

Dark and Light

Chapter 17 - Dark

Kiera

She threw herself at the barrier, battered it with enough Dark to level a city. Whips of Dark fire and volleys of lightning. And the barrier reflected it all. Rippling with magic, unharmed by even the most vicious of attacks.

And still Kiera persisted. Threw chunks of herself at the barrier in a mad fury. Poured her very *being* into her attacks.

Lily was in there. In danger.

No matter the cost, she *had* to break through.

That Dark was useless against the forcefield surrounding the forest was irrelevant. As was the fact that such a barrier could only be destabilised with Light.

Lily.

That was the *only* thing that mattered.

"Fuck!" Kiera screamed, pouring more of herself into her attacks. "Break! Piece of shit Light- Argh!"

The barrier thrummed with energy. Waves of light and colour rippling down its surface. But no cracks formed. No breaks. Not even a hint of damage.

All she could do was redouble her efforts. Spend more of herself in the hopes it'd tip the scales.

In vain.

Deep down, she knew the truth. Knew it clear as day.

She could throw everything she had at the barrier, and nothing would happen. No amount of Dark could shatter Light wards like these. An ancient barrier fuelled by the countless Mythic fuckers inside it.

Kiera wasn't strong enough.

Lily

Music, sweet and soft, guided her.

She swayed in time with the tune, walking through a forest of magical things. Elves and gnomes and nymphs.

It was as if she were dreaming.

Yes... Dreaming...

Something inside Lily fought that. A distant echo of a voice, telling her something that Lily couldn't quite make out.

Such a nice, beautiful forest...

The tune led her along, through brambles that snagged on her clothes, peeling them off her like thorny fingers. She shuddered, felt a cool breeze tickling her bare skin.

She shook her head, a moment of clarity nudging her.

This... This was *wrong*. It was-

Her head throbbed to the tune of the music.

The clarity faded away.

A dull smile pulled at her lips as she stepped into a clearing. A bed of leaves with a figure lounging atop it.

A woman with pointy ears, green veins under her skin. Eyes blacker than midnight and hair of moss and leaves. A beautiful creature that smiled at Lily as she approached, patting her makeshift bed. Urging Lily closer.

Lily obliged, drifting closer to the dryad and her hamper.

No. A voice in her head pleaded. So, so quiet.

A long finger tucked under Lily's chin as she knelt down beside the dryad, lifting her head up and moving it from one side to the other. The dryad examining her face. Then her body.

Fingers – cold and wet against her skin – slid down Lily's body, pressing against soft breasts and hardened nipples.

When the creature leaned in to kiss her, Lily tasted the forest.

Damp soil and humid, earthen flavours.

A part of her retched.

The rest accepted. Opening her lips wide, embracing the inhuman tongue exploring her mouth.

The next thing Lily knew, the dryad was shoving her onto her back, pushing her legs open. A long, slithering tongue slid from the dryad's mouth like a snake, down between the creature's breasts, sliding closer and closer to Lily's crotch.

No!

The image of Kiera flashed through her mind.

Lily held onto it, forced her addled mind to remember.

Kiera needed her. And she needed Kiera.

What was she doing here? Why was she in this forest and what was *that*?!

When something brushed her down there, on her exposed privates, Lily screeched. Kicked out, pushed herself away.

She rolled back. The dryad scowled.

"No!" She shouted at it. "Where's Kiera?!"

Something flared inside Lily. Energy surging in her chest.

The dryad's eyes narrowed, its head lifting to listen to something... Something sweet and melodious and-

Lily slapped her hands over her ears, blocked out the sound as best she could. The poisonous tune. It slipped past her fingers, urged Lily to let go and surrender herself to it.

"No! I won't!"

The dryad rose to its feet, began approaching her. Lily backed away from it. Clutching her head, shaking, fighting the oppressive calm threatening to steal her away.

When her back hit a tree trunk, no-where left to go, the dryad smirked at her. Licked its lips with that long, disgusting tongue.

"No."

The dryad touched her.

"No, no, no!"

Its tongue slithered closer to her body.

NO!

The brightness inside her exploded. A shockwave of blinding Light tore from Lily's chest, blasting out in all directions. A shining, all-consuming whiteness that launched the dryad backwards and rocked the trees all around them.

Distantly, Lily felt something *shatter*.

For a few brilliant, blinding moments, there was nothing but the Light. The world cast infinite white, Lily alone.

Then the Light faded. Disappeared.

And she felt empty. Drained.

Tired in a way she hadn't felt in a while. Not since the last time she'd drained her inner reserves of magic so long ago.

Suddenly, her eyelids felt very heavy.

She blinked, struggling to reopen her eyes.

What she saw when she did might've terrified her, if not for the heavy weight of fatigue settling over her.

The dryad rising to its feet, a tree bark knife sprouting from its hand and murder in its eyes. It took a step closer to Lily.

Darkness crept in from the corners of Lily's vision.

No...

The last thing she saw before the blackness took her was a fireball falling from the sky. Leathery wings and a whip-like tail, red and black and *furious*.

When she awoke, it was to the scents of smoke and fire.

The first thing she saw was Kiera's face above her, looking down at her with worry. In her True Form, a sultry succubus in all her glory.

Her lover's eyes widened when she saw Lily was awake.

"Flower?" Kiera said, voice shaking slightly.

"What..." Lily blinked, squinted up at her. "What happened?"

"You got lost again," Kiera said, a forced smile tugging at her perfect lips. "I had to come find you."

"The forest..."

"Gone," Kiera stated.

