

My Boyfriend is a Vampire

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Chapter Three – Eye of the Storm

*The trials you are now facing
They are not greater than your will
For there is nothing under heaven
You cannot overcome
See the door that lies before you
And know this too shall pass
The confrontation of your fears
In strength drawn from the past
Where the silent voices whisper
Find the course that is your own
And however great the obstacle
You will never be alone*

- Eye of the Storm, by *The Cruxshadows*

It was dark.

Everything was dark.

Mark couldn't make out anything in his surroundings.

He sat huddled next to the only light and source of heat. A campfire. But the light of the campfire didn't reveal anything close by. Especially where the wood for the fire was coming from.

Mark had a large, warm blanket around his shoulders, and quietly sipped his cup of soup. Vegetable. Yum. Another man sat opposite of him. He looked tall, around 6' with white hair, and a matching white mustache and goatee.

For three months, Mark sat in silence, never having the courage to speak to the stranger. He was fed three meals a day, and had some comfortable blankets to sleep on. The stranger never spoke either.

Funny enough was that Mark could eat the soup and meals that were provided, that he hadn't consumed any blood in the last three months. Mark didn't worry about it either, since the only things on his mind were Christian, and where he hell he was.

It could almost be hell.

"Am I dead?" Mark asked himself again, for the thousandth time since he'd arrived here. But since he'd arrived here, this was the first time he asked it out loud.

"No, you are not dead" the stranger replied. Mark looked over to him not realizing he had spoken. He studied the man for a few moments, who was looking back at him.

"Then where am I?" Mark asked with fear in his voice.

"You are with me" the man grinned a little, and went back to tending the fire.

Mark grimaced a little. "You're a big help, buddy! Where are we, then? Who are you, by the way?"

The older man looked back to Mark. "I am Merlin, and this is a place of pure magic. I'd say we were inside your mind, but that's only partially true. We are in a nexus. A place where magic flows freely. This is no illusion. This is probably the only place where you can ingest something besides blood."

Mark looked a little shocked at that statement. "What do you mean besides blood? As for being Merlin, I doubt that. Merlin died a long time ago."

"You're a vampire, are you not? You need blood to live. With some magic from the nexus I was able to help your body convert the nutrients from the food you've been consuming into what you'd get out of blood. As for dying, I didn't die. I just came here, to wait."

Mark looked back at the fire, "Ye... yes, I'm a vampire." He sighed. "So why am I here if I'm not dead? I'd rather be with my boyfriend, Christian. What are you waiting for?"

"Ah yes, that must be the vampire you talk about when you sleep. You've started talking in your sleep since you arrived here, something I gather you never used to do. As for why you are here, only you can answer that. You brought yourself here."

Mark wasn't surprised by what Merlin says. While he didn't normally talk in his sleep at home, it did happen once a year or so. Mainly due to stress. But how Merlin knew he didn't do it regularly, he had no idea!

"I was here waiting for you, Mark." Merlin replied.

"I brought myself here?" Mark asked, seriously doubting what Merlin was telling him. He couldn't believe the famous, creepy old man had been waiting for *him*.

"You're a wizard, Mark. Yes, I know your name. You mentioned that in your sleep as well. You're a very powerful wizard, and" Merlin pointed to Mark's finger, "that signet ring protects you. Who gave it to you? That ring is 2000 years old."

"Nyarai gave it to me. She's a vampire, the oldest vampire still in existence or so I'm lead to believe."

Merlin nodded a little, "I met her once, when the accords were signed. She seemed very... noble."

"She is that" Mark replied curtly.

"You can go home anytime you want, Mark." Merlin said after a long pause.

Mark jumped up from his seat. "Really? Honestly?"

Merlin nodded sagely. "Yes, but I'd suggest you stay with me for a few more months. I can train you to use your powers. You know that most vampires have an extra ability of some sort. Like in the *Twilight* books you mumbled about in your sleep. Yours is your vast magical ability."

Mark sat back down, and just looked at the fire again, sipping his hot soup.

"The fire is a magical fire, Mark. Where did you think the wood came from?"

