.

Once there, Alastar tried to detect the Sun Maiden's scent in hopes to follow it back to her camp. The waterfall area was just as breath-taking in the darkness as it was in the light of day. The moonbud flowers were opening up and emitting their soft pale-yellow glows all around the dark prince's tall stature, causing his jet-black hair to shine regally. He twitched his nose several times, desperately trying to pick up her scent in a hurry.

He gave up after a few moments, unable to afford the time to really sniff her out, and elected to take the well-beaten trail a short distance from the beautiful waterfall. He dared not teleport any further since he could easily be sensed by the Light Fay if he used his magic past here.

They may have even known he was there, but the vines were not attacking so far. Maybe they knew he was already poisoned and there was no need to be alarmed over a dying vampire. Perhaps, they were watching him and laughing their heads off.

Alastar frowned, gritting his teeth. Curse those stupid Light Fay with their prejudiced ways! Just because other common vampires liked to drink them to get intoxicated, didn't mean his clan would. At the very most, they drank blood on celebrations, but they were not constantly devouring the other Fay. Yet, the Bloodless Fangs received blame for what their cousins did. It just wasn't fair.

Besides, his cousins drank other Fay to transform them into their kind. Alastar's clan did not have such powers, yet they were treated with the same ignorant fear and hatred. It was definitely discrimination.

Twigs snapping shortly in front of Alastar made him duck down behind a large oak tree and hold his breath. He heard talking and made out two short figures, about four feet tall, effortlessly in the pitch-black darkness. Seeing in the dark certainly had its advantages.

"Do you smell that?" the first one said, sniffing loudly with his blown up smashed-in nose. The second one sucked in the air with his nostrils from his stretched nose like a vacuum and snarl-growled in a predatory fashion.

"Yeaah! That *is* blood! Fresh blood! We needs that!"

Alastar's heart pounded in his elongated ears. The only ones after blood on any pathways were usually those blasted Red Caps. There was no mistaking them now, with their medieval style caps, burlap sack styled clothing, and worst of all, those accursed iron boots complete with spiked toes.

They were beyond dangerous for they had to kill and soak their hats in their victims' blood to keep their immortality or die once their headwear dried out. They hunted for fresh blood day and night constantly.

These were not the ones that hammered nails into one another's skulls. They were the more aggressive, militant variety and there were hardly any who lived to tell the tale after encountering these monsters. Alastar didn't think those thugs would dare to travel on Light Fay trails, but here they were, hungry and ready to butcher.

In his weakening state, Alastar wasn't sure he could fend off two Red Caps at once since fighting even one of those maniacs was hard enough at full strength. Giving up wasn't an option for these monsters since they were also fighting for their lives, much like Alastar was at the moment.

No way was Alastar, the dark prince of the Bloodless Fangs, willing to die by this method, or any for that matter. The Light Fay would still be blamed for his death even if the Red Caps did him in. He was *not* the one who was going to die here!

"Ah-ha!" the first Red Cap boomed, as he appeared suddenly, snatching Alastar's hurt leg and proceeded to slice it open with his fillet knife. The dark prince hissed viciously at the attacker, kicking the brute's face with his good leg and teleporting away.

"Where'd he go?!" the second Red Cap shrieked, angry to have lost a chance to soak his cap to stay alive. The first one cracked his jaw back into place and sniffed the air again.

“I had him! I did! See? Lookie here at all this blood!”

“Give me that!” yelled the second one, yanking off his cap to get some of that blood on it. The first one withdrew his hand fast and smeared the vampire’s blood on his hat. The second Red Cap jerk threw a childish tantrum, blasting the eardrums of his companion.

“You spineless scum! You didn’t even let me taste it! I hate you, spineless scum!”

“Shut up!” the first one shouted, shoving his comrade to the dusty earthy trail. “It’s your fault you didn’t get him first. Your fault, not mine. So shut up!”

“No, I will *not* shut up, you fiddle-brained fool! I wanted that blood! Don’t hide it from me! That was vampire’s blood! *That’s* why you didn’t share! Not even a little! I *hate* you, scum! Spineless, spineless filthy scum! You-” The second one suddenly stopped mid-sentence and suctioned the air once more.

“Oooooohhh! He’s still around here!”

“Where?!”

“Oh *nooo*, you don’t! That tasty vampire is *mine*! I ain’t sharing *any* with you, so forget it, you spineless scum!” The second Red Cap went on the hunt for poor Alastar, who wasn’t able to teleport very far due to his rapidly weakening state. The adrenaline from fear was pushing the poison through the dark prince’s body even faster.

He was afraid that he might not get away from those accursed Red Caps and they would get his special immortal blood after all. A vampire’s blood would help those greedy terrorists’ immortality to last much longer than any other Fay creature’s blood.

No wonder they were after him. Still, Alastar wasn’t going to make it simple for them to get him. Being quiet and staying put wouldn’t save him since they could smell his wounds and they could climb trees easily and chop them down just the same should the prince hide in any. He had no choice, but to fight. So, he hobbled out on the trail several yards away, his sword ready.

“*There* he is! *Get him!!!*” the second Red Cap screamed and both rushed him, their smaller knives slashing about. Alastar stood his ground best he could, fangs bared and hissing.

Despite their smaller size, the Red Caps were just as strong as trolls and even meaner. They mercilessly battled Alastar savagely, attacking him from in front and behind, not giving him a moment’s rest. They were trying very hard to wear him down and it was working.

They sliced new deep wounds into him and leapt upon him, sucking and biting Alastar’s fresh wounds like blood-thirsty leeches. The brutal kicks from their iron spiked boots burned like fiery hot poker in the vampire’s flesh, robbing him of his already dwindling strength. They wanted to kill him quickly so they could soak their caps in his blood for hours and devour his flesh.

Screaming in agony from their constant assaults, the dark prince resorted to biting them himself, but their wicked blood had such a horrid stench that Alastar couldn’t stomach it. He spat and tried to wipe his fangs for a second before the first Red Cap came at him again, their blades clashing with sparks flying.

Enraged, Alastar emitted a low growl that erupted in a roar intertwined with a hiss at the dreaded Red Caps, displaying his sharp bloody fangs as he held his sword as steady as he could. The Red Caps responded by shrieking demonically at him, their screams mixed with strange humming growls. Their monstrous screeches hurt Alastar's elegant pointy ears badly.

He shook his head in great discomfort, when the second Red Cap attempted a mindless move and suddenly latched himself to Alastar's bad leg, sucking crazily. Roaring like a lion in pain, the dark prince snatched the beastly tick off, wrapping his right claw around the Red Cap's throat and squeezed tightly, his claws deeply cutting into the monster's neck.

But he didn't need to pop the tick for he seemed to be just dying off on his own when yellow froth came bubbling up from his blood smeared mouth. The first Red Cap noticed and was terribly shocked, since he too was beginning to feel the effects of the poison from Alastar's blood, realizing the truth too late.

"No! This *can't* be! Poisoned blood?! You have *poisoned* blood!! We drank it! We *drank* it!!" the first Red Cap screamed over and over while Alastar dropped the second Red Cap, now dead, onto the blood-soaked trail.

The dark prince knelt to the earth, trembling and breathing hard. His vision was fading in and out as he struggled to stay conscious. He couldn't take much more of this.

The first Red Cap scrambled away in a dizzy daze, babbling in crazy sped-up speech when he at last stumbled and fell face down on the trail, dead. Alastar jammed his sword into the ground and fought to push himself back onto his feet, but failed miserably, collapsing not long after the last Red Cap expired.

If he died, his precious Sun Maiden would be killed as well. He needed to return to his feet and find her immediately, somehow. Looking through half-lidded eyes blurred with tears, Alastar again strained to get back up, but it was no use. He had lost too much blood and definitely was dying.

Vampires may be the undead, but that didn't mean that they couldn't lose their immortality. Worse yet, Alastar was one of the Bloodless Fangs, a special breed of vampires that could never be undead and their bites could not transform a non-vampire to a vampire whatsoever, a truth the Light Fay refused to believe.

The dark prince's people would die out if they didn't continue on having children and plenty of them since all walks of life wanted them destroyed. They were seen as the common mosquito and often thought of as being very disease-ridden.

Should ever the Bloodless Fangs clan become extinct, the undead variety of vampires would rule and enslave all of the Fay by turning them into the undead as well. They planned to do the same to the humans once the majority of the Fay were undead, thus a so-called zombie apocalypse would overtake the weak humans like a never-ending wild fire worldwide.

Alastar cared not of the humans as they were ignorant fools that destroyed what and whom they did not understand. What he cared about was not dying right now.

All knew that his people could be killed just like any other Fay and die just the same. Their immortality saved them from dying of old age, but not from being killed. Alastar knew he couldn't afford to die like this. The Light Fay would be made at fault for his death and his precious Sun Maiden would pay the price of this Red Cap attack.

He just couldn't let that happen, but unfortunately, his body wouldn't respond anymore and he could not leave the filthy blood pool he had landed in to get the aid he so sorely needed.

“H-help... S-someone...help...” the dark prince choked out pitifully, closing his eyes in great sorrow, tears overflowing down over the bridge of his nose and dripping into a pool of his own blood. He felt himself fading away as he blacked out.

CHAPTER 2

With darkness swallowing him whole, Alastar's spirit wept. He had failed his beloved Sun Maiden and now, it was all over for him. Worst of all, it was all over for her too. She would be certainly destroyed in the war to come initiated by his parents.

Then, a soothing warmth flooded over him and a wonderful dream graced him. He felt that the Sun Maiden was kneeling beside him and staring with those endearing green eyes of hers. She took him away to somewhere beautiful, clean and white. She told him that he would be fine and she would remove the poison, but how could that be? He was dead, wasn't he?

Next, Alastar witnessed strange powerful images. A tall Fay man, with an odd fashion of bat-like wings, was floating in front of the Fay Sun and somehow, he commanded the Fay Moon to block out the Fay Sun. From its eclipse, ray after electrified ray came striking down, destroying many of the Light Fay by burning them alive.

Next, he observed the fabled blue phoenix in space attempting to drive a fairly large dying star away from a smaller planet that the humans called home. Suddenly, he was there in the world of the humans and wherever he happened to be, there was nothing, but destruction spanning out in every direction.

