

Night and Day

Chapter 4 – Paladins

Kiera

Patience was something every Darkspawn knew well. Lacking the ability to sleep, lurking in dark places for months and years and centuries, impatience was a concept most Darkspawn were only vaguely aware of; a weakness of humans.

Waiting for Lily, Kiera felt her patience lacking.

The four wooden walls around her felt like a prison, old lumber trapping her in place. Suffocating her. Clipping her wings. It was a new sensation; a *terrifying* sensation. To be stuck here, unable to leave, unwilling to leave, but impossible to stay.

How long did she have?

The Prince would want her to report her findings as soon as possible. She should've set out the moment she'd seen what the Outlanders could do. She should've left the cave, flown to the nearest entrance to the Abyss, told the Dark Princes everything.

At which point, they would've demanded to know why she hadn't killed the Outlanders when she'd had the chance.

She'd have been unable to answer *that* question.

And then the Dark Princes would've sent other Darkspawn to the surface. Powerful Darkspawn, to hunt and kill the Outlanders before they could become too dangerous. The Outlanders were a weapon. An existential threat. They *needed* to die.

But Lily...

Kiera prowled around her inn room, stalking back and forth over and over again. Mind reeling. Heart racing.

What could she do? What option did she have?

Do her duty and report to the Dark Princes? That'd lead to war and destruction and death. Stay here, near Lily, until the priests discovered her? Flee and avoid the oncoming chaos? Forget about the petite Outlander and her kind, pure smile?

It was all too messy.

Too complicated.

Kiera sent her senses out, felt the minds and impulses of everyone at the inn. No hint of the gentle brightness that was Lily. So she reached out further, into the streets beyond. Searching the evening for the girl. Hoping and praying she'd find her.

Nothing.

Lily was still at the cathedral. With her friends. With the priests. Being lied to. Corrupted.

They'd all know there was no 'Kiera the priestess' now. All of them would know she'd lied and tricked them, that she'd been spying on them. They'd know she was the 'enemy'. All but Lily. They'd want to hunt her, destroy her. Just like those mindless Runties in the cave.

"Fuck," Kiera spat. "What's *wrong* with you?"

Since when had she ever been scared of anything? Priests were *nothing*. So weak they were barely worth considering. And the Outlanders might become powerful foes one day, but they were still weak now. As frail as any other humans. There was nothing in this city that could even *hope* to threaten Kiera. She had *nothing* to be afraid of.

So why was she?

"Lily," Kiera sighed.

The thought of it – of never seeing Lily again, never hearing that sweet laughter, seeing that pretty smile – was an agony unlike anything Kiera had ever imagined.

She reached out further with her mind, pushed her senses to their limits, *anything* to

avoid facing *that* feeling.

And there, like a beacon in the night, Kiera felt her.

A joyous, excited, giddy bubble of soft light. Walking away from the cathedral, moving ever closer to the inn. To Kiera.

Lily.

Their lips met before either could speak. Kiera's arms wrapping around Lily's shoulders, Lily's arms around Kiera's waist. Heat and excitement and energy rushed between them, warm tingles blossoming.

Kiera didn't need to breathe, didn't need air to live. But she needed *this*. This *feeling*. This *warmth*. Like a gentle blanket on a cool night, a warm drink on a chilly morning, all the things humans took for granted, their little pleasures. With Lily's arms around her, their lips connected, hearts beating as one, Kiera finally understood. Knew the significance of those tiny, fleeting, wonderful moments.

Their kiss broke; Lily panting softly, Kiera mimicking her through habit. Chests rising and falling. Skin prickling.

Kiera stared into her partner's eyes, got lost in the deep dark of her pupils. And, before she knew it, Lily was leaning forward again, pressing their lips together, kissing her in a way that only lovers could.

"Lily," she moaned into the girl's mouth.

And the girl moaned back, melted in Kiera's arms.

Their lips parted, but they kept holding each other. Arms gently squeezing the other. Heat passing between them like a glowing flame. Kiera stared at Lily and Lily stared back, eyes filled with something deeper and fuller than any lust or desire Kiera had tasted on another before.

"Hey," Lily said softly, cheeks pink.

"Hello," Kiera smiled.

"So," Lily breathed. "This is where you go when you're not off seducing girls from other worlds. I like the dress."

Kiera glanced down at herself, saw a deep valley of cleavage. Gone was the dull priestess robe. In its place, a regular, albeit slightly more revealing, commoner's dress. Blue and white and ordinary; made sexy only by the body wearing it.

