



Prologue

"We are not keeping it." He decided for his wife, as she cradled her baby close to her chest.

“No, what if there’s a chance-” she stuttered, but he interrupted.

“There is NO chance, Elowra.” Madoc shouted. His glare shot through her eyes and landed deep in her heart.

“Okay,” the queen resigned, “Okay. But I don’t want to. You do it.” She sat up straight, and rested her baby on her pillow as it cried. “Take him away. Wherever you want to.” Her voice cracked and she couldn’t hold back her sobs.

Madoc was quiet as his wife left the room, left with an opponent he was determined to destroy.. He picked it up and messily wrapped the bed sheet around its small body. He chanted the magic to silence the child. Since the crying was over, Madoc slid on his boots and exited the castle from the back. He walked deep into the forest, until he couldn’t see light through the dense trees.

Madoc whispered the words of magic to carve out a cave in an enormous rock by the base of the Kyllian Mountains. He put the baby down on the cave floor, enjoying how it writhed and flinched from the cold of the rock. Quickly, before the spell ran out, Madoc slipped out of the man-made hole, and watched the rock entrance magick shut.

Chapter 1

The rocket had been quiet for years. It was ages since it felt something, since it had last sensed a presence. But the harmony of magic sounded somewhere far from the castle. A magical presence tugged on the strands of its conscience, waking him up. It could feel his chosen faerie’s magic pulsing, his core lighting up. He felt a great rage awaken, and never die down.

Serafena was exhausted. The day was long and boring. All her parents did was assign her homework and order her to assist the servants. That was all they ever did. The blandness of her day was tiring, and she couldn’t wait to fall asleep. She tried eating some dinner, but after a few bites she felt like she couldn’t keep anything down. She tried water but no better. She’d try again tomorrow. Her stomach issues were happening a lot recently, but good night sleep would fix it, something she hadn’t gotten in a while. As she laid in bed, she found herself wishing for some excitement. When would she live the true life of a Kyllian Princess? Something had to come out of her life. She had to make something happen. But the thoughts slipped away as quickly as they came, and she fell asleep.

She felt a headache blossom behind her eyes when she woke, twinging at every blink. She crawled out of bed and her feet found her slippers on the floor. She walked up to the window and peeked back the curtains. The light hurt her eyes, and she stepped away.

No outside time today, she supposed.

All her chores were complete, thank the heavens. Today, she could explore her castle like a real princess. She changed into beautifully handmade day clothes. Since she wasn’t going to frolic the gardens today, now would be a perfect time to wear it.

The attic. A voice in her mind called to her. Sure. The attic always had the best nicknacks. Maybe Serafina would even find a crown.

The attic was huge compared to village houses, and magic prevented even a single speck of dust from settling. It didn’t require a ladder to access because the designers of the castle

created a stairway specifically for the storage room. Sera examined the inside, searching for what was calling for her.

She walked towards some cardboard boxes, flipping open flaps. She would know once she saw it. She had to, because there was nothing else but gut instinct that encouraged her towards a box set slightly apart from the rest.

A box, which looked just like any other at first, but glowed a gold more vibrant at every step she took toward it. She spun the box around, looking for a label. The words “baby” were scrawled messily in black. She opened it, and a golden rocket zipped past and around her. Emitting stars and buzzing like a joyous firefly.

The rocket landed at her feet, and she scooped it up carefully in her arms before climbing down the stairs to her room.

Serafena sat on the couch in her bedroom, turning the rocket over in her hands. It was delicately crafted and bedazzled with jewels. Two jewels in particular, shined so bright that she couldn't break away.

The rocket didn't say anything, it couldn't. But it spoke to her in a different kind of language. An eerie hum. An order to obey. It was quiet and demanding. Terrifying, coming from an inanimate object. Maybe not so inanimate. She jumped up in fear when the rocket suddenly chanted louder. She sprinted to her closet, opened a drawer and shoved the rocket deep underneath her clothes. The noise in her head cleared, and she could breathe again.

