

Her Dark Dreams

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Four friends set out to kill Kyuuka's father. Instead they find friends in unusual places and on top of that, they get placed in a different dimension. Now they must find their way back home. But will all of them make it back home safely?

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Chapter 1

Sunlight streamed faintly through the trees. It was dawn. All things still slept soundly on beds of leaves or mattresses. All things except the wood-elves. They lived in this forest, Lenath, The Forest of Light.

Kyuuka ran through the trees, dipping in and out of the sunlight. She stopped in a patch of the golden-red rays. The elf was clad in a purple-silver long shirt and a dark green short shirt over, and bandanas on her long, slender arms. The green shirt reached her lower hip. Underneath, were black pants, tight for warmth, but loose enough for travel. Leather made the boots. They V'ed around mid-shin. On her back was slung a quiver of whitetail arrows and two white-bladed knives. A long, elvish made bow was grasped tightly in her hand. The bow had carvings on it that told a story of a terrible war.

She crouched down and felt the ground blindly. Her fingers found the soft engraving in the mud. A drag mark. Good. She was close. But, she couldn't go into the camp without being seen. The trees would be safer. She stood, grabbed a low-hanging branch and, moments later, was standing on the treetop. These trees, Glasson trees, had their branches growing off the trunk top. So there was enough room for two people to stand comfortably with room for sitting. The elf ran out onto the strongest branch facing West.

A half-hour later, Kyuuka arrived at the campsite. There he was, tied to a tree, hands bound above his head, unconscious. She knelt on the spot and looked around the unconscious elf. At least 20 men lay around him, sleeping with bottles of wine dangling loosely in their hands. A disgusted look crossed her fair face. They'd been drinking. But there was also a good side. If someone drank red wine, they would sleep for three days. This was probably the second day.

She leapt gingerly down from her branch. Yes. A lot of red wine was around. She could smell it. As she walked toward the elven prince, the scent changed. It was dragon-water. Pain reached itself in her eyes. The devils had used a truth concoction to try and force the truth out of him. But, from how strong the scent was, he had been telling the truth, and they didn't believe him. She walked towards him, extending her hand. When she was close enough, she stroked the side of his soft, fair face, tucking a stray lock of pale hair behind his pointed ear.

Nikku's face was death pale and his skin was as cold as ice. He stirred as the mixture of heat and sweat collided with the coldness of his face. Kyuuka watched him begin to stir as the heat spread through out his body. His eyelashes flickered. Slowly, she began to see the color return to his eyes. He blinked several times before everything became focused.

"What...? Who...?" His words were slightly slurred from the dragon-water effect.

Kyuuka put a finger to his lips. They were parched. "I'm getting you out of here." She stood on tiptoe and untied his wrists. Without the rope holding him up, the elven prince began to fall. Kyuuka moved and placed herself in the path that he would fall. Nikku fell limply into her outstretched arms. His head fell on to her collarbone, and there nestled its way further into her soft, warm skin upon her neck. Kyuuka gently knelt and placed Nikku on the ground.

"I think I'm going to be sick." He moaned and rolled away from Kyuuka, clutching his stomach. She closed her eyes and turned to face the sleeping men. They were beginning to awaken. She had to hide. Again, she picked up Nikku and, using all her strength, was able to pull herself and the elven prince, up into a tree some way from the camp.

The men began to regain their feet. One took a bucket of water and began to sprinkle water on those that hadn't awoken. As he reached the man closest to where Nikku had been, he looked up. An outrageous roar split the camp. "He's gone! Where could he be? Captain!! Search the trees, the grounds, and the rivers. We have to bring him back."

Kyuuka let out a breath of air, giving her the impression of a beast trying to find its way out of a circle of archers. She looked around, hopeless. She made up her mind in half a second. She tightened her grip on the elven prince and began to make her way East.

She was 5 leagues away from the men's camp, and quite sure they wouldn't be found, when Kyuuka lay Nikku down. He had slipped back into unconscious, again. She looked him over quickly. His worst wound seemed to be on his side. But first, she had to deal with the dragon-water, now flowing violently through his systems. She stood, grabbed some Glasson leaves, knelt again beside the elf and set to work.

King Seki was pacing his study. The worksmith, Kyuuka, hadn't delivered his order of bows yet. She always had them ready by two days. What was going on? He couldn't wait any longer. He strode out of his study, through the hall and out into the bright sunshine of the morning. He walked across the square and knocked on the worksmiths' shop. No answer came. He pushed open the door. Not a thing moved. It was like the city, Caneth, The Lost Elven Empire of the South. Seki walked around the shop, and paused before six, well crafted bows. Beside them lay a single piece of parchment. He picked it up. It dated from 2 nights ago.

'Please forgive me. These are yours. I've gone out to find your son. I'll try to heal him as best I can before I bring him home.'

The king read the note through twice and, smiling slightly took the bows and the note, then took his leave.

Kyuuka covered Nikku's wound with healing leaves she had found. The dragon-water was pouring out of

the prince's body like ringing out a piece of cloth. Every 3 minutes, she would soak up the water in beech tree leaves she had found earlier.

Nikku began to stir. He could tell the drug was being drawn from his body. "Where am I?" he asked to the darkness that obscured his line of sight. No answer came. Instead, he felt his face being stroked. He used his cheek and shoulder to press the hand closer to him. He opened his eyes and a wonderful sight met them. An elf knelt beside him; blue eyes alight with the spring's morning rays. Blond hair braided down her back, in an attempt to keep her hair out of her face. The skin was shallow. She smiled at him, bringing beauty onto her face. Her eyes sparkled like the mornings' dew still clinging to a blade of grass.