Scorched trees sizzled as smoking, cracked earth oozed fresh steaming lava from a massive split volcano nearby. The terrified screams and cries of intense sorrow from the humans rang in Alastar's ears, although he couldn't see any of them.

And lastly, there was an auburn-haired young man with the same legendary blue phoenix outlining his spirit. The strangest thing was the phoenix's fire changed from blue to white and that bright pure white phoenix was an awesome power that terrified Alastar worse than anything had before. And Alastar was hardly frightened of anything, except losing his immortality of course.

The image of the auburn-haired man was not so shocking though. Alastar felt comforted by the sight of him, but that massive white phoenix behind him was what chilled the dark prince to the bone. The fast-moving flames of the snow-white blaze that morphed from a phoenix to a massive hand that seemed to envelop everything around Alastar including the auburn-haired man, who was now looking at him in a way that confused him.

Why was he looking at him with such pity in his eyes? The dark prince stared back at him and felt as if he knew him somehow.

"Change..." was the only word the auburn-haired man spoke before the white fire mixed with blue flames took him. His dying screams were so agonizing to hear that it made Alastar cringe and brought forth tears in his eyes as he watched the man burn away into...white feathers.

Feathers? Alastar found that part to be extremely bizarre. Most beings turn to ashes when burned up, not angelic feathers. He had no time to reflect on it further since the mass of swirling white and blue flames was covering him then. Searing pain tore through him and he shot up, screaming, into a sitting position in a bed where he was lying, in a room he had never seen before.

"I'm *so* sorry!" cried a voice.

Alastar took a moment to realize what had happened and where he was. His garnet-red eyes' cat-like slit pupils had widened to round spheres in the darkened room. He was in a wonderfully comfortable bed of soft white feathers tightly bound in a large thick cotton sheet and covered with a heavy knitted quilt boasting the colors of autumn leaves.

The room was almost void of light except for the massive collection of moon flowers. It was as white as the mattress and exceptionally clean. Two small wooden tables were at both sides of the bed. The one on the left had an unlit oil lamp and the one on the right was covered with healing herbs, tools, and sterile wraps.

His torn bloody garments were gone except for his tattered pants, most of which had been trimmed into shorts. The knife wounds on most of his body had been healed fairly well and his skin had been washed clean of the bloody grit and grime from battle.

Best of all his eyes observed was the Sun Maiden herself, wearing a body suit that had swirling patterns of pastel colors dancing over a pale yellow background. The edge of her off-the-shoulder top was accented with green leaves sewn into the fabric. Her lovely legs were hidden within the long, thin pants of the jumpsuit.

Her beautiful tanned face and sparkling green eyes beguiled him all over again despite his discomfort. He sighed softly, but then grimaced at his pain.

She was busy with trying to mend his severely injured leg where the vine had planted itself hours before. She was forced to cut into him deeply to extract the seed which was budding fresh vines and spewing more poison into his bloodstream.

Alastar now knew where that searing pain originated from. She was holding a metal grabbing tool which had been heated by a small candle in a golden holder on the floor. She blew the candle out, since she no longer needed it. The vine seedling was out, at last.

"I had to do that. I'm so sorry, I couldn't risk any magic to numb you as it would make the seed take root even further and you'd have to lose your leg to be saved. It's a fail-safe for the vines to quickly kill off our enemies if they try to use magic to do away with the seedlings before they had a chance to truly flower," the Sun Maiden, named Rosa, explained as she placed the wiggling sprouted seed into an enclosed jar.

She washed her bloody hands and the grabbing tool in a basin of water on a fanciful oak dresser bureau and then dried her gentle hands on a cotton towel soaked in aloe. She had several of these aloe-infused cloths ready and put them on the bed near Alastar's leg which was well butchered at this point.

The dark prince felt somewhat sickened from the nasty aftertaste in his throat resulting from the Red Caps' blood. Smelling his own blood didn't help matters either as it made him feel a twinge of hunger and nausea. The special Fay herbs she had plastered on his exposed muscles helped slow the bleeding amazingly well.

Alastar watched her work with half-lidded eyes for he was thoroughly entranced by her loving kindness and graceful beauty. The way her soft gentle hands patched up his agonized leg soothed him into a such lulled state of mind that he couldn't hardly stay awake. She was healing him with a spell of euphoria without much effort.

It was clear that she was highly skilled as a healer since the dark prince knew the royal healer back at the castle didn't remotely have the level of talent as this Sun Maiden did. These spells took years upon years to master, and then, they were a struggle to execute them, but this young Fay was casting a difficult spell without issue.

To his great joy, she hovered over him, pulling the brightly-colored quilt over his cold body. How incredibly beautiful she was! He could hardly get over that fact. Her wavy, reddish-brown locks hung down past her perfect face, her hair tickling his chest as she smoothed the quilt over his abdomen. He felt safe and reassured as he let sleep take him then.

When next he woke, the room was empty and the sun was shining through the curtained windows. He wished the Sun Maiden would appear through the door, but she did not. Yawning, Alastar decided sleeping some more would be most beneficial to healing his leg and did so, sleeping the day away.

Awakening again, he opened his garnet-red eyes to see the Fay Moon casting its gentle glow through the now uncovered windows. The bed was in a good location directly in the path of the moonbeams and the dark prince reveled in the recharging energies he was receiving. It felt so good, like his mother's affectionate hugs that reminded him of her love.

There was a fresh collection of moonflowers in the room too, glowing ever so softly and making the small room even more pleasant and cozy. Alastar attempted to get up then and found that he couldn't. The pain in his leg was just too intense and he was still weak from the vine's venom. Even the Fay Moon's recharging energies couldn't lessen the vine poison's power like he had hoped.

Disappointed, he leaned back on the many fluffy pillows the Sun Maiden afforded him and turned his head, noticing a very thick book waiting for him on the right bedside table. He picked up the heavy novel and saw that the Sun Maiden had left a little note for him on the front cover. It read:

Here is a quality novel for you to read while you heal. I hope you enjoy it.

A warm smile graced his pale face as he caressed the front cover of the leather-bound book. She made a good choice for an activity for him to do while waiting for his leg to get better. Alastar took much pleasure in reading books, especially large novels like the one he had in his claws.

It was written by the Elemental warrior Lagomorphe, and his fighting adventures were legendary, as was he. No other fighter could compare to this magnificent Fay warrior. All books written by the Elementals were top notch quality stories since they always wrote the truth.

Non-fiction or fiction, Alastar cared not. Escaping to another world through a book was just as thrilling as really doing it. He had been to the human world a few times before, and while it was exciting, it was draining also since there was no Fay Moon to recharge his powers and growing unnecessarily weak was not a burden that he desired.

Staying in his world was much more comfortable, so he settled for a good book during down time whenever he had any. It had been months since he had a real chance to read long and hard. And so, with much enthusiasm, he opened the novel and started reading.

Hours passed without the dark prince realizing it. He was completely absorbed into the novel and living the stimulating adventures within it. The Sun Maiden had arrived to change his bandages and apply fresh

dressings on his leg along with more healing herbs. She smiled seeing him so engaged with reading; he didn't even notice that she had returned.

"How are you enjoying the book?" she asked, in her sweet melodious voice. Surprised, Alastar set his gaze upon her in a rush. He didn't realize that she had been there for a while. She decided that the novel must have been that excellent to have captured his attention that much.

"It is very incredible. So interesting," he replied, placing in a bookmark to save his place and put the tome on the wooden table at the right side of the bed.

He looked at her, seeing that she had on another off-the-shoulder body suit, but this one was mostly a lighter pink color with sparkling prism sequins sewn to the top's edges. The pants were shorter, exposing her attractive, toned legs. He shivered in delight by the mere sight of her. Rosa smiled gently and she went into nurse mode, tending to his damaged leg.

They exchanged small talk and then, Rosa hurried off. Alastar was saddened, but he took some comfort in that she seemed to be fond of him. Although, he knew that she still must be very afraid of him.

He had no desires to frighten her and did not comment on her short visits to him. He wanted to show her that he was a kind, loving vampire that she could trust. He would not bite, at least, not without her permission.

Although the Fay didn't need to eat to survive, eating and drinking made life more exciting and less bland by experiencing the sensations of good tastes and smells the culinary world had to offer.

This night, the Sun Maiden brought a fine meal for the dark prince. Then, she left soon after, not giving him much time to converse with her. For a while, it was like this, but he soon learned why. Alastar's beloved Sun Maiden had important duties to fulfill around the Light Fay camp, but he wasn't very sure what those duties were yet since she told him no more than that she had duties to begin with.

The dark prince couldn't do very much about that and ate the delicious food alone. Fresh pheasant, fine aged cheese, red grapes, and a good year of wine made for a delectable spread. She even left the bird uncooked so he could drink the blood from it.

Alastar wasn't the kind of vampire that needed to drink blood to survive like his cousins did, but he appreciated her efforts to cater to what she thought were his needs. He enjoyed drinking blood just the same though. He only wished that he could have had her company while he dined, but knowing that she had prepared this banquet personally for him warmed his heart deeply.

Day after day went by and each of those days was spent mostly sleeping during the day, and at night, the Sun Maiden came to him usually past midnight to care for him. The Sun Maiden renewed her euphoria sleep spell on him daily, wanting his leg to heal quicker.

Maybe in a month's time, he would be well enough to use it again. Thankfully, her vampire-hating older sister and mother were away on their annual gathering of rare seedlings and herbs to strengthen the Light Fay forests' defenses. Rosa surmised that they should be gone for at least a month or more, enriching the soils of their lands.

Light Fay were very involved with caring for their territories to the point of insanity. Rosa was hopeful that she could get this vampire back on his feet and safely out of her guest room soon before anyone found out. She knew what she was doing was extremely illegal according to her people's law.

Vampires were to be destroyed, not coddled and brought back to full strength. But she could not leave this handsome vampire to die when he was so kind to her and he actually managed to kill off those savage Red Caps, who had been stalking her for two days and three nights.

Rosa remembered back to when she had gone to the waterfall area to strengthen the vines with fresh seedlings to hopefully deter the Red Caps from hunting her, and then she had witnessed some of the battle's end between those evil monsters and the vampire prince.