Sera left her room to create new chores for herself, and she didn't come back for the rest of the day.



Chapter 2

“After all this time, the rocket could finally fulfil its purpose. Soaring through the sky, it couldn't remember the last time it felt its faerie. It raced through the trees expertly, for a rocket who hadn't seen the world in over fifty years. While it dodged branches and birds, the rocket felt its faerie tug on their bond. Its faerie knew it was coming. The rocket blasted faster, yearning to feel the power of its master shine in its jewels.”

Serafena awoke from the sound of wood cracking. She shot up straight in her bed and gaped at her dresser. The magic toy rocket had launched into her wooden drawer, and was now trying to nose its way out of the cabinet. Sera could only watch as the wood weakened, then splintered, and finally the rocket broke free. The glass window parallel to the dresser was easy to break through, and the rocket zipped into the world outside.

Her bones finally unlocked and Sera hastily fastened her boots and recklessly jumped out the window. She landed completely wrong and had to scramble up to run after the rocket, it was already so far away.

Serafena was out of breath, tired and sore. The rocket seemed to be slowing down then speeding up, or maybe it was her mind playing tricks on her. Regardless, her body was starting to give out and her head was spinning. The adrenaline of the chase fueled her in the beginning, but after running for what felt like hours, Sera realised how unfit she was. Not only was she huffing and puffing, but she also had no idea where they were headed. Since she didn't know what the big prize was, she was finding it hard to care.

Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, the rocket stopped. It made a nosedive down and hovered in front of the princess, glowing slightly. She was panting, and her dress was ripped. "Where are we?" She stuttered. She hadn't realised the time as she was running. Dawn brought a soft glow to the forest, and Sera was almost admiring the beauty, but her annoyance hadn't let go.

"This is the last time I'm following someone who isn't human," she murmured angrily, grunting slightly as she looked around. The woods had an eerie vibe about them, especially at night, and the princess felt a **shiver** run down her spine. Suddenly, a twig snapped near her. She jumped slightly, straining her ears to try and hear anything else, when ragged breathing came from somewhere near her.

Afraid, Sera spun around, calling out desperately into the forest. "Who are you? Show yourself!" Her body stiffened as she heard someone making her way out of the bushes. She took a defensive position, ready to defend herself against threats. A faerie with dark brown hair makes his way out of the bushes. He looked at her and she met his honey brown eyes.

"You followed my rocket." He noted. She didn't say a word. "Come." He turned around and walked away, but she was frozen. Should she go after him? Or run back the way she came?

He stopped, "Are you coming?" Was she coming?

A hint of anger in his eyes jumped her bones, "Coming!" She exhaled, and she tripped over the tree roots after him, trying to match his startling pace.

Chapter 3

"I'm Seraphena, but call me Sera." He only nodded in response, then turned back to his rocket and cave. His cave was unnerving. It wasn't a natural opening of land. The entrance looked like it was never there, like he broke into rock to make a home. She felt her palm against the edges. They weren't sharp.

"What happened here?" She asked, turning away from the cave to face him.

"I broke out of that prison a long time ago." He said, "Now come. Sit with me by the river."

She didn't know why she took the hand he held out for her, or why her legs moved with his, but they walked down to the stream and sat by the edge. Immediately, the scent of fresh flowers delighted her. She looked around and saw all sorts of wild flowers with beautiful colours dancing in the breeze. They were walking along the Crystal River, famous for its reflective and clean waters.

"I assume my rocket led you here." He sat by the river edge and patted the grass next to him. Sera sat toward him.

"It did."

"Well, what do you think?" He asked. He watched the river crash against the smooth river rocks and spray water up to where they sat. He had brought a branch of berries with him to share. Sera tried eating a few and they stayed down, most likely due to their small size. She could only swallow ten before she felt the warning signs of stomach pain.

"Think? About what?"

"Do you know why the rocket came to me?"