"This is where I go," Kiera purred, "when there's a naughty girl from another world seducing *me*. Not that I can stay here too long..."

Lily pursed her lips, arms dropping from Kiera's waist. She took a step back, looked around the bare room with its stiff bed and beat-up table and chair. Not the most romantic of places, Kiera realised. But then, she hadn't been expecting Lily to actually come. She'd hoped for it, sure. But...

"The priests," Kiera said softly. "They know about me?"

Lily nodded her head.

"They know what I am?"

"Darkspawn," Lily whispered. "They told us you're probably a powerful Darkspawn. One that can 'take the shape of a human to trick and deceive' and that you're dangerous."

Kiera rolled her eyes.

"I snuck out," Lily continued. "I don't think anyone saw me."

"If they did," Kiera said, reaching out with her senses and finding nothing, "they'd be preparing to burst in here right now. Casting all kinds of wards and spells, trying to trap and destroy me. No-one followed you, though. We're fine."

For now.

Lily turned away, walked over to the bed, sat down on its edge. She patted the spot next to her, a gentle smile on her lips.

Obediently, Kiera walked over to the petite girl and sat down beside her.

"We can't do this forever," Kiera said, voice cracking a little. "This might well be the only time we can get away with it. The last time we'll ever be able to see each other."

"It won't be," Lily promised.

"How can you possibly know that? And don't tell me that seeing the future is one of your special Outlander powers."

"It's not," Lily said with a smile. "But we will see each other again. I know it. I believe."

Kiera let out a chuckle, turned to look at the girl.

The certainty in Lily's eyes made her chest ache.

"Even so," Kiera smiled, "I say we should treat tonight like it's the last time. No regrets."

"Oh?" A twinkle entered Lily's eyes. "What do you have in mind?"

Kiera's fingertips moved masterfully, touching and massaging Lily's deepest sweet spots as the girl bucked and moaned a chorus of pleasure.

If there was anything Kiera was good at, it was *this*. Pleasure. Satisfaction. Passion. It was her *purpose*, the reason for her very existence. It was who she was, from the surface to her very core. She was *sex*.

Lily panted, gasped, moaned. She shook and shuddered as orgasm after orgasm rocked her body.

And Kiera soaked it all in. Absorbed the hot, intense tingles. Felt the unbearable pressure and the explosive release. Relished in the satisfaction radiating off Lily's sweaty, naughty body.

"Oh God," Lily pleaded. "Oh *fuck*. I-"

Another round of spasms hit her, Kiera sliding fingers in and out of her with one hand, toying with her breasts and nipples with the other. She stole kisses from the girl whenever Lily gasped for air, wrestled her tongue as Lily groaned and moaned.

She could feel the sweet oblivion in Lily's mind. The abandonment of everything but this moment. All thoughts, all fears, the whole world, everything pushed aside and forgotten. The only thing that mattered was the here and now. The hunger and Kiera feeding it. The pressure that Kiera built up like a crescendo, released in sparks of pure bliss.

Kiera pleased Lily like only a succubus could. Pushing her to the limits of satisfaction.

And, when the song was sung, and Lily could take no more, Kiera slowed down. Aggressive fingering became a gentle massage, kindling the embers of arousal. She breathed on Lily's soft, sensitive, sweaty skin. Cooed to her, kissing her neck and shoulder and collar.

A lifetime later, the two lay next to each other. Holding hands and sharing the same, love-filled gaze.

Kiera could've stared into those eyes for an eternity. The rest of her life would've been whole and happy, if she could spend it gazing into those pretty eyes. But Lily was human, and humans needed sleep. The petite girl struggled to keep her eyes open, all her energy sapped away.

"Tell me again," the girl whispered, eyelids too heavy to keep open. "About the places... The beautiful places..."

And then she was gone. Lost in a deep, wonderful slumber.

"The Crystal Chasm," Kiera whispered anyway, just in case some part of Lily could still hear her. "A crack in the ground, filled with countless, pretty gems..."

She spoke and spoke, keeping her voice soft and quiet so that Lily wouldn't wake. She told the sleeping girl of all the beautiful places in the world, all the wonders she'd discovered while exploring. Forgotten cities overgrown with vegetation, caves and cavers

filled with glowing gems and plants, desert oases and forest clearings where no human had ever set foot. She whispered to Lily through the night, until morning came. And all the while, her eyes never drifted from the girl's pretty face.

Lily

"You have proven yourselves worthy," the old priest croaked out. Each word sounded strained by the priest's advanced age. "The Eternal Light has chosen you to be Paladins."