The gory carnage had been too much for her to stand and she was about to leave when she had heard the vampire's weak, desperate cries for help as he laid in bloody filth dying. Although enormously frightened, Rosa's sympathetic heart could not ignore someone in terrible need, even if that someone was a dangerous vampiric enemy.

She had covered him with her dark brown cloak to conceal what he was just in case they were seen and used her magic to lift him home in secret. Most of the Fay in her clan were asleep or getting ready for bed in their homes at that time so Rosa successfully got Alastar into her guest room relatively unnoticed.

A safeguard spell over the door kept everyone out except her and so she didn't have to be plagued with worry about the vampire being discovered while she was out of her cabin. Nearly three weeks had passed since she had brought him there and his leg was mending very well.

Rosa felt a little bad for hardly talking to him, but she had no choice with the many chores expected of her within the Light Fay camp. Her family and friends needed her expertise with keeping the clan's community cabins clean and to care for her people.

She was almost like a nurse and a doctor all in one, helping and healing the sick, the seniors, and the children. She raised morale for everyone there and she was well-liked and respected by most within the camp.

As busy as she was, Rosa made sure she always had the time to take care of the vampire prince, who nearly had read all the books she could sneak over to him at least twice or more. Once again, it was time for her to clean the guest room, including the vampire whose scent she had to mask with essential oils.

Rosa was always very meticulous about keeping everything tidy and pleasant smelling. She got busy and brought a bowl of fresh spring water to wash Alastar with, including some clean lavender scented towels. She began wiping his face, rubbing tenderly.

He was still asleep, but she had to start caring for him now, due to her strict work schedule. Rosa stopped and backed away a little when he stirred awake, opening his garnet-red eyes for a moment, then closed them again to stretch luxuriously, groaning out the tension in his stiffened muscles.

Blushing, she watched him in nervous awe, admiring his magnificence. He was so incredibly handsome with his attractive and perfect face, powerfully enticing physique, and that impressively long, shiny, onyx mane splayed about him, like a glistening black waterfall.

She was forced to stop gawking at his alluring beauty when she accidentally dropped the towel on the wooden floor. She tried to retrieve it when he grabbed her hand suddenly, scaring her a little. The times before she interacted with him, he never tried to grab or touch her. They hardly spoke to one another that much. But now, he had her hand in his icy grip.

She feared horrible things would happen to her then. What a fool she was to make him well so he could attack her! But somehow in her heart, she felt that wasn't so. The times she had looked at him as he slept and when he was partially awake, he behaved as a gentle purring robust lion with a magnificent mane to match. He was so polite and sweet that she started to feel a little less wary of him. Was it all a trick?

She timidly looked at his ghostly white face, their eyes meeting in a long silent pause, neither of them moving. Rosa felt a sharp spark in her soul as she gazed into those garnet-red eyes that were speaking great volumes to her.

Despite the dead white color of his flesh and icy cold temperature of his touch, the Sun Maiden dared not flee from him. Not after seeing the intense burning love his eyes were longingly showing to her. She had never seen another Fay look at her like that. Never.

While many younger Sun Maidens had the folly of fantasizing about silly crushes of their very handsome vampiric enemies, Rosa never let such insanity cross her mind. Her mother always warned her to stay away from such beasts as the vampires, both the royal ones and their common cousins. All they wanted to do was to drink the lovely Sun Maidens to get intoxicated and to use them as their playthings for unspeakable activities. She always believed that.

Even when this same vampire prince healed her ankle at the edge of the Gray Forest, she didn't really trust him. On that day, she had been foolishly admiring his alluring handsome features that were just too awesome to ignore.

The sound of his steed was what made her initially come so close since she had a soft spot for horses. She had never viewed one that close before, since she had only seen them from afar at the Gray Forest's edge when the royal vampire armies rode them on the trails.

How kind he was to her when he caught her spying on him. It was unlawful for a peasant to set eyes on such royalty without permission and the punishment was slavery or even death. But he didn't harm her. Not at all.

He healed her twisted ankle when she had fallen and ever since then, she vowed to pay him back so they could be even and she could do away with the strong doubt set in her mind about his people.

Her mother was often adamant about her warnings on vampires and she was very pleased that her daughter had wholeheartedly agreed with her. But now, she could not.

"I never got to really thank you for saving me..." Alastar finally spoke, unable to take his intense gaze off her. "I'm indebted to you." The Sun Maiden waved her free hand as she shyly looked down and away.

"No, no. We're even now. You spared me when I looked upon you without permission and I saved you from the vine poison. When your leg has healed, you will be free to go. I won't report you to the general."

She mentally punched herself. Why was she trying to push him away? She knew why. She was still afraid. Her kind never mingled with the vampires before.

A terrible prophecy would come to pass to her people if they did merge. The Eclipse Fay would rise up from the forbidden union of the Dark Fay and the Light Fay and destroy the Light Fay utterly. That was the prophecy all Light Fay were told. She didn't want to be responsible for the destruction of her own clan.

Then again, how could she possibly reject him? He had shown her only kindness and compassion. That was more than she could say for the self-appointed leader and general of her clan, General Blake Flamesear. He had his cold blue eyes on her for as long as she could remember and it was pure harassment.

How she despised Blake and his demanding, controlling ways. He expected her to become his obedient little wife, when she had other plans like never marrying that arrogant tyrant. Nothing she did made Blake leave her alone and get a clue that she did *not* love him and never would. She didn't even remotely like him.

She figured that she'd never find real love with Blake scaring off other Light Fay suitors, but now, here was a dark vampire prince who was madly in love with her. She knew he was a prince by the royal garments he wore and the battle damage to his sword meant he was a fierce warrior.

She also had seen him fight, so it was obvious that he was fearless and strong, even when weakened by the vine poison. He certainly would not be frightened off by Blake, who was truly a coward that commanded his guards to do all his fighting for him.

"My dear lady," Alastar said, his rich, deep voice putting her on the edge of excitement and fright. He was like a living ghost of ethereal beauty, so overwhelming and thrilling that she could hardly stand it.

"I simply cannot let your benevolence go unrewarded. My heart will not let me disregard your compassion. You saved me and I am yours. I can never pay you back for what you have done for me. Please allow me to show you my sincerest gratitude. I desire to be your servant for all eternity."

The Sun Maiden's heart pounded in her ears as she took shaky heavy breaths, her hand still in his grasp. There was noticeable warmth growing between their hands, something that didn't seem possible with how terribly cold his hand was a while ago. Although his words didn't directly say such, it was almost like he was proposing to her for marriage the way he was speaking. How could she answer?

"I am Alastar, by the way," he said, winking playfully then, shocking and surprising her. The attraction within her grew that much stronger. The dark prince couldn't hold back his handsome wide smile that displayed his sharp, glistening fangs.

Still, she made no move to escape, her green eyes sparkling with warmth. Intense joy was swelling up inside of the dark prince. He knew she was just as enchanted by him as he was of her. He placed no spell upon her though, she truly was falling for him and this wonderful truth made his heart soar even higher.

"I-I'm Rosa..." the Sun Maiden stuttered, shaking with unnerved trepidation. Alastar closed his eyes for a brief moment and breathed in deeply, as if he was taking in a glorious scent.

“Rosa... What a fine name for a gorgeous Fay. My lady, Rosa...” he said lovingly, bringing her hand close to his lips to kiss. She watched in slow motion, partially fearing the worst, but mostly enjoying the moment very much.

She expected him to leave an icy kiss upon her hand, but instead she experienced a surprisingly warm kiss adorning her skin. His romantic manner was so enthralling that she could hardly believe it nor stand it. Rosa realized that she was taking great pleasure in all this. She was falling head over heels in love with a vampire prince!

Alastar released her hand then to sit up in the bed better, but struggled to do so. Even after all this time, the vine poison’s effects still lingered. He had a long way to go to be back at his full strength. Rosa hurried to help him, when her eyes were caught again by his, this time with their faces inches apart.

The dark prince couldn’t resist this perfect opportunity to express his love further and so, he gently gripped her chin and brought her lips to his in a tender, sweet kiss. The Sun Maiden was so deep in their own love ‘spell’ that she ignored her instincts screaming at her to get away from him.

Kisses from a vampire meant they would soon try to bite and drink whomever they were being amorous with. Rosa didn’t care about that now. All she wanted was to bask in this love that they were both supplying to each other. It was something she had yearned for, to experience this beautiful loving devotion.

Their first gentle kisses were soon intensified into much stronger ones. Alastar held her tightly to himself as he passionately kissed Rosa repeatedly, treating her as if she was the very air he needed to breathe. She kissed him back even harder, answering loud and clear what her feelings were for him. Even with his lips trailing down to her neck, she clutched him closer.

No painful bite tormented her neck, only his eager lips dancing on her tanned skin. This went on for quite a while, both seemingly unable to get enough of each other. While they continued to feverishly express their feelings, Rosa remembered the prophecy and how her clan would be destroyed, if she went any further with this vampire. Should she have his child, which seemed very likely in the future, the prophecy would come to pass and she would be responsible for her clan’s destruction.

As hard as it was to do, she pulled away reluctantly. Alastar was confused and worried that he might have offended her somehow. He couldn’t see how though, since they were simply kissing and nothing more than that, besides hugging. He would die of instant heartbreak, if she rejected him now.

“My lady Rosa... What troubles you?” Alastar said carefully, not wanting to scare her off.

“Did I...do something to upset you? Am I going too quickly for you?”

“N-no, no...! It’s nothing like that... I was really enjoying myself,” Rosa admitted, blushing hard. Alastar felt great relief wash over him and grinned happily, but was still puzzled.

“Then...why did you pull away?”

“Oh, it’s-it’s n-nothing...” she said in a shivering voice.

She felt so guilty. She actually did not mind the idea of bearing this vampire's child, despite the fact her people would die for it. What a traitor she was! But she desired him that badly. What a dilemma!

"It is indeed something. Tell me...please," Alastar insisted, wanting to get to the bottom of this. She appeared to be very much in love with him as he was with her, but then she pulled away. Why? He had to know.