She didn't. How embarrassing.

"Don't be embarrassed," he said, like he read her mind, "This magic isn't simple like you believe."

The lush grass tickled her thighs. He ripped out a handful of berries and ate them. He then continued, "Magic entities bond with royal faeries to create psychic and physical safety." Caedryn's rocket was a royal entity? She'd heard of them, but she never realised that that was what she found.

"Are you a part of my family..." She realised she didn't know his name.

"Caedryn. They are not your family." He said, not unkindly but his words still stung and deflated her curiosity. "They were mine." He said, plucking a flower from the ground and brushing the petals against her lower legs.

"My parents are yours? Are we-?"

"No, we're not." He said, meeting her puzzled eyes. "I am the only true child of the King and Queen of Kyllian."

"What?" She felt vomit rising in her throat. *I was their only child.* No way. "Liar."

"I'm not lying, Seraphena."

"I remember my parents fighting over a young Caedryn. Over whether or not he should stay in the castle or face banishment." He spoke barely above the wind. Quiet and sad. The way he whispered made Sera think that he was revealing a big part of him. Her insides froze, she kept herself still to keep him talking.

"Then, I remember my father bringing me to that cave, and closing me in." Her stomach stirred nauseously. Her parents had *opened up a cave* just to abandon Caedryn in it? How could they?!

"I..." She wanted to say that she didn't believe him, but...she wasn't sure. How could someone of royal blood be out here unless the King and Queen demanded it? "I can't believe that they did that."

Caedryn said, "Well, they did. And here I am talking to a lady who is lined up to take my place as ruler but somehow I am too distracted by her beautiful face to care about my place in royalty."

Seraphena blushed deeply at that. No one had ever said that before. She never even had the opportunity to talk to boys before. She saw her reflection in the Crystal River, wondering what Caedryn saw. Her skin was so pale, her hair was discoloured but her eyes...her eyes were normal looking again. Gone was the dull green that had been there for weeks. Now her eyes were glowing, a brighter green.

"So now we go back to why my rocket brought you here." Caedryn said, lifting her chin from and admiring her up and down.

“And why is that?” Sera said, delighted that he saw something in her.

“Because I want to overthrow the King and Queen of Kyllian. And I want you to help me.”



Chapter 4

Sera thought a lot about what she'd learned in her early morning. Her parents had abandoned their biological child, and thanks to her father, her mother always had to treat her coldly no matter how hard she tried. Because her father was a cruel man and an evil king.

Why shouldn't she help a royal faerie that could make the ruling fair again?

Was Caedyrn's plan fair? Seraphena knew that she would want justice against the people who wronged her, and the feeling had to be more intense for Caedyrn because...

Every time Sera thought about Caed, about his life, his question and his history, she couldn't stop the tears that swelled. She never truly cried for him because she needed to be strong, but it always made her heart ache to think about a young boy left for nothing.

But maybe Caedyrn was being silly, trying to mess with a princess's mind. There's no way he would want to take over a kingdom as a one man army. Although that is why he asked her...this was all so confusing. Her sympathy for Caedyrn was interrupting the smart side of her. How was Caedyrn's very existence messing with her?

The headaches she got from thinking about the whole situation were painful enough that she could barely see her bed and she stumbled to the mattress and slept for the rest of the day.

Caedryn had always been good at being stealthy. Sneaking around, hiding in the shadows... it was his specialty. Which was precisely why he thought it would be a good idea for him to try to break into a guarded castle.

He made his way around the bushes, hiding behind the leaves and the wall's shadow, he was as silent as a fox stalking its prey. He was about to climb over the wall when he heard footsteps.

Cursing to the stars, Caedryn frantically searched the garden for a quick place to hide. He had his eyes on a thicket of berry bushes, but didn't have the time to make the escape because a hand snatched him by his shirt to a halt.

"Where do you think you're going?" He froze when he heard the princess's sweet voice. Serafena gazed at him with anger in her eyes. "This is so dangerous, Caed. Why are you here?"