"Does this mean we'll finally get some answers?" Joe demanded, eyes narrowed at the old man. "No more cryptic bullshit and half-answers?"

The old priest nodded his head, and Lily swore she heard the bones in his neck creak and groan.

"About time," Joe grumbled. He opened his mouth to ask something, but someone else beat him to it.

"What exactly *are* we?" Sid asked calmly. "What *is* a Paladin?"

The priest nodded his head again, considering. When his eyes closed and he let out a breath, Lily was half worried he'd gone and kicked the bucket right there and then. He looked *old*. Like, *fossil* old.

"Until now," the priest croaked, "nothing beyond a theory. A promise. A 'Paladin' is one who *purifies* the Dark. You slay Darkspawn and purify the Dark, transform it into untainted power."

"A promise?" Sid asked. "From who?"

"Long ago," the old priest began. "Back when the world was new and-"

"No!" Joe snapped. "No more stories. No more distractions. You promised us that if we cleared out that cave, you'd tell us how to get home. So, spill it. How do go back to our world?"

Lily glanced over at Gav, who was – predictably – about to start arguing about how this was all a video game and that they weren't actually on another world. The look she shot him shut him before he could speak.

"The ritual we used to bring you here," the old man said slowly, "can be reversed. To send the five of you back to your world, we'd simply need to tweak the ritual spell. That, and gather enough power to cast it again..."

"And how long will that take?" Joe demanded, eyes narrowed.

"Months, at least," the old priest shrugged. "Years, depending on how many other priests agree to help. You'll need hundreds of us to build up enough raw power... Unless..."

"Unless what?" Joe asked, though the look on his face told Lily he already knew the answer. They all did.

"Unless the five of you were to power it yourselves..."

But, in order to do that, they'd need a *lot* more power than any of them currently possessed. Which meant killing more Darkspawn. A lot more.

"How *convenient* for you," Joe muttered.

"Convenient?" The old man smiled. "Or fate, perhaps? Who can say..."

More questions followed. And more slow-spoken answers. Lily zoned most of it out. She could ask Sid for the important details later. No, her mind wandered to a little inn just a few streets from the cathedral. The beautiful, amazing woman waiting for her in a small, cosy room.

Before she knew it, the old priest and most of the guys were leaving. Everyone but her and Joe made themselves scarce.

Lily shot to her feet quickly, was about to exit the room with the rest of them when Joe spoke up.

"Where were you last night?"

Lily froze, turned to look at him.

A tall, imposing figure. Muscled and strong, looking every bit the heroic Paladin the priests wanted. His eyes were hard on her, eyebrows narrowed.

"I went to your room just after sundown, wanted to talk to you about something," his jaw tightened, though his voice remained calm and even. "I waited for you. Figured you'd be back soon. But you didn't come back. Not all night. So... Where were you? I know you weren't with any of the guys..."

"No- nowhere," Lily stammered, her brain refusing to give her a reasonable alibi on the spot. "Just went out for a walk, is all."

"Alone?" Joe said, eyebrows narrowing further. "At night? *All* night?"

"Yeah," Lily gulped. "Is there a problem with that?"

"Is there?" Joe asked.

"I've got something I need to do," Lily said quickly, turning away from her friend. "We'll talk later, okay?"

Later. When she'd had time to think up some convincing lies.

She began walking away from him, towards the room's exit.

"You're different," he said behind her. "Ever since we got here. You're not the same. It's Kiera. She did something to you, didn't she?"

Face hot, Lily ignored him. Kept on walking.

Kiera

"Are you sure?"

Lily nodded her head eagerly, sitting cross-legged on Kiera's bed. The girl was beaming, eyes bright and bubbly.

How could Kiera say no to *that*?

Still, she felt a wave of trepidation. Anxiety. Uncertainty.

What if Lily didn't like it? What if it shocked her? Frightened her? What if it *changed* things? *Ended* things?

Kiera inhaled instinctively, calming herself.

She focused for a moment, letting the commoner clothes dissolve off her body. Then it happened. Her body shifted, morphed. Horns grew on her head, wings on her back. A tail burst from her lower spine. Her skin shifted from pale, human skin to that of a succubus; crimson and leathery and distinctly inhuman.

Lily's eyes widened, her mouth dropping open.

"This," Kiera said, holding out her arms and whipping her tail through the air, "is my True Form."

She'd have unfurled her wings for effect, but this room was *far* too small for that. She smiled at Lily, hoping it'd calm the girl, stop her from freaking out.