"T-there is a prophecy that warns all Sun Fay to never merge with the Moon Fay or else..." Rosa paused to choke back the sob rising in her throat then. She swallowed hard and made herself continue.

"Or else their union will bring forth the Eclipse Fay in which will be Light Fay's complete destruction. If we stay together, the prophecy will come true and all my people will die!" She began to cry, feeling terrible. She wanted to be with Alastar and expand their relationship further, which in turn, would make the dreaded prophecy a reality.

Alastar had a strange expression on his face as he shook his head. There was something wrong with how she told that ancient foretelling. What he was taught was fairly different, as it had crucial details that her version was missing.

"My father told me of that ancient foretelling years ago, when I was small and learning my royal duties," he began, stroking her wavy reddish-brown locks.

"What I was told, was that the Eclipse Fay would overshadow the Light Fay clan and destroy those who are pretenders of the Light, most of all, the false leaders," he explained, wiping her tears from her face.

"Not all of your clan will be killed, if this comes pass. Should you be honest and true, you will be spared the wrath of the Eclipsed." Alastar reassured her, putting his arm around her shoulders and Rosa, sniffing, leaned over and laid against him.

She buried her face into his bare chest and wept, partly in relief that not everyone in her clan would be killed and partly in fear, since she knew their union would not be blessed by either of their parents.

They most likely would be shunned and hated, she could sense it. But she could not deny her feelings. She would be freed from Blake's persistent harassment once she married Alastar. That should get Blake to be so disgusted by her that he'd finally leave her be. Or so she hoped.

Certainly, her friends and family would want nothing more to do with her as soon as they knew and that part made her so very sad. Perhaps, she was meant to fulfill the prophecy with the dark vampire prince, Alastar. Maybe it was their destiny to do so.

With their love as strong as it was, it wouldn't be too difficult to make the prophecy come true very quickly. She lifted her tear-stained face as she heard Alastar speak in a thoughtful tone, mostly to himself.

"The Eclipse Fay can only appear if the Moon and the Sun merged together in a new form. The Eclipsed will bring destruction to the lying pretenders of the Light and then, a hidden truth will set forth a painful quest of trials. The Blue Phoenix will cause the third generation to be reborn twice and the White Fire will speak through the chosen third..."

Alastar paused as a stunned expression overtook his handsome face. Rosa looked at the dark prince confused. She never heard that part of the prophecy before. The Light Fay disregarded the Blue Phoenix as a myth and this White Fire was unknown to her.

The dark prince's visions, the ones he had seen back when Rosa saved him from the vines' poison, were still fresh in his mind. He hardly thought of the ancient foretelling before until now. But seeing how some of his visions were matching up with the ancient foretelling or prophecy as Rosa called it, shocked him.

He had seen the White Fire in the form of a white phoenix and then as a massive fiery hand that caused him great fear none of the likes which he ever had before. How could he explain these visions to Rosa when he didn't fully understand them himself? She was scared enough as it was and he had no real answers for it all.

"Third generation? Chosen third? What does that all mean?" she questioned, puzzled. Alastar put the visions out of his mind and shook his head.

"Concern yourself not with this, my lady Rosa, for I am not completely sure myself. Let us go back to expressing ourselves," he purred, snuggling closer to her.

Rosa afforded him some more cuddling time, which ended too soon for Alastar when she had to leave. If she stayed any longer in the guest room, those who relied on her daily to clean their cabins, would become suspicious and come looking for her.

While there were other Sun Maidens that could do Rosa's duties as well, the residents preferred Rosa and asked for specifically her. She could heal like no other, while always giving it her all in her work, never doing less than her best. The dark prince reluctantly let her go and anxiously awaited her return.

Each day was just as wonderful as the one before it; she would come to care for him and be intimate with him for an hour or so. She never seemed to grow tired of him, instead she felt as eager as he was to have their special daily hour together.

Eventually, Rosa began to not care at all what her clan would think about her being with Alastar once they finally found out. He was her source of true happiness and she valued being with him above everything else. So, she soon became careless, devoting more than an hour with Alastar each day and not coming up with good excuses for her absences, thus creating strong suspicion in her friends and family.

They figured that she had a boyfriend with one of the Light Fay guards in secret so General Blake wouldn't find out, thus they kept quiet at first, being happy for her. The only one who wanted Rosa with General Blake was Blake himself. Everyone knew how much she couldn't stand him, but there was no telling their close-minded, extremely selfish leader that.

It didn't take Blake long to notice how scarce Rosa was being lately and confronted her about it. He stopped her outside her living quarters. It was a quaint, unpainted, wooden cabin that housed a kitchen, living room, bedroom, wash room, and guestroom.

Rosa felt a terrible chill go through her when horrid Blake stood in front of her cabin, his arms crossed in front of his mighty chest. His cold steel blue eyes stared down at her in a superior manner and as a breeze blew, his blond bangs swayed over his frowning face.

“Rosa, where have you been these past weeks? I’ve heard reports that you’ve been slacking off your duties. I want to know why and I want to know now!” he said, rather meanly. He had a suspicion that she might be seeing one of his guards behind his back. He wanted to know which one it was so he could have him executed.

“Oh, General Blake, I’m so sorry,” Rosa said, her mind thinking hard of an excuse of some kind. “I-I-I-I…” She felt frozen with frightful worry that Blake might just storm into her house and search it. He did that before when some of the other Sun Maidens, who were jealous of her, had said she was hiding a lover in her home to get her in trouble.

Of course, it wasn’t true then, but now it was! Alastar would be savagely killed before the whole camp, should Blake discover him. She would want to die as well, if that happened. She had to think of something to make Blake not want to go in her cabin. But what could she say?

CHAPTER 3

There stood General Blake, his massive and thick structure overshadowing the small Sun Maiden, Rosa. He expected an answer to why she wasn't doing her chores and Rosa's mind churned with all kinds of excuses to feed him, but which one would he believe the most? Then, she suddenly had an idea that might work.

"Well? Why weren't you doing your duties?! Answer me!" Blake snapped unkindly, not liking her hesitation to give a proper response. And why wasn't she bowing like she was supposed to? He was fairly certain that she most likely was seeing one of his guards due to how she was refusing to answer. He grimaced when Rosa held her mouth and stomach at the same time.

"*Ohhh*, I am so *very* sick, General Blake! I have not been feeling too well. Oh *no*, here they come!" Rosa cried, faking some realistic hacking coughs that sounded like she was choking on thick mucus.

"*Ohh*, I haven't been able to clean the inside of my home for so long too. It's-it's *really* nasty in there!" She let loose another series of vicious choking coughs.

Immediately, Blake backed away from the cabin and Rosa as well. He kept backing up as she continued to cough more and even spat in the grass. Blake hated anything to do with sickness, thus he wasn't a fan of dribble-prone newborns and weakening ill seniors. Even his own men he cared not of, who were often battle-damaged after doing the raids he commanded them to do on the other clans of the Fay.

Trolls were a great source of wealth and whenever his clan's treasury was getting low, Blake had his men go steal from the trolls with disastrous results. The ones that made it back were so beaten up that they hardly made it and died slowly in agony. Of course, Blake didn't care to honor any of them for their sacrifices. That was how heartless he was.

The Light Fay citizens were not pleased with their leader, but none could oppose him, since he had so many willing helpers, their souls sold out on greed. This included the dreaded Glacial Fay, which were so powerful that many believed should the vampires try to enslave the other clans of the Fay, the Glacial Fay could stop them.

"Very well," Blake said in a disgusted tone. "Since you are so ill, you may get some rest. But I want to know the very minute you are well again. I still expect you to do your chores as every Light Fay in my clan has to pull their own weight. Understand?"

How she hated his demanding, rough voice. Always barking orders like some mongrel dog. She really was repulsed by Blake more than ever. He was holding her up from having quality cuddle time with Alastar.

Rosa sighed and answered, "Yes, sir."

He seemed satisfied and finally left. She watched Blake walk off like a proud peacock, his thin rat-tail of blond hair wagging about his huge, bulky backside. She shuddered and hurried into her cabin, locking the door behind her.

She was very thankful that horrid Blake actually bought her made-up story of being too ill to do her usual duties. Rosa knew that Blake didn't care at all if she did her duties for the others, he only was concerned

when she would be doing them for him again. She recalled the last time she had to clean his cabin, which didn't need any cleaning in the first place.

He just wanted her over there so he could brag how great he thought he was and why was she waiting to marry such a perfect Fay such as himself? He had stared at her lecherously while she had swept his living quarters and he had spewed out inappropriate comments about her body that she did not appreciate hearing. She was sure that he would force her to marry him soon enough and then have his horrible way with her. How she longed to be free of that prideful, lusty dictator!

Her mind's eye showed her Alastar's wide fanged smile that she adored. How warm and safe he made her feel whenever she laid her eyes on him. Even thinking about him made her feel better. He was her way out of this concentration camp. Soon, Alastar would be well enough to walk again and she was seriously considering running away with him.

Then she remembered her family. What would her mother say? And her older sister Trisha?

The Sun Maiden wiped the fast-forming tears from the corners of her eyes quickly. She couldn't have them come too, it would be too dangerous and she doubted they would want to go as well. She would have to leave them behind in order to be free from Blake. She had to do it or be miserable forever.

Rosa gathered up her supplies to wash and care for the dark prince when the guest room door opened. Alastar hobbled out, looking for her.

"Ahh, Rosa. There you are," he purred, very pleased to see her. "I was growing concerned."

"I'm sorry, Alastar. I was held up," Rosa sighed, shaking her head. She used to care for Alastar in the dead of the night, but now, she visited him during the late afternoon hours and would stay with him until morning, talking and snuggling the night away. He always looked forward to that part and so did she.

Rosa went into the guest room, putting her supplies down and helped him back into bed. She began preparing the towels, salves, and bowls of water when he questioned her.

"Held up by whom? I heard someone outside talking to you. And you were coughing badly out there. Are you alright?" He appeared very troubled.

"Oh, that. I was trying to get General Blake off my case for not getting my duties done," Rosa explained, removing the old bandages and inspecting his calf, feeling his bare leg carefully.