"Caed..." he smirked, the nickname repeating itself in his mind in Sera's voice.

She ignored him. "Come with me." Intrigued, Caedryn followed after her, resisting the urge to sigh. This was going to be a long, painful conversation. For her, of course. He had nothing to lose, but everything to gain.

"You are actually trying to overthrow the monarchy?" Sera stared at Caedryn, shocked. He looked back at her, meeting her stare. "That's exactly what I asked you to do with me. And there's nothing you can do about it, even if you refuse to help. Don't you understand? I've already told you my reasons. You should know why I chose to do this. Why I *have* to do this."

He had to earn his place. He had to rule when Madoc died. He deserved to be King. He needed to be worthy. To be recognised. To be *loved*.

"Okay, Caedryn. I will help you."

"What?" His gaze swung back to her, and he stared into those pale green eyes, almost not believing what he was hearing. "You agree?"

She nodded her head, gazing at him. "You're doing the right thing. And I'm not just going to support you from the sidelines." The young girl looked at him, a faint smile on her face. "I'm going to fight with you in front of the world."

His jaw dropped, he couldn't believe what he was hearing but he was incredibly grateful for it. He admired her for a few moments, and smiled smally. "Thank you so much."

"Your welcome," Sera smiled, "Now, where do we start?"

Chapter 5

Before Sera would let him in the castle, she made Caedryn agree to take a bath. He stunk from living in the forest for so long, only able to be cleansed by the river, but when the river was freezing, he couldn't wash himself there either. Also, his unnatural scent of dirt would alert the house of his presence, maybe even her parents. She handed him a **sponge** and some soap before letting him bathe in peace.

They headed straight for the library afterwards as the day was still bright. Together, they scoured the old shelves for books on magic, prophecies and magic entities. According to Caedryn, the rocket he bonded with as a child could enhance his powers, and maybe even Sera's.

Caedryn said that even though she wasn't a true royal, Seraphena did have powers that she could train to wield, she just never had the opportunity to find out under the rule of the King and Queen.

Unfortunately, no scrolls or guides of any kind were in the library. But a source said that they were lost underneath the fallen castle of Kyllian. While Seraphena wasn't good at cooking or textbook memorisation, something she loved to do and was good at was archaeology and geology. History always interested her, which was how she knew about old magic even after it was discontinued as a learning subject.

She took out her tools from a tool chest gifted to her by the castle's archaeologist. He had wanted to support her, as she herself was a beginner archeologist who had already done trades around the castle. The man who was in charge of the castle's history, and who spent his free time training Sera in her favourite subjects. It was the only gift she'd ever received. She told Caedryn and he promised to be extra careful.

"Okay so angle the hammer then pull to move the rock." She explained, giving him an example with her own rock. She leaned over the rock and noticed her hair was browner and thicker. She made an excuse to touch it by pushing it behind her shoulders, and it was soft and fluffy. So unlike the dry, teased hair she had before.

She didn't want Caedryn to think of her as a look obsessed woman, so she returned her mind to the task.

They pushed rocks aside over and over, until they reached a hole in the floor, and Cadeyrn jumped in. Together, they pulled out a heavy chest. Caedryn offered to carry it, because he could also tell Sera wasn't exactly strong enough to.

Caedryn was already climbing up the steps that would lead him back to an old servant's staircase with the chest while Sera packed the tools. When she was done, she headed toward the same stairs, and was about to climb when she was stopped by the voice of George Laine, the man who gifted her the archaeology kit.

"Stop what you're doing, Sera." He said, "You don't know how mad your parents will get."

What parents? They lied to her for years and abandoned their real child. Sera was wordless, but with a small nod to confirm she heard him, she left.

Caedryn and the betterment of the kingdom was more important than George's warnings.