Lily rubbed her eyes, sat up and looked around. Her head throbbed and fatigue still consumed her, but she wasn't so far gone that she couldn't focus.

They were on a hill, surrounded by grass and flowers. The sun on the horizon.

She turned her head, eyebrows knitting together.

Not a tree in sight. Just hills and flowers and fields. Save for a column of thick black smoke in the distance, Lily might've been able to convince herself that the forest had been a dream. Or a nightmare.

She shuddered, remembering the enthralling tune.

"Couldn't get them all," Kiera muttered angrily. "The whole place was filled with 'em. But I cooked the Treant, and that Dryad bitch. Neither of them will hurt you ever again."

Lily looked to her.

"Are you alright?" Kiera asked. "When I found you..."

"I'm-" Her voice was strained. "I'm okay."

She tried to force a smile, but it proved more difficult than expected. Her eyes watered, her heart hiccupping. It was all she could do to not break apart.

A long silence followed the lie. Kiera pursing her lips as she stared at Lily. Lily doing her best – trying her hardest – to seem fine, keep her love from worrying. But, the longer the silence stretched, the more Lily's facade crumbled away.

"I'm... not *great* at comforting," Kiera said. "Or, well, I am. Just not like *this*. My way of comforting people is..." She gestured to her body, frowned. "I don't know what to say or do to make you feel better. I feel so..."

"Powerless?" Lily said, knowing the feeling all too well.

Kiera scowled, nodded her head.

Her hands bawled into fists.

"I want to help, but I don't know *how*. Or if I even *can*. It's infuriating. I..."

Lily put her hands on Kiera's, wrapped her fingers around those bawled fists. The succubus looked at her, and Lily held the gaze. Smiled softly.

"You're here," Lily said. "That's more than enough."

Another silence fell over them.

Still fatigued, Lily wanted to curl up in Kiera's arms and spend the next week sleeping. But the desire to get as far away from here as possible proved stronger by far. She looked down at herself, blushed when she realised she was still naked.

Her clothes were gone. Stolen by the forest and-

The gemstone!

She patted her body, as if she'd feel it in some invisible pocket somewhere. But no.

The gemstone had been in a small pouch on her belt. A pouch that was now miles and miles away, in the possession of a host of – probably pissed off – Mythics.

Lily looked up at Kiera in panic, which brought a similar urgency to Kiera's expression.

"What is it?" Kiera asked, head snapping around to search for threats.

"My gemstone thingy," Lily said quickly. "It's-"

Her hand buzzed, a small glow flaring in her palm.

Lily stared down at the gemstone that'd just appeared in her grasp, mouth agape and mind slow to react.

When Kiera saw Lily's panic vanish, her urgency faded a little. But not entirely. She continued to look around, eyes narrowed. When she returned her gaze to Lily, there was a seriousness in her expression that Lily couldn't ignore.

"We should go," Kiera said.

Lily couldn't have agreed more.

"You up for flying?" The succubus asked. "It'll be faster than walking, and you'll have the chance to rest up."

Flying?

A thought occurred to Lily. An idea returning.

"Flying?" She smiled. "Sounds good."

Kiera raised an eyebrow at her.

Lily clutched her magical gemstone, opened up a list of spells and unlocked one; poured raw power into enhancing it.

Hopefully, she half-mused, half-prayed, this isn't going to be a waste. It can't be that bad, right?

Kiera

Lily screamed as she plummeted to the ground.

Kiera laughed, diving towards her. Red-and-black leather wings flared out, huge and graceful. She sent out a wave of force, as gentle as a breeze but plenty powerful, to sweep Lily up out of her fall.

Which only made Lily scream all the more.

From the petite girl's back, two massive wings extended. Bright white feathers, beautiful as Lily, and graceful as a dove in flight. Or, they *would* have been graceful if not for the wild flapping and screaming and very un-Lily-like cussing.

"You're moving them too much," Kiera said, shooting up and gliding around the struggling girl. "You only need to flap occasionally to maintain height, or to rise higher. Most of the time, you just keep them level and let the air pillow you."

"What the shit does *that* mean?!" Lily screeched.

"Like..." How could she describe it in a way that'd make sense? "It's like you're a boat and the winds are your waves. Here, watch me. You're flapping them too much. Less is more."

She demonstrated, wings in a stable glide as she circled the rapidly descending Lily.

"Leaves on the wind don't flap," she said, amusement filling her voice. "Be a leaf."

"I'm not a leaf!"

It took a little while, but Lily gradually got the hang of it. Falling into a stable glide, only flapping her angelic wings to regain lost height. Her face twisted in an adorable expression of intense concentration.

Kiera couldn't help showing off. Flying alongside Lily, spinning in the air and rolling around her to the other side. She did fun little tricks, laughing out loud when Lily stuck her tongue out at her.

More than once, Kiera rolled under Lily just to get a good look at her naked body.

Those new wings of hers, glowing with inner light, illuminated the petite girl's body beautifully. Shadows filling every valley of flesh, a faint glow outlining naughty parts such that they claimed Kiera's attention with ease.

How the girl wasn't freezing cold, Kiera could only guess.

She glided upside-down under Lily, the wind her pillow as she came parallel with her Flower.

Their eyes met.

Kiera nudged herself with a tiny burst of force, pushing her body higher. Closer to Lily.

Their lips met.

The rest of the world melted away. The sky and the ground and all the winds between. There was just the gentle warmth of Lily's lips, the softness of her body.

The kiss broke far too soon.

Lily stumbled in the air, yelped as she spiralled out of control and plummeted.

Kiera burst out laughing, darted after her.