Alastar watched with a pleased look on his face. He always loved it when she was touching him, even if this was for medical reasons. He had to stop his mind from wandering then. He was a prince after all. And a very nice, respectable one too. But he was a vampire as well, so halting his fantasies wasn't an easy task to do.

"When you walked out to see me, did you feel any pain?" she asked, putting on a layer of fresh salve, just in case.

"A little," he admitted, appreciating her presence. He could hardly wait for her to finish wrapping his leg, so she could descend him with lavender oils, a fragrance he didn't mind. Then, it would be cuddling time, at last.

“Please don’t go walking around until you really are better. You need to heal still. My magic can only do so much after all. Your body has to do the rest.”

Rosa soaked a large cotton towel in warm water and cleaned the vampire well in order to descent him. She had tried before to get him to clean himself without her help, but he acted as if he was too weak to do it.

She had a sneaking suspicion that he wasn’t as weak as he pretended to be, but still washed him herself due to the fact that he was so ridiculously charming and hard not to love. She had long discarded his tattered bloody clothes weeks ago and gave him a white robe that she had secretly ‘borrowed’ from her sister’s boyfriend’s closet. She was sure Garrett wouldn’t mind for he had so many robes, he probably wouldn’t miss just one.

Next, she poured some lavender essential oil onto a cotton cloth and wiped it on his face first, then his neck. He angled his head and neck so it would be easier for her to do. She massaged the lavender oil onto his back, while he vocalized his enjoyment handsomely. His long shiny black mane had to be tied up and folded over together on itself and tied again to be manageable.

It was quite a chore washing all that hair, but it was the most beautiful, sleek, shiny hair she had ever the pleasure to stroke and comb. Alastar seemed to really like having his hair played with, although almost everyone enjoyed that sort of thing. He refused to have his hair cut whatsoever saying it was his pride and crowning glory. Even suggestions of trimming it was unacceptable.

She recalled the first time she had washed those long, unruly tresses when she brought him home. It nearly took her two hours as she meticulously wiped the blood and filth from it with towels, changing bowls of water constantly, and all the while trying to keep the bed and pillows dry. Then, combing it free of tangles took even more time.

She had lost a lot of sleep that night. But it was all worth it, caring for this exquisite vampire. Her reward was his eternal love and true companionship, both of which she could only dream about before.

Rosa poured more oil onto her hands then, ready to coat his mighty pectorals. Rubbing the oil on his bare chest always made her blush. She may be used to him, but she was still a shy Fay.

When she had finished, he took her hand into his and pulled her down over top of him as he leaned backwards into the pillows. Blushing and smiling, Rosa hugged him close as he suckled her neck lovingly. Even with his fangs grazing her tender tanned skin, she felt no fear whatsoever.

Just then, the only door in the room opened to Rosa’s horror. Her older sister Trisha entered and instantly was blown away by what she saw. There was her little sister in the guest room with a horrid vampire monster. The vampiric beast had her defenseless little sister in his claws with his evil mouth upon her neck! Oh, how he was going to burn!

“Trisha!” Rosa cried, pulling away from Alastar and standing up. She realized she must have forgotten to place a barrier spell on the door and that was how her sister could enter. Trisha could see the red sore marks on her sister’s soft neck. That infuriated her into action. She grabbed the oil lamp, which was now on the dresser, and fired it up as bright as it would burn.

“You *devil!* Get *away* from my sister!” Trisha screamed, waving the oil lamp at him.

“Burn and suffer!” she shrieked, breathing hard from fright.

“Rosa, get behind me! *Now!*”

“Trisha! What are you *doing!*?” Rosa cried, not moving away from Alastar, which made Trisha believe he put a spell on her to stay by his side. No matter, she would get him just the same.

“*Die*, you evil wicked wretch!” Trisha shouted, holding the lamp right into Alastar’s face. Rosa was incredibly embarrassed by her sister’s actions. But Alastar showed no discomfort from the light and smiled charmingly at the enraged Trisha, who was getting very flustered by the lamp-light’s failure to cause the vampire to scream in pain.

“Oooh! *Why* isn’t this stupid thing destroying you?!” Trisha snarled, her mane a hue redder than her angry, round face. Alastar laughed handsomely, shaking his head and grinning wide.

“I am of the Bloodless Fangs clan. Light cannot harm me, my silly Sun Maiden,” he proclaimed, suavely.

“I am *not* yours, *nor* am I silly!” Trisha snapped, then widened her blue eyes as his words sunk in.

“*Whaat?! You’re one of them? Ohh, we have to get you out of here! How’d you even get in here? You filthy mongrel, you-*” Trisha’s tirade was cut short when Alastar took offense.

“Dare you *not* speak of me in such a coarse manner!” he growled, baring his fangs. “I am *not* a commoner, silly Sun Maiden. I am the dark prince himself!”

Alastar angrily sat up taller and acted as if he was trying to get out of bed, which alarmed Rosa. He may love her, but he probably didn’t think much good of her sister Trisha.

Rosa came up behind Alastar and quickly put her arms around his shoulders, tugging. She pulled him back so forcefully that his attention was caught and his anger quelled. He reveled in her touching his bare shoulders, while her body pressed against his back. He couldn’t wait to marry her, even though her sister seemed like a militant shrew.

“My older sister means no harm. Please don’t be upset,” she said softly in his long-pointed ear. She hoped like mad that he wouldn’t attack Trisha over her insults. She glared at her older sister.

“Trisha, stop! I was the one who brought him here! Don’t blame him for anything!” she shouted, tightening her hold on Alastar, who grinned slyly. Trisha gaped at her, stunned.

“*You? You brought this, this...horrid monster here? Why?!*”

“If I am a *horrid monster*, then you are a broken-down hag of a witch who couldn’t do a spell to save her miserable self,” Alastar retorted, with a teasing smile that Trisha started to hate.

“Alastar, stop it!” Rosa scolded, stifling a laugh. He leaned back up against her similar to how a feline would, requesting more affection. Trisha’s stink eye was the nastiest one Alastar ever had witnessed. He smirked, for he was not intimidated whatsoever.

“Because I hurt my ankle and he healed me. I wanted to repay him. Almost a month ago, two Red Caps were stalking me for days and he destroyed them for me.” Rosa paused as she saw the disbelief on her sister’s face.

“A likely story,” Trisha said stiffly, irritated that she had to allow the filthy vampire to stay until he was well enough to walk on his own.

She was bound by Fay law to show gratitude to anyone who protected her family. Rosa was her one and only little sister after all. But one vampire against two Red Caps was too much to swallow. It was a tall tale for sure.

“How can a fairy not like fairy tales? You would be better off as a human. They believe in nothing these days. You would fit in really well,” Alastar commented.

The dark prince teased further, his devilish grin making a comeback. “Yes, with your looks, you would fit in perfectly...”

“*Why you!!!*” Trisha roared, raising the oil lamp in a threatening manner.

She knew what he meant and she didn’t appreciate his snarky insults. Everyone in the Fay world regarded humans as the most arrogant, ignorant fools in all the realms. They were far too often ugly in appearance with matching hideous insides. Their hearts were full of deceit and lies, yet they judged everything around them as if they were the only valid authorities in existence. Somehow in their deluded minds, they regarded their opinions as facts. All of the Fay knew how lowly, unsightly, and incredibly clueless the humans truly were. Rosa let go of Alastar and ran over to her sister in a rush. She clasped her hands together in a begging gesture.

“Trisha, Trisha, please listen! He was poisoned by the vine seed and so I brought him here to heal him. It’s almost a month now that he’s been here and he’s never once harmed me! I will not be finished with healing him for at least five days or more,” she explained, in a rush.

“So, please, *please, please* don’t say anything to anyone, especially Mother!” Rosa prayed that her sister wouldn’t reveal her secret of hiding a vampire in her cabin. She was at her mercy and her sister was very firm in being an anti-vampire activist.

Trisha looked down at her sister’s desperate, pleading eyes, then at the monstrous creature in the guest bed. Alastar had his claws clasped together in a begging fashion and making a cutesy, sad face with his lower lip stuck out.

She scowled in irritation at the dark prince. He thought he was so funny and charming, well, she didn’t think he was. Alright, he was a little funny, but certainly not charming to her.

She had never seen any vampire behave like that before. Rosa had said that this beast had been there for nearly a month and as far as Trisha could tell, her little sister appeared fine and unharmed. The vampire wasn’t hissing like a cat with rabies and there was no smell nor sight of spilt blood.

Maybe this one wasn’t like the others. Trisha bit her lip. Destroying vampires was a duty that all Light Fay must do. But she was stuck. This dark prince may have potentially saved her sister from a certain death by the Red Caps and so, she had to let him live as a reward.

If she reported him, he would be as good as dead and since he was the prince, his parents would have a war with the Light Fay clan instantly. She reluctantly placed the oil lamp back on the dresser bureau and let out a defeated sigh, relenting.

“Fine, I won’t tell anyone you have this vile monster here,” she said very disgustedly. Rosa jumped up and hugged her sister in great joy, when Alastar spoke up.

“You cannot possibly be resisting all this charm,” he said, waving his hands over himself.

“Only old harpies can do that...”

Trisha grit her teeth. Again, there was that smile of his which she hated so very much.

“Oh, *that’s it!!!*” Trisha growled, ready to punch him. Rosa held her back the best she could, struggling since her older sister was a bit on the hefty, strong side. The dark prince chuckled deep in his throat, thoroughly amused.

“Alastar, please stop making my sister angry! I mean it!” Rosa ordered, her serious tone finally making him behave a little. But the playfulness was not out of his system, as it hardly ever was. He bowed his head and shoulders downward, his black mane flowing forward.

“Yes, my queen,” he purred, unable to stop being frisky. Trisha could barely believe the incredible nerve this vampire had. Instead of being a beastly predator, he was a mischievous, rascally jerk. Wait, did he say... “queen”?!

“*Queen!?* You didn’t just say that! No way!” cried Trisha, thoroughly shocked. He laughed handsomely, sending different kinds of chills down each of the sisters’ backs. Alastar’s garnet-red eyes shone brightly as his striking gorgeous smile never left his face.