Chapter 6

Caedryn slept on Sera's couch so he wouldn't have to sleep in the forest. In the morning, he woke Sera up to get ready to work on their magic in the library. Sera could understand the language the scrolls were written in thanks to her lessons, so she wrote the translations for Caedryn to read.

They came across the prophecy. The reason for all of this. Caedyrn explained, "The prophecy stated that a random heir would become eternal king. No one knew when this heir would be born or arrive in Kyllian, so when the Queen had an unplanned pregnancy, the fear it caused my father was real but unreasonable all the same."

Sera nodded with determination to understand everything and win this fight for Caedyrn.

They learnt that they needed to feel complete peace as beginners to wield their powers, so Caedyrn dimmed the lights and Sera created a quiet corner by a window with candles and cushions.

"Focus your mind on the power within you." Caedyrn said. They sat on cushions opposite to each other on the floor, and Caedyrn was reciting the magic wielding instructions from memory.

"Talk to that power. Tell it how you want it to come out, how you want to accept it." He said.

"How you want it to accept you," she finished the instructions.

Serafena focused on the marrow in her bones, and felt magic streaming through her veins. Her magic tasted like the earth. Like fruits and flowers and fresh cool air. She wondered what Caed's tasted like.

"Can you taste it?" He asked excitedly, "The raw power?"

"I can." She smiled, "It's **tasty**. Like flowers and fruits."

"Delicious." Caedyrn tapped her leg, a playful gesture that could be felt instead of seen, because their eyes were still closed to maintain peace, "Mine tastes like....something. Something delicious I wasn't able to taste in the forest."

Sera was saddened at that, but they didn't have time to describe tastes to each other. She needed to turn her magic into something usable. She thought very hard about what she wanted her magic to do, then she opened her eyes. Nothing.

Then hundreds of textbooks, fruits, and Tim Tams and who knows what else fell down around them. Sera had asked for knowledge, chocolate and apparently more archaeology tools, because they all appeared around her. Wow.

Caedyrn however, was quiet. He too had unlocked his power, but when she looked at what he created, her heart dropped.

Hundreds of crowns, dark weapons and parchment paper. So different from hers.

They practised their magic by creating things, wielding the earth's elements, and Caedyrn could even silence her powers. Could he do that to the King and Queen? What an advantageous gift that would be.

Caedyrn examined everything valuable that their magic had summoned; the books, weapons, crowns, paper, and archaeology tools.

"Let's go through the books you brought us. I bet you'll love reading them to me."

Serafena smiled and picked up the book closest to her. They huddled together in their quiet corner and she cracked open the spine and read the first page.

Chapter 7

Caedryn fell asleep in the cushions after she finished the first book, but Sera couldn't. She had already read whole books about potions and toxins, extinct magical creatures and most importantly the different breeds of power. The most interesting thing about magic breeds is that some were significantly more powerful than the others. Abilities like speaking with animals only took two pages in most magic books, but powers like kalenkai, the ability to read and destroy minds, was so important that scholars often wrote whole books and series on the magic.

She tried eating some of the Tim Tams she created. "It melts in my mouth," she mumbled, but then she felt the bile rise in her throat and threw the rest of the bar on the floor.

When she finished a couple of books on terrifying rare powers, her head was pounding so hard that she needed some way to relax. She settled on a book about face painting. Surely some silly tiger patterns on kids would calm her head down from the stress of magical nightmares.

She cracked open the book titled "Face Painting; Taking over the Gods." As she read, she learnt that face painting was the art of using physical and imaginary paints to create a new person. She read about how people discovered this power, and how it could be used.

But what interested her most about face painters were words like "bleaching the canvas" which was essentially uncreating the person you painted, and minor powers like "preserving great art" which meant the magic painters had to keep the person they painted alive.

She moved to the next section, "Side effects and people problems," which covered what could happen to a painted person and the people around them if they found out that the person wasn't real.

The next sentence had her stomach seizing up.