"You're..." Lily shook her head, blushed. "You're beautiful."

Kiera felt a weight of tension disappear.

She let out a breath, chuckled.

"Glad you like it," she said, running a clawed finger between two huge, gravity-defying breasts. "Most people scream and run when they see it. Or stand there and shit themselves. Or, if they're under my spell, well..."

"Guess I'm under your spell then," Lily smiled.

"No," Kiera laughed, stepping closer to the bed, "I'm under yours. From the moment you touched me with that wicked spell of yours..."

Lily blushed, couldn't meet Kiera's gaze. Her head flicked up, focused on Kiera's horns to distract herself.

"Those are nice," she mumbled, blushing bright. "Makes sense for a succubus to be

horny, I guess..."

"If you like," Kiera purred, crouching down in front of Lily, placing her hands on the girl's legs. "You can use them as handles. You'll probably need them, actually. My True Form has a much longer tongue..."

"Yes," Lily gasped. "Please..."

The girl was opening her legs, reaching for Kiera's horns, when the room's door slammed open.

Kiera's head snapped sideways at the exact same moment Lily's did. Both of them recognising the figure in the doorway in an instant. Tall as he was, clad in chainmail, square jaw set and eyes narrowed in pure, undisguised hatred.

"Joe!" Lily squeaked. Her legs were closed in a heartbeat. "What're you doing here?!"

The would-be knight didn't answer.

Glaring at Kiera, he charged into the room, brandishing his sword and roaring like a madman.

Kiera swatted him aside effortlessly, tail whipping through the air and slapping him square in the chest. She held back from striking him too hard; she didn't want to do any *permanent* damage to Lily's friend, after all.

He slammed back through the doorway, collided with the wall beyond, crumpled to the ground. Still conscious, though. And pissed off enough to ignore his pain.

"Not bad," Kiera shrugged. "Stay down."

But no, the idiot was already struggling to his feet.

Kiera stood, looked around the small room. At Lily, at the window, at the man pushing himself off the floor.

She acted on pure instinct.

Her tail swept through the air, slid itself around Lily's waist and pulled the girl towards her. Lily yelped in surprise but, when Kiera wrapped her arms around Lily, held her tight, the girl did the same. Clutching onto Kiera as if she knew exactly what was about to happen.

As Joe finally managed to get back on his feet, Kiera turned away from him – launched herself and Lily at the room's window.

Glass shattered, bounced harmlessly off Kiera's body.

Her wings unfurled, flapped once, launched Kiera skyward. Above the street, away from the inn.

Lily burrowed her face into Kiera's chest, clung on for dear life. But she needn't have worried. With Kiera's arms and tail around her, nothing in this world would be able to separate them.

She flew high, far above the city walls, and into the deep dark of night.

"You could've warned me," Lily panted, voice still a little shaky from their flight. "And I thought flying in *planes* was bad..."

Lily shuddered. Kiera stepped to her, wrapped gentle arms around her shoulders.

"I'm sorry," she said softly, mournfully. "I wasn't thinking. My body took over. I'll take you back, drop you off close to the city wall. I didn't mean to..."

To steal her away? Kidnap her?

"It's okay," Lily said, letting out a breath. "I'm okay."

"We're not too far from the city here," Kiera said, ignoring the icy pain in her chest. "We don't even need to fly. I can guide you back safely. Won't take more than a few hours. And then... Then you can be back with your friends and... and..."

"It's okay," Lily whispered. "I'm okay..."

A silence fell over them.

Kiera had landed in a little hollow, a clearing in a forest.

She'd *snatched* Lily right out of that inn's room. Flown off into the night with her, like in the scary stories parents told their children. She hadn't been thinking. She'd just *acted*.

"I'll take you back," Kiera promised. "I didn't mean to..."

"It's okay," Lily repeated. "I know you will."

Kiera's heart sank. Her stomach dropped. Of course Lily wanted to go back. Of course she'd want to be with her friends, safe and secure. It made sense. Staying with Kiera? That was crazy. Silly. Stupid. Of course she wouldn't want-

"But," Lily said, interrupting Kiera's thoughts. "Maybe not right away?"

Kiera looked down at Lily, stared into the dark pools of her eyes. Found herself getting lost in those pupils once again.

"I mean," Lily continued, cheeks pink. "Might as well go see those Crystal Chasms while we can, right? And all those other cool places. Let's face it; how many chances am I gonna have to explore a strange, magical world? I-"

Kiera kissed her.