“Oh, but I did. You see, I plan to marry your little sister. If she will have me, that is...” Alastar said, then looked directly at Rosa, his eyes so beautifully alluring and full of his love for her.

“Rosa, would you agree to marry me and be my queen for all eternity?” he asked, smiling beautifully at her. Rosa’s eyes grew wet with happiness as she blurted out an answer that stunned Trisha worse than the vampire’s proposal.

“Yes! Oh yes, yes, *yes!*” Rosa cried, running into his open arms and they hugged, the dark prince feeling whole and complete inside as his other half embraced him.

Tears dampened the corners of his eyes as well, as his beloved cried in joy. While Rosa had this feeling that Alastar was going to ask her to marry him, actually having him really propose meant that she could be finally free from Blake’s harassment forever. That made her extremely jubilant.

Initially, Trisha felt very sickened by this sudden news of matrimony between her only little sister and that wretched vampire prince, but then she saw the tears of elation in both of their eyes when they finally stopped hugging and faced one another with their eyes locked and foreheads touching.

They were so very much in love that it was awe-inspiring. Amazing and genuine were those looks of endearment in the vampire's eyes. Trisha's hard heart softened as she understood and she even smiled a little when Alastar and Rosa kissed compassionately.

She had to admit that they looked sort of, well, cute and sweet, like beautiful innocence budding into an impressive flower of intense splendor. It certainly was true love, no doubt. Trisha decided to leave the love birds alone and tried her best to ignore Alastar's playful teasing when she left.

"Come on, admit it. You are thrilled to have such a handsome brother-in-law. No one is finer than me. You know it is the truth," he told her with those confident, puckish eyes and that charming, wide grin.

Trisha had to laugh then and shook her head. He wasn't as horrible as she first thought. If her sister was happy with him, then she could be too, despite what he was.

Sadly, Rosa's estimate on how soon she could have Alastar healed was sorely incorrect. Only two days after he proposed to her, he had a relapse in his health when he developed a terrible fever. Being away from his homeland and staying in a sun-enriched environment was slowly killing him day by day.

The soothing rays of the Fay Moon was the only thing that helped cool his fever, although he still felt a burning inside that agonized him. Rosa was beyond upset and unable think straight. Her healing spells, no matter how strong, were no longer having any effect on the dark prince.

It was obvious Alastar could no longer stay in the land of the Light and he needed to be returned to the darkness in vampire country. Trisha figured that it must be an after-effect of the vine's poison. Since no Dark Fay ever survived a vine poison attack before, they never knew of this deadly after-effect.

Meanwhile, General Blake had thought over Rosa's excuse of being sick and wondered if maybe she had dared to lie to him. Deeply thinking, he toyed with some of the many medals attached to the front of his royal blue military uniform, none of which he had earned. He decided to send his best spy over to her cabin to see if she really was sick, because if she was, he didn't want to get infected. But if she was harboring a man over there, then there would be an execution in town. Again.

"Guard! *Guard!*" Blake shouted loudly, and an overworked sentry rushed in.

"Sir?"

"Bring me, Sethte, at once!" the general ordered.

"Yes, sir!" the guard replied, bowing and then saluting before he raced off to find Sethte. Blake clasped his beefy, hairy hands together as he stared at the far wall, waiting.

On that wall was a proud painting of Rosa and himself standing side by side. Blake noticed that the painter didn't make Rosa's expression happy, instead she appeared miserable. He failed to notice that crucial detail before. It made his blood boil and decided to have that painter killed for his insolence. Soon, Sethte was in his chambers, dressed in a simple, dark blue uniform that consisted of a buttoned-down shirt and long pants.

“You summoned me, my general?” Sethte bowed in full respect, his shining platinum gold locks flowing over his shoulders as he did. He looked up, showing his bright light blue eyes. Blake stood up from his throne-like chair and paced the room while he spoke, steel blue eyes narrowed in irritation.

“Rosa reports to me that she is too ill to do her duties. She gave me a desperate performance of it when I was at her cabin over a day ago,” Blake paused as he felt his wide cleft chin, stroking it.

“More I think of it, the more I think she’s lying. I suspect she hiding one of my guards over in her cabin and I want you to find out who he is, so I can have him eliminated!”

“Of course, General Blake. I will go spy on her this very moment.” Sethte left as quickly as he came. Blake grinned fiendishly. Good. Now, should Rosa truly be ill, his spy could get sick instead, while Blake could be selfishly comfortable in his lavishly furnished mansion that put the rest of his people’s cabins to shame.

He would await Sethte’s report and if Rosa was indeed not sick, he would go into her cabin as he did before and drag out that traitorous guard himself. Then, Blake would demonstrate what happened to those who dare betray him.

Sethte did his best to be undetected as he observed Rosa’s cabin from afar during the day and at night, he listening in near the windows. At first, he thought he heard a male voice inside the guest room, but he sounded pitifully sick. He heard Rosa and Trisha talking with each other about taking, whoever was in there, away to the darkness.

Confused, Sethte thought perhaps they meant the man, whoever he was, could be close to death since the Light Fay believed that they all returned to darkness when they died. Sethte gave his first report to Blake the next morning. He asked to speak to his general and entered his chamber.

“Well? What do you have to report?” Blake asked over his breakfast of wine and quail. Sethte bowed and then, straightened up.

“I observed nothing in the daylight, but at night, I heard a man’s voice in the guest room. He sounded very ill. Close to death, I dare say. Rosa and Trisha mentioned something about returning him to the darkness.”

Blake squeezed his wine glass so tightly that it broke, creating a huge mess all over his dining table. So, it was true! Rosa had a man in her cabin after all! But this man was sick and so, her being sick as well might be true.

Still, Blake was very infuriated that she didn’t tell him all the details. If the man died, then she would get what she deserved for trying to have a boyfriend behind his back. Granted, they weren’t married, but to the general, that didn’t matter. In Blake’s eyes, Rosa was already his and he dictated who she could see, and that was to be no one other than himself.

“So, she *was* hiding a man in her home...” Blake said strangely, as if he was desperately trying to control his building anger, but failing miserably.

Sethte noticed how the general’s body trembled with rage and swiftly ducked behind the opening to the hallway through which he had come to deliver the news.

Blake went on a violent tirade as he flung the items from the dining table throughout his chamber. The food went flying and was wasted upon the polished floor. He stained the proud painting of him and Rosa with wine when he threw the bottle at it, screaming.

Sethte said nothing as he stayed out of the spray of expensive items that Blake continued to chuck about and break. At last, Blake finished his tantrum by knocking over the heavy dining table completely upside down.

He pointed a finger at Sethte and shouted, "I want Rosa's cabin searched and the man exposed! I want to know who he is!"

"You want to send your men into her cabin, even with the sickness inside of it?" Sethte questioned, confused. Usually, the general liked to keep dispersal of any disease to a bare minimum.

Blake breathed in and out shakily, fighting to think a bit more clearly. Spreading such a deadly disease throughout the camp would be disastrous for he might get infected. He forced himself to calm down, although it was most difficult for him.

"No," Blake said reluctantly. "But I *cannot* let her insult me like this!"

The general shouted for the captain of his guards to come. Captain Garrett arrived in due time, lavishly dressed in his military dark blue and gold uniform. He swiped a hand through his scruffy, short, reddish-orange hair as he looked at Blake and Sethte respectfully with his grass-green eyes, before he bowed and then saluted.

"Yes, sir! General, sir!" he asked, standing tall and stiff, awaiting his orders. He noticed the mess in the chamber, but dared not to comment on it. What Blake did in his own room was his own business.

"Captain, I want you to go to Rosa's cabin and tell her and Trisha to bring out the man they are hiding there. I want you to bring him here immediately, understand?" Blake said, when Sethte spoke up.

"But, my general, the sickness!"

Garrett raised a reddish-orange eyebrow while he backed up a little. All Light Fay feared illness that threatened their immortality. He didn't want to become unwell and be forced to stay away from Trisha, his lover. And what was this of the sisters helping a sick man in Rosa's cabin? Why wasn't that man in the infirmaries?

Rosa would never bring anyone disease-ridden in her home, especially with how meticulous she was with cleaning. Having a sick man in her house on purpose sounded absolutely ludicrous that Garrett had a hard time believing it.

"Sickness? What level is this sickness, sir?" Garrett asked carefully. Instantly, his ears were blasted by Blake's barking commands.

"I *told* you to bring out the man Rosa is hiding! Do it *now!!!*" he shrieked, grabbing a broken chair and throwing it at him. Garrett moved out of the way as the chair narrowly missed his head and slammed into the stained painting of Blake and Rosa, causing it to fall to the floor with a loud thud.

Glass shattered from the frame and flew in all directions. Garrett and Sethte decided it was a good time to leave and did so as respectfully as they could. Blake commanded his men to get the maids in his chamber to clean up the mess and they promised they would call for them, but other things were on their minds then.

“Incredible temper he has, doesn’t he?” Sethte spoke softly as he and Garrett were out of earshot of General Blake. Garrett nodded, thoroughly shocked. Their general’s rage was only getting worse and worse as time went on. It appeared uncontrollable more than ever.

“He’s gone mad,” Garrett said, shaking his head. “Rosa would *never* keep a sickly man in her cabin. You know how she is with cleanliness.”

“I do, but I did hear a man inside her cabin. In the guest room. You must find out who it is or the general will have your head. And mine too, probably,” Sethte said, worriedly. Garrett didn’t want to believe Sethte, but he was Blake’s best spy. He never lied about what he reported during his spy missions. Troubled, the captain went to Rosa’s cabin and he was met with much resistance from her.

“Garrett!” she cried as he made his way through her front door just as she was leaving. She had run out of lavender oil and she was going to get some more from the market. What a fine time for her sister’s boyfriend to come visit!

“What are you doing here?” she asked, wishing he would just leave. But it was clear he was doing nothing of the sort. Garrett looked at her suspiciously and sniffed the air, making a face.

“What’s...that horrible odor? It smells like rotting flesh,” he grimaced, pinching his nostrils together with his fingers.

“*Whew!* It’s really strong too! How can you stand it?” The captain headed over to the guest room where the stench was emanating the most from.