Painted people who are fading will often see:

- *their complexion dullen*

- *find their bodies weaker*

- ***often can't keep food down as their stomachs fade away.***

- ***have headaches that cause vision distortion as their mind fades***

Sera's eyes settled on the chocolate she discarded. Felt the taste of bile in her throat. Recalled the mind splitting headache she just had, the *reason she had opened the face painting book in the first place!*

She was painted. There was no doubting it. She had looked so discoloured recently. She only noticed some colour returning to her after...after Caedryn. She banished him from her mind. She didn't need to think about him when she was fading out of existence. But wasn't she better now?

She quietly stood up from the quiet corner and tiptoed to the nearest mirror, which was by the entrance. She examined herself from head to toe. Her hair was long, brown and shining. Silky and soft to the touch. She wasn't fading there. Her cheeks were plump and pink. Her

lips were full and her eyes were back to their gorgeous green. She wasn't fading there either.

She was clothed, but behind the fabrics she could make out the shape of her body. She wasn't muscled, but she was a healthy weight and the most important thing was her skin. Her skin was glowing, smooth and not the miserably dull peach, but bright and sun kissed.

She wasn't fading.

How was she not fading?

She had all the symptoms.

Just days ago she noticed her colour fading..

And now she was beautiful. She wasn't being bleached from her canvas. From what she understood, her painter was getting stronger. And in turn so was she. But why could she still not eat? And why did her head still hurt? What was going on with her painter?

She went back to the quiet corner, where Caedryn was still asleep, and picked up the book on Face Painters to search for more information on how her painter was getting stronger, and maybe on how to find them.

Caedryn was stirring awake, and he was her friend, so she couldn't explain to herself why she snapped the book shut and hid it behind her pillow.

"Morning, Sera," Caedryn grumbled, still sleepy.

"Morning, yeah," Sera laughed awkwardly, "It's only afternoon, almost dark actually." Reading and practising magic had taken up their whole day. And if Sera was awkward, she didn't think Caed noticed it. Thank the magic.

"Read anything mind blowing?" He asked.

"No," she lied through her teeth, "Not much." She wasn't telling Caedryn. And that was that.

Chapter 8

Today was the day. Caedryn and Serafena were a mixture of excitement and nerves, their stomachs twisted into tight knots. It was time to reveal Caedryn's true heritage to the public. It was time to *rebel*.

Serafena had decided to get the attention of the public by putting out a message in the local papers about the "Prince Justice" speech. The attention of villagers was instantly caught, because Kyllian didn't have a prince that they knew of. Only a princess.

The crowd gathered below the imperial balcony, eagerly awaiting news. It had been decided that Serafena would go out first because she already had the people's respect, followed by Caedryn to enforce that they were a united front.

When the young princess walked out, there was, as expected, many cheers, with people whistling and screaming. She smiled, although a twinge of fear twitched at the very bottom of her consciousness. They were so happy, so loving of her. Would they feel the same towards Caedryn? They better.

“Good morning everyone. I’m so pleased to see you all gathered here today at my request. The reason that you all came is probably to see this prince I speak of. But firstly, I need to tell you all of a truth I only just discovered. I am not the daughter of King Madoc and Queen Elowra. I was adopted by them after they decided to discard the true heir. His name is Caedryn, and he survived a horrible childhood. At his permission, I would like to tell you all his story.

“Prince Caedryn was locked in a cave as a newborn by the King and Queen, and left there for what was supposed to be all eternity. But Caedryn wanted you to be ruled by a fair and kind leader. So he used his magic, his magic entity, and his determination to speak to the current rulers about his idea.

“I invite him to tell you all of his plans, and I encourage you to consider his words, as he is a man of truth and honour.” Serafena stepped aside, and Caedryn stepped into the light.

A respectful round of clapping passed, before Caed began.

“All your life, you believed in only a princess. And while a princess she is,” he glanced at her, “a prince exists as well. I was born more than fifty years ago, and as Serafena has told you, I was abandoned. The reason for that was the Prophecy of an Eternal King. A King who would rise above all others, and rule Kyllian for infinity to come.”