Mark looked back at Merlin and started to stammer, "We... I, I... I ththought... that..."

"I know exactly where to start your training." Merlin smiled, watching the 17 year old vampire.

Mark blinked, "Wh... where?"

"I'm going to show you how to cast a spell so that Christian will be able to go out in the daylight with you."

"Bu... but... isisn't that... too... too... adadvanced?" Mark stammered, again.

"Not really, you came here with magic. And while you may not understand what you did, I'd wager it wasn't your first spell. It's just the one that woke you up."

Three months later, Mark had worked hard. He had worked at everything that Merlin had asked of him. They trained day and night, and during the last month or so, Merlin would take him back to the dark ages to train amongst English warriors.

Mark held up his sword as he dueled with the Knight.

The swords clashed, and made a typical clang sound.

After his first session, Mark had asked Merlin "What is the purpose in leaning to use a sword?"

"Discipline. Diplomacy. Stupidity. Discipline because you need to learn when to fight, and when to not fight. Using magic in the way you're most likely to use it is to fight. Diplomacy because sometimes it's stupid to fight, so you have to learn to use your skills in the best manner to get a meaningful outcome. Stupidity because you're going to use your magic for many things. You must be mindful of your own abilities, and while you certainly use it on a daily basis, remember the first two items."

Mark stood silently, to begin a duel with a wizard following his duel using a sword with the Knight. Both opponents bowed to each other. The purpose of this duel was to only gently disabled their opponent.

A second after the bow was completed, Mark raised his hands and muttered some latin words. Wizards typically choose a language not of their native tongue to cast a spell in, this way they don't accidentally cast it.

He'd met a wizard a few days ago who used french, and another not that long ago who used Australian English. The most interesting one was the pretty young lady who used Klingon.

Spell completed, his opponent had been gently disabled. He was securely encompassed by a vine, and was hanging upside down as if he was some sort of prize catch for a game hunter. He smiled at his accomplishment.

"Let me down!" the wizard complained.

Mark grinned. "When Merlin comes to check on how we did, I will let you down. He said he was going to eat lunch. You and I both know it takes him 3 hours to eat lunch!"

The captured wizard just groaned.

"You've come far, Mark" Merlin commented one day as they were sitting around their customary campfire. A campfire of magic.

Mark just quietly watched the fire. While in medieval England, Mark had gone back to snacking on humans. He whispered, "I'm just trying to do my best, so I can go back to Christian."

"You can go back anytime you like, Mark. I'm not forcing you to stay."

Mark looked over at Merlin. "I know that, but I also know that had I left three months ago, even if I knew how, I wouldn't have been able to protect Christian, or my friends."

"Is that why you are still here?" Merlin asked candidly.

Mark looked into the old man's eyes. "Yes."

"You're a vampire, Mark. Is that not enough to protect all those you love?"

Mark shook his head negatively.

"Why not?" Merlin bluntly replied.

A spark lit in Mark's eyes, Merlin could instantly see the fire. "Because the enemy won't always be someone who is easily subdued by a vampire. It could be another supernatural species, or a wizard."

Merlin remained quiet, and studied his pupil for a few hours.

They were long, quiet hours Mark noticed. The first few hours of quiet he had since he had first spoken to Merlin. Even sleep was rare since the training began. He was given 3 – 4 hours a day, at most.

Now it had gone back to being quiet.

Mark felt like it was the first day he had spoken.

The same campfire, the same blackness, the same strange old man. It was like nothing had changed.

Except that *everything* had changed.

Mark knew this too. *He* had changed. Merlin didn't change him, magic didn't change him. He changed himself. Through the training, through the pain, through the punishment. Through the love, the combat, and the sacrifice.

"Go home, Mark. There is nothing else I can teach you at this point in your development. Go home and make love to Christian. Oh, and invite me to the wedding!" Merlin exclaimed excitedly. The first time Mark had ever seen the old man excited.

"Huh? What wedding?" Mark started to ask, but a large white flash enveloped him.

And then he was gone.

“I think I'm going to miss that young man.” Merlin commented to himself, eating a cup of soup.