"You need to rest. I'll get you home."

Nikku felt himself being lowered to the ground. He saw, as he used the tree to support himself, a horse standing there. "Lenenathe, the Lord of the Treehorses. Said to have never been tamed by human or elven hands, yet I have done so."

Kyuuka lifted the prince, and set him gently atop the horses' saddle. The horse shifted under the weight upon his back. Then, she used a branch to hoist herself in back of Nikku. The horse was tall. Tall enough so your toes couldn't touch a bush; nor the highest roots of a tree, which, in any case, don't grow that tall.

"Ride now and may our will go with your speed." The horse took off, galloping into the trees towards the Kingdom of Cerneth Soin.

"Nikku!! How are you?" King Seki ran down the throne, at which he had been sitting, to where his son stood, fully healed, looking better than ever. He embraced his son with that have not been seen for a long time. Seki looked into his sons' face, glowing with health. Then for the first time, he noticed two elves straining to hold back a younger elf. He turned a cold eye upon Kyuuka. He knew who she was.

He stepped around his son and walked toward the now draining elf. To keep her from moving while the king talked, one guard kicked her in the gut. She lost all air and stopped moving. She bowed her head to hide the anger that was now welling in her eyes. She could guess what was going to happen next. "You received the notice that my men sent out three days ago? Do you remember what is said?" The without waiting for an answer he went on, "It said not to go looking for my son because I would pay the ransom, whatever it might have been."

Nikku could tell the elf maiden was choosing her word carefully. "I know these men. They would take the ransom, then ride off with your son, then have you pay more and more until you were almost spent, then giving your son back in poor health would have your son die. The you would die of grief and loss. Once the King was gone and no heir to the throne, the city would fall and men would rule Lenath forest once more!"

The king reacted very quickly to these facts. His hand found its way forcefully to Kyuuka throat. "What would you have me do?? Go out and look for him myself??"

"It's better than having your kingdom die in one fell swoop." There was too much truth in this statement to retort, instead, he nodded to the guards and they began to drag the worksmith down to the dungeons. Everyone could hear the curses she yelled at the people, yet none understood it. No one.

Blood rushed away from her fingertips. Kyuuka strained against the rope holding her hands above her head. Soon, she let her energy slip away from her. Her head fell. She looked right and, from that position, fell into unconsciousness. She was drained of energy, and she knew it. Rabices scurried around her, brushing her toes that barely touched the ground, hopping and half running around the stone-flagged floor.

Three hours later, the dungeon door creaked open. Kyuuka turned to see who was coming. She turned her head in the opposite direction as she recognized the figure. Nikku. Her hands clenched and unclenched. She let out a moan of pain as her nails dug into the raw flesh that the dragon-water had left behind on her hands. She turned again to face the prince, pain, anger, and sorrow mixed on her face. Their eyes met, Nikku's full of concern. He didn't even have to ask. As he walked forward, the elf opened her palms to show him. The rawness danced in the torchlight.

"So, it wasn't a dream. You are real." He said, extending his hand and stroking her skin. To his surprise, she jerked away from his hand. "You are with your father. You betrayed me. You want me to die at sunrise." And when he looked puzzled, she continued, "I heard them," She gestured towards the guards that flanked the door, "talking about it." She turned away again.

"No, I'm with you. My father doesn't understand." he pulled her face to look deep into his own. "I'll get you out."

"So it is true. She did save you." Seki turned on his heel to face his son.

"I'm positive of it. You may go check yourself."

"And so I shall." Seki stormed out of his study, down the hall, ran down four flights of stairs, and opened the door to the dungeons so hard Kyuuka turned to look at him and wouldn't have been surprised if sparks flew from his eyes and nostrils. "Show me your hands. NOW!" She turned away, not wanting to do anything the person that wanted her dead, to do. Seki was running short of patience. He ran over and began to tear and scratch at her hands, trying to open them. Anyone within two leagues of the city could hear the scream that rent the silent air around the city. The pain was too much. The elf fell to the agony in her hands. She slipped into unconsciousness yet again.

Having gotten her palms to show, Seki examined them closely. He son hadn't lied. Her hands were raw-red like the setting sun. The anger that had festered in his heart was suddenly diminished. He took a knife out of his belt and cut the bonds holding Kyuuka up. "NO!" Nikku ran forward and caught her before she hit the cold, hard floor. "Father, please. You get some sleep. I'll take care of her." Nikku carried the limp form of the worksmith up to the guest sleeping quarters.

Kyuuka's eyes flew open. She stared around at her surroundings. She had on her purple shirt over her black pants. A vase of Casemeintals' stood on a chestnut table beside her bed. The only thing that separated her from the outdoors was a high ceiling. "Your awake." The voice came out of a shadowy corner. Kyuuka jumped, half tempted to run out of the room, but instead, she stayed in place. She sat up, her shoulder hurt as she did so. Kyuuka glanced at her hands. They had turned back to normal, although still sore from the previous night. Nikku had walked up beside her bed. "Thank you," she still stared at her hands.

"Are you feeling well enough to join myself and seven companions?" She looked up at him. Her expression gave the answer away. They were sparkling with anticipation, an energy that had been locked away for a long time. He bent forward, intending to tell her something secret, but instead, was pulled into a hug by Kyuuka. She pulled him close and whispered, "Thank you so much." She kissed him on the cheek, let him straiten up and leapt out of bed. She went over to the closet in the corner, took her green tunic, boots, braces and belt out and began to dress for the long journey. Nikku stood rooted to the spot. His hand traveled over the place where she had kissed him. A smile broke across his face and he quickly hid it as he opened the door and stepped out into the hall and shut the door behind him.