The crowd gasped, as they heard of the prophecy.

“I was an unplanned baby, and you can imagine the fear that rose in my father.” Caed explained, “He was angry that someone could rule his kingdom for longer, and yes, I may rule longer than any King, but I will rule better and kinder. I will keep our country safe with good magic, and I will make sure families stay united as strongly as they can”

“How do we know you’re not a fraud!?” The crowd said. Sera wondered what Caedryn was thinking.

“All royal faerie’s are bonded with a magical entity.” He said, “This is mine.” Caedryn’s rocket zoomed around the crowd. The rocket was nothing but a glimmer of gold shooting through the crowd to her, but to the people, it was the coolest thing they’d seen. It zoomed between couples, around heads and finally back to rest by Caedryn’s hands on the railing.

“I am the Prince of Kyllian, and Serafena is your Princess.” Caedryn bellowed to the crowd, “Support us in the overthrowing of the malicious King Madoc and free Queen Elowra!”

The crowd cheered, Sera was laughing, and Caedryn held her close as they waved to their people.



Chapter 9

“Enough with this nonsense!” The enraged voice of King Madoc echoed in the kingdom. Sera felt the world tense, the crowd and even the birds had slowed down. “Who do you kids think you are!?”

“We are *Prince*-”

“You are no prince.” The King spat.

“Am I no prince, mother?” Caedryn addressed his mother who looked slight and fragile behind Madoc. Sera suddenly felt like all the eyes were interrupting this private moment.

“Caedryn, please,” her voice broke, and snapped Caedryn out of anger.

“Fine. We take this inside,” he grabbed Sera by the waist and led them all inside. The balcony doors closed and the public announcement was over.

They were inside the Royale Office, decorated just as you’d expect a headquarters of a King and Queen to be. Gold lining, white tables, and beauty.

“I want to be civil about this Madoc.” Caedryn began, “I want to rule because I am your heir. You and Elowra have ruled for long enough.”

The door opened and George Laine entered the room. “Caedryn and Serefena must rule our kingdom.” He handed Elowra a scroll. She read it, and gasped before Madoc snatched it from her.

“Rubbish. Utter rubbish.”

“It’s real. You can tell that it’s real, can’t you Cadeyrn?” George asked him, “You’re feeling what you’re feeling because you are meant to be king. You feel the magic connecting you to this place.”

Caedryn looked confused and surprised. How did the connection feel? “I can,” he said, “I feel it.”

“Fine. Be King.” Madoc seethed, “but leave me, Elowra and Serafena alone.” He dragged Sera from Caed’s side, and held her in an iron grip.

“No, let me go!”

“No, you might not be a *real* princess but you are still under my control.”

It all happened so fast. She felt absolutely nothing in a split second. She had felt Madoc’s nails scraping against her bare arm. She had felt her throat bleeding from her screams. She felt sadness, anger, despair, rage and then she felt nothing.

Instead, she watched the scene with new eyes. She watched herself being stolen away. She watched Elowra sobbing. But *Caedryn*. Caedryn was burning with power. Rage in his eyes and a paintbrush in his hands. She realised that he had bleached his canvas. Caedryn had erased her from existence. How could he?

She was supposed to be Queen, but now she was nothing!

Serafena felt her mind and body explode, collide, then snap together. She was back in her body. But she was away from Madoc and his portal. She was by Caedryn’s side. She didn’t even realise she was crying until she noticed that Caedryn was wiping her cheeks clean. Caedryn was her painter, and Serafena was happy to be his canvas.

“You will never be a true king. I will destroy you! My magic and *my* wife are more powerful than you ever will be, *Caedryn*.” He said his name with such scorn that Sera’s stomach rolled in fear. “I will come for you. You’re not all powerful at all! You’re useless!”

Madoc pulled Elowra into a portal, and the crowns floated to sit on the new ruler’s head.

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