

It hurt Eclipse.

It *hurt* Eclipse!

Even in my pained, pinned position, I saw the red of blood in the night mare's coat as she cried out in pain.

Even as the creature slammed its foot into my lower back, sending pain wracking through my body, I stayed fixed on that fact.

This monster—and whoever sent it—had harmed *my* night mare.

*No.*

I gripped my prism and saw black.

Magic, tumbled from my prism, cocooned around me, swaddling me and the night mares. I swear I could see a million galaxies, and exhaled a thousand stars that skated across the sky.

“No one harms one of mine,” I growled. “*No one!*”

My magic scattered like darkness under the onslaught of dawn, leaving the night mares changed.

They were bigger and the glow of their eyes seemed sharper, but there was something *bright* inside them that seemed to shine.

The creature howled and tried to claw at them, but Comet caught its left arm, Nebula its right. Twilight bit at its right thigh, and Blue Moon kicked it in the face.

Solstice and Eclipse glowed, black and silver light flickering around them like the light of the moon and the shadows of the night.

Together, they charged the monster from behind, slamming their untamable magic into the creature's back.

It screamed, and silver light ate away at the insubstantial edges of its body.

*Just how powerful are the night mares?*

I felt its foot on my back slip, and I pushed off the ground and whirled around, shoving my hand up into its shadowy torso, as I used the one magic I'd been practicing endlessly for the past few weeks.

I made a ward.

Not around me or my night mares, but around the monster. Or—rather—through it.

Yep, I created a barrier inside the monster, splitting its body in half as the spell grew and expanded.

The creature stopped flailing. Cut in half, whatever magic that made it hold its shape crumbled. It's body and limbs turned into thick clouds of smoke which dissolved into the air.

A flower dropped on my legs—the only sign of the monsters' presence that was left behind.

Blood oozed down my back as I leaned forward and snatched up the spotless, white flower. It was a chrysanthemum.

*Lady Chrysanthe.*

I shoved the flower in my pocket, then stood up on shaky legs. “Everyone okay? Eclipse?”

Eclipse called to me—she was already farther up the street, pawing at the road and charging a few steps east. Toward the finish line.

Solstice, Nebula, Comet, and Twilight joined her.

Only Blue Moon waited at my side, swiveling so I could conveniently hop on.

“You’re all crazier than I am,” I grumbled as I awkwardly flopped on to Blue Moon’s back, blinking when I realized he hadn’t lost the extra height, and that something still brimmed under his coat.

Blue Moon snorted, took a few prancing steps, then fell into a rolