

Every Last Day

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By : Aleauea

The end is near, but do not fear... Is all hope lost in Lasken as the prophecy that once killed returns?



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### Part 1 - Darkness

#### Before

The world is a cold desolate place. Unforgiving, like the sun on a hot summer day, but ready to tear you limb from limb when the sun sets and the raging winds take their toll after dark. I look over at Torin. He knows something's wrong too.

"Loretta," he begins, taking off his jacket and handing it to me. "It's time."

"Great," I reply in a sarcastic tone. Usually Torin would have laughed at my response, but not today.

I drop his jacket by the door to our barn as I pull my skirt up above my knees to prevent it from trailing behind me in the dirt as we make our way across open fields. The grass comes well above my ankles, so Torin and I have to battle to get through it, taking huge steps, almost as if walking in leaps and bounds. Like the men who go to space, but space is the last thing on everybody's mind right now.

We come to an old abandoned tractor shed, surrounded by moorland and the occasional trail the foxes had made in the hard sand.

Torin peers through a single crack in the door to the shed before motioning for me to follow him quietly.

"Stay low and nobody will see you until they need to," Torin whispers in my ear, my brother's smoky and damp breath tickling my neck.

"Who ever said anybody was going to notice me, anyway," I hiss back, articulating every word, and then I push him away from me. His breath is completely rank, but dental hygiene isn't on anybody's mind either. It is time. It is my becoming. It is tickling my neck like my brother's foul breath, it is pulsing through me like a heartbeat that was never mine, something inside of me that I desperately want to let out. It is me, but I am me too.

Only one can stay, but I am willing to choose.

"Girls aren't meant to turn, Loretta, you know that, right? A girl at the becoming is going to attract attention, so stay low." Torin tells me. I already know that I'm not meant to be here. Girls aren't ever meant to turn, girls aren't even meant to know our king exists. But I know. That must count for something.

One of the seer's will see to me tonight. I'm ready to do what it takes to be the real me, I'm sick of hiding somebody else in my soul. I want to let them out, and they don't want to be inside of me anymore.

If the seer's don't want to, I'll make them. I know who I want to be because a part of the other me is already seeping from my skin, like blood. I am so alive tonight, and I never want it to end.

"Loretta Jane Baskerville, I am not at all surprised to see you here." The voice is stern and powerful, yet reassuring.

"Bastian," I reply. "I am not at all surprised to see you here either."

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I turn to see one of my close friends. He turned last moon. He has his reasons for being here. Just like I have mine. Just like we all do.

"Darkness is coming, Loretta, you shouldn't be here. The seer's are going to be too preoccupied with another portal fix to see you." His eyes are blank, but I know he's not lying. I want to think he is. I can feel more of the other me trying to escape me. *No, no*, I think to myself, *it's not time yet*.

But it's too late for that, now.

The pain. It taunts me at first, gently persuading me. Pulling me and pushing me as it escalates. But it just keeps getting worse and worse. *Darkness is coming*. Bastian's words ring in my ear, like a fly that just keeps refusing to leave. *You shouldn't be here*. I know that now. I made a mistake.

"Loretta!" I can hear Torin's distressed call faintly over the pounding in my head. "Help! Help! My sister, she's in pain!"

But, I know nobody will come. I can see Bastian. It's blurry, but I know that it's him. He will help me. He's my friend, why would he not?

"Loretta Jane Baskerville," I can hear Bastian. I'm slowly fading, but I strain my ears to listen to what he has to say. "Don't you dare die on me, not tonight, of all nights." His hand is sweaty. I know that because he's holding mine and it's wet.

Wet and shiny, like a bubble.

But, I'm not scared anymore. This is my becoming.

And I'm going to become something great.

"Goodbye," I whisper faintly before I'm finally, free. And completely and utterly alive.

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