“*No!* Garrett, please, don’t! Garrett!!” Rosa screamed, rushing in front of the guest room door, holding her arms out. “I beg you! Don’t go in there!”

“Why not?” he inquired, frowning, still holding his nose. “Are you really hiding a soldier in there? Are you?” Rosa had no answer for him.

“Come on, Rosa. The poor man is decaying in there. Put him back in the infirmaries, so he can get the proper care,” Garrett noted the desperate expression on her face. Why was she doing this?

“Open this door. Now,” he ordered.

Rosa bit her lip. She hated to use a flaming blast attack on her sister’s lover, but she had to. The sealing spell she had put on the door could possibly be undone by Garrett, since he was trained to break down barrier spells, so that wouldn’t stop him.

When he tried to push her aside from the door, she knew she had no choice, but to attack him. She quickly pressed her fiery palms to his abdomen before he could react and she let him have it. He was flung back against the wall opposite of the guest room, knocking over her table and some glassware all over the hard-wooden floor.

“*Rosa!* What is the *matter* with you?!” Garrett shouted, holding his stomach and clutching the overturned table for support to get back on his feet. The broken glass made the floor a slippery hazard which Garrett’s leather boots kept sliding on. Rosa kept her hands spread and burning, threatening another attack with tears streaming down her face.

“I told you, you can’t go in that room! You just *can’t!*” she cried, shaking her head, her green eyes ablaze with defensive worry.

“By the flames of the Fay Sun! Rosa, how could you? I can’t believe you’d hide a man, sick or otherwise, in your house and think Blake wouldn’t notice! He’s as good as dead, thanks to you!” Garrett paused to scratch his head in a fast-quick scrubbing motion, something he always did when he felt very flustered.

Taken aback by the extreme worried concern plaguing Rosa’s eyes, Garrett realized that she must really love this sick man, whoever he was. He decided to do an unthinkable thing and let Rosa keep this man however she saw fit. True love had to be the reason why she would allow a sickly man in her home when she was so overly apprehensive of disease.

“Who is he? Just tell me and I’ll report to the general that the man died on his own. Alright?” Garrett offered, but Rosa refused to tell him who was hidden in her guest room. She knew if she did, Garrett would not leave without taking Alastar to Blake. It would be his duty to take an enemy to the general.

Rosa’s mind raced on what she would do and say next. Should she detain Garrett against his will? How could she do such a thing when he was stronger than she was? She only was able to knock him down with her fire magic because he didn’t expect her to attack. He would be ready for her now. What to do; what to do??

Just then, the guest door opened and Alastar staggered out, breathing hard and clinging to the door frame as he struggled to stand. Garrett stared, frozen in place, shocked at whom he was seeing.

The dark prince of the Bloodless Fangs?!

It couldn’t be him! But it was, with his trademark shining black mane that hung past his knees and his sharp garnet-red eyes. No other vampire looked as he did with his perfect features and flawless physical being. Garrett had once seen the prince months ago at the edge of the Gray Forest when returning from a gold raid on the trolls.

The captain had hidden himself and his battered troops behind the thick oak trees while the royal vampiric family had passed by on horseback following the trail that ran along the Gray Forest’s edge for miles.

Even though it was against the vampiric law to look at royalty without permission, Garrett never cared to abide by their laws and had observed his enemies well. On that day, he marked the dark prince’s appearance in case he needed to nock an arrow at his skull someday and do away with him when the time came.

Now, here he was in the stinking vampire flesh in Rosa’s home!

“Why’d you come out?” Rosa asked him in a hushed, concerned voice as she placed his left arm around her shoulders while he still held onto the door frame.

“I...I had to...” he gasped, knowing he had better convince this Light Fay soldier not to kill him. Otherwise, he’d have the same problem when he almost died during the Red Caps’ attack as the vine poison was destroying him. Should he die, so would Rosa, due to a guaranteed war from his parents. Garrett continued to stare in stunned silence at the dark prince, who looked back at him with determined, yet ailing eyes.

“Please...kind sir...” Alastar struggled to get his words out as he felt he might black out at any moment.

“Please, let me...return home... If I die here...killed either by...your hands or your general...an immediate war between...your people and mine...will be assured... My-my parents won’t stop...until everyone in your land is destroyed...”

The dark prince suddenly clutched the left side of his chest in great pain as he squeezed his eyes tightly, leaning back while Rosa cried out.

“Alastar!”

But he seemed to recover a little as he held a reassuring claw to her and trained his garnet-red eyes, which were clouded in much sickness, on Garrett.

“I don’t- I don’t want my Rosa to be killed... So, please... Let me leave quietly... I beg of you... I beg of you...” Alastar trailed off in a whisper as his eyes rolled up into his head and then he collapsed face first onto the wooden floor.

Rosa tried to hold onto him, but he simply was too heavy for her to stop his fall or even slow it. She screamed his name in shock and bent over, pleading for him to wake up, weeping.

Garrett said nothing for a long while, watching Rosa fuss over the vampire. Finally, he stooped down to the dark prince, who was still alive, just unconscious. Rosa shrieked at Garrett to get away when he gathered Alastar into his arms, doing his best to ignore his unpleasant smell and hoped whatever illness the vampire had would not infect him.

She gawked at Garrett, believing the worst. Would he take Alastar away to be burned alive or staked in front of the whole town? Instead Garrett carried the vampire prince into the guest room and laid him down in the bed. Rosa watched with happiness building inside her. Did this mean what she desperately hoped?

“I will prepare a wagon tonight...so we can take him back home,” Garrett said simply and Rosa hugged him in exhilaration, tears of joy cascading down her face.

“Oh, thank you, *thank you!*” she cried, unable to believe this was actually happening.

Garrett stood like a statue, knowing what he was doing meant his death. Blake would never forgive him for this betrayal. But the Light Fay captain would gladly sacrifice himself to save his kinfolk from a terrible war from this prince’s parents.

The captain knew now that he would have to live in exile. He doubted that Trisha would want to be banished just to stay with him and he didn’t want to make her to do so either, thus that meant he had to give her up, or die. Either way, she would have to live in misery without him.

He gently pushed Rosa off of him so he could leave and prepare. Her eyes followed him with appreciation. “Garrett, thank you so much,” she said, placing a cool wet cloth to Alastar’s forehead. He grunted a response and closed the door behind him. Now, came the hard part.

CHAPTER 4

Garrett's heart pounded in his ears as he quietly led his faithful dark brown ox, Betty, drawing an unpainted wooden wagon over to Rosa's cabin during the late-night hours. He hoped that none of his fellow co-workers would notice him like this. But if they did and questioned him, he had the believable excuse that the sick man in Rosa's cabin had died and his corpse needed to be taken away. By now, everyone in town knew of the sick man, but not who he was.

'I know who he is...' Garrett thought, still feeling very nervous despite his ready excuse. He was aiding the enemy and shaming his late father's wishes to utterly destroy all vampires whenever possible.

Tonight, he was saving one and not only that, but the prince of the Bloodless Fangs, the most dangerous clan of all vampires. They did not have the limitations of their cousins. They were unaffected by sunlight and some of them even enjoyed eating garlic. Some were known to survive attacks from silver, such as their powerful King.

The ways to ward off a common vampire did not work on the Bloodless Fangs for they hardly had any vulnerabilities. They were vicious killers with dark, black hearts and they sought out the weak and children to feed on.

At least, that was what most Light Fay believed was true about them. Garrett felt very puzzled, since the vampire Rosa was hiding, didn't seem like any of those negative things he was taught to know. He let a shakily sigh escape his lips as he pulled the hood on his long, dark brown cloak lower over his brow and gathered the fabric around his neck in a nervous manner.

'It is for the good of the clan. It is for the good of the clan.' he repeated in his head over and over as an attempt to quell his shame and mounting fear. He hoped that they wouldn't be caught. He just wanted this to be over with.

Once at Rosa's cabin, he checked around for prying eyes. He didn't sense anyone and so, he took Betty to the back door and told her in a whisper to stay. Then, he quickly entered the back of the cabin. His lover, Trisha was there, already clued into the plan to return Alastar home, to the dark side of the Fay world.

Rosa had Alastar ready, dressed in a dark cloak with a large hood that covered his head that made him look like a druid. He was sitting up in the bed, shivering even though he was burning up. The Fay moon wasn't shining through the window yet and the dark prince wasn't doing too well.

No longer was Garrett concerned on catching the terrible sickness that plagued the vampire. Rosa nor Trisha had been infected, so it was probably an illness that only the Dark Moon Fay could get. The captain patted the dark prince's backside and helped him to his feet. He then guided him to the wagon out back. Rosa and Trisha put on their own cloaks of sparkling finery and covered their heads as well.

Holding his breath, Garrett numbly supported Alastar as the vampire stumbled on his own feet to the wagon. The prince not only felt feeble, but immensely embarrassed. He hated to be so helpless like this with having a Light Fay warrior aiding him onto the straw-filled wagon as if he was an infant, but he had no choice.

He had no energy left to save his dignity, what was left of it. Alastar really didn't enjoy begging Garrett to keep the secret of his illegal stay at Rosa's house, but he'd do anything to preserve her safety, especially her life.

Garrett took a large burlap cloth that he had in the wagon and draped it over the vampire to conceal him further. The scratchy burlap scraped Alastar's face and so he pushed it away, as best as he could. He turned his head and frowned, contorting his features in disgust.

Despite his suffering and shame, annoyance came to him in a rush. The unkind burlap made the prince feel that this might be some sort of insult from Garrett. Why couldn't he have brought a softer cloth with which to hide him?

He grit his teeth and attempted to get comfortable by shifting his weight. But it was no use. The unforgiving straw was poking him all over through the cloak and thin robe. Miserably, he numbed his mind to stand his building irritation.

None of them said a word as Betty the ox followed her master away from the Light Fay camp and into the Gray Forest with Trisha and Rosa trailing close behind. It would take at least a day and a night on foot to get Alastar back home. Rosa feared that he might not make the journey.

If it were so, then she would be doomed to be Blake's slave or a wife forever. Tears fell from her eyes as she walked listlessly behind the creaking wooden wagon, listening to the soft squeaking of the axle as the wheels turned on the dusty trail in the Gray Forest. Trisha noticed her sister's shoulders shaking from her silent weeping and put her arm around her, hugging her close.

"Shhh, it'll be alright..." she whispered, putting her hand into Rosa's trembling left hand. Rosa squeezed her hand tightly and forced herself to nod, acknowledging her sister's comfort.

"It's best not to talk now," Garrett warned them in a hushed tone, his eyes darting around the darkened forest. He kept his lantern's light as low as possible, not wishing for its glow to attract anything within the dangerous woods.

A strange sound made him turn his head toward it. He thought that he might have heard something moving amongst the trees, not too far off in the distance. A crackle of twigs made the Light Fay captain jerk his head to the right. Betty grunted in worry, slowing her pace as she tried to turn around. Garrett coaxed her to move forward and faster. The beast groaned out in fright, smelling whatever it was that was stalking them now.

Alastar was saying something under the burlap cloth, but his words were muffled. Rosa caught up to the wagon and climbed in, removing the burlap from her beloved. Alastar grabbed Rosa's left arm with his right hand and pulled her closer. She could see the troubled look in his face, his eyes filled with distress. He needed to tell her something, but he lacked the strength to do so.

"What's wrong, my love?" she asked, touching his face and bending down closer to him. "It's-it's t-the..." Alastar's body trembled hard as he fought to get the words out.

"Nev-er...b-born..." he gasped out incoherently and tried to catch his breath as a fit of coughing overtook him.

"What?" Rosa didn't hear him correctly.

“What did he say? Is there something out there?” Trisha asked, confused and feeling the chill in the air then. She shivered and pulled her cloak around herself tighter. Alastar continued to cough hard, a series of hacking wheezes that stole his breath away, alarming everyone.

Garrett narrowed his eyes as he thought he caught a glimpse of something large to the left side of the trail. Whatever was following them could easily attack at any moment with all that noise Alastar was making.

He knew that the vampire couldn't help it, but they might all be killed since the dark prince's coughing was attracting whatever was out there. He turned to look behind him and grimaced. Ugh, that rotting smell was even worse now, but it wasn't the same as Alastar's stench. This was much worse.

“Stop him from coughing!” Garrett hissed, his long pointy ears picking up the sounds of more twigs and leaves being crushed under something heavy and large.

“How can I possibly do that?” Rosa snapped back at him. “Even my healing spells are ineffective, so how can I make him better and get him to stop coughing? Tell me *how*!?” She grit her teeth, fighting back tears. She truly believed her magic was now useless and, she felt, so was she.

“Let me try something,” Trisha said, climbing into the wagon with them. She attempted to calm Alastar's throat with a soothing spell of her own making and it seemed to help better than she thought it would. It was a dangerous spell she was hesitant to use since it had put to sleep a seriously ill pet squirrel Rosa had years ago and so, she hardly ever used it except in dire situations.

Thankfully, it didn't put the vampire into an eternal sleep where even a kiss of true love would not wake him. The dark prince could breathe once more and the strangling coughs subsided.

“Oh, *thank* you, Trisha!” Rosa said loudly, forgetting to be quiet. Trisha smiled as her little sister embraced her over Alastar, the vampire's pale lips gently moving up into a smile. How fortunate he was to have such kindness given to him from his ‘enemies’.

Suddenly, the wagon stopped and Garrett stood frozen on the path, breathing hard. Betty grunted and groaned in fright, yet she seemed unable to move as well. Rosa set her eyes on who had made her sister's lover stop dead in his tracks and her gasp was caught in her throat. Trisha went to Garrett in the front of the wagon and squeaked in shock.

There stood a towering being dressed in a flowing black and golden robe having only one sleeve with part of his chest and right arm completely exposed. His sun-kissed blond, wavy bangs danced in the wind around his handsome, human-like face and on his brow rested a silver crown made of a single bar of metal curled around his head with the ends curled onto each other.

His sly eyes were a rich honey color and his thin lips were yanked back into a wicked grin. While his long, curling bangs were the color of sunshine, the rest of his hair was cut short to his scalp and it was the darkest hue of eggplant purple, appearing almost black as a moonless night.

Rosa couldn't barely contain her fright. The wicked creature had his fingers transformed into five razor sharp claws poised at Garrett's throat, ready to dive into his jugular. The Light Fay all stood there, watching and terrified. Then, at last, the terrible monster spoke.

“What are you Light Fay doing with a decaying vampire...in the dead of night?” he asked, his smooth, deep, rich voice sounding so serene, yet ominous. Deviously, he peered into each of their eyes one by one, tasting their souls. Rosa cried out in painful fright and looked away.

Hearing her distressing shriek, Alastar felt a surge of rage and released a vicious growling roar that ended with a hiss that got everyone’s attention. Rosa was extremely frightened by her lover’s outburst, since she hardly heard him hiss or growl, let alone a roar like that.

Alastar rolled off his back to his left side and turned over, then held himself up by his arms. He moved his head up enough to see the wicked creature and met his gaze with fury.

“Leave us *alone!*” the dark prince snarled, suddenly feeling somewhat better somehow. Were the after effects of the vine poison wearing off? He hoped so since he had to try and protect Rosa and the others from this dangerous Neverborn. They didn’t have a chance to make it out alive otherwise.

“Yes, get out of our way! We need to return him back home!” Trisha yelled, trying to be brave, but hid her eyes when the demon looked her way again. His broad, open smile revealed rows of shark-like teeth that scared Rosa to death. Especially with the disturbing way he was licking his lips at them.

“Come, come now. You don’t expect me to leave empty-handed,” the evil immortal replied, nonchalantly. He focused his golden-brown eyes on Garrett then, placing his grip on his neck threateningly.

The captain narrowed his eyes, gritting his teeth and grunting his frustration, since he was paralyzed by this wicked monster’s magic. Betty was in a trance so she wouldn’t escape or make a fuss while the demon dealt with these tasty Light Fay and the delicious vampire. Trisha’s love for Garrett made her bargain with the monster.

“Don’t kill him, *please!*” she begged, throwing herself at the Neverborn’s feet. Smirking, he reached down in a split-second and grabbed her by the neck, holding her hostage against himself as she screamed wildly.

“Trisha!” Rosa cried, trying to run to her sister, but Alastar held her back, almost pinning her down inside of the wagon. She was surprised by his strength then. He even looked less sick as well. How could that be?

“*Stay here!*” he ordered her in a hushed whisper. His expression was so serious that Rosa dared not disobey.

“Brother in darkness, let the Light Fay go...” Alastar said, getting out of the wagon and approaching the Neverborn.

“And what will you do if I do not...?” the demon inquired while his claws tightened even more on his victims. Garrett and Trisha screamed their agony, which brought blinding tears to Rosa’s eyes.

“Stop it!!” she cried, shaking. Her misery seemed to make the horrid monster very pleased.

Alastar wanted to do battle, but he knew at his level of strength, he would probably be killed and then eaten by this demon. There was no doubt that Rosa, Trisha, and Garrett would be tortured, and then eaten too, probably alive.

Negotiating for mercy never worked with demons and battling hardly worked either since they were expert warriors and often too difficult to defeat physically. Not only that, but a never-ending series of revenge attacks would come next whether from the demon himself or his allies of pure evil madness. Alastar didn't want the bother of a Neverborn coming around desiring constant revenge, even if he could defeat this beastly evil creature. He had Rosa to think about after all.

"You can do nothing," the monster snarled, then continued on in a sly tone.

"Nothing, except join me in feasting on their flesh," he said, thoroughly relishing in their terror and rage. "I can sense you haven't had a good drink in a long time..."

Alastar's jaw tightened as he glared back resentfully. Of course, he hadn't had a decent draining in a long time, but he didn't need to, to survive that was. Yes, he wished he could have tasted blood other than the raw fowl Rosa had brought him, but he could repress that itching desire in his fangs better than most.

The evil being was only trying to tempt his dark nature to drink blood and make him feel ashamed for not doing so. The vampire prince knew that telling this Neverborn that he'd never drink them would be unwise.

It would only give the demon an idea to place a spell on Alastar to bite and drink his friends just to torment them for his own evil enjoyment. So, the dark prince said nothing, yet his narrowed angry eyes spoke volumes.

"You should be thanking me that I came along...to help you..." the fiend continued, smirking again. Having the upper claw on these weak Fay made him feel invincible, as most terrorists felt. Unfortunately for the travelers, this demon had the strength to end them in the blink of an eye.

"Help?! What do you mean?!" Rosa was shocked. How did this monster think that stalking and harassing them like this was helping?

"Do *not* talk to him!" Alastar shouted at her, worrying her. She looked sadly at her beloved and then briefly at the deceitful brute, who gave her a salacious, hungry gaze that made her cower and turn her face away, whimpering.

"You help no one, but yourself," Alastar pointed out, growling. The Neverborn haughtily laughed, throwing his head back for a moment, his laughter mixed with eerie snarling and low groans of unknown beasts.

"Such an intelligent vampire! Yet, so foolish at the same time," the monster said, changing his expression from playfully amused to incredibly hateful.

"If I had not arrived, you'd be rotting away to crumbling ashes in that pathetic wagon. You would have *never* made it back to your country. My darkness aided in your survival. You owe me and these two Light Fay will be a fine first down payment."

"You *cannot* have them!" Alastar shot back with such ferocity that Garrett thought better of the dark prince then. He wasn't as terrible as Blake made the vampires seem.

“So, you want to drink them all for yourself, do you?” the demon sneered, getting very annoyed. “Greedy impetuous vampire, how *dare* you show such insolence when I was kind to you! They are *mine!*”

“Please, don’t kill them! Just let them go, please! I’ll do anything!!” Rosa blurted out, horrifying Alastar. Oh, why did she have to say *that*? The dark prince gave her such a chagrined glare, that Rosa was taken aback.

- **CONTINUED IN "CAC BOOK 1: FORBIDDEN ECLIPSE"** -

Will Garrett and Trisha escape from the Neverborn alive? Will Alastar ever get back home safely? What will become of Rosa? Who is this nasty, wicked Neverborn anyway?

The answers to these questions and ***a lot*** more will be in the first book of "*Change a Changeling: Forbidden Eclipse*", to be published in late 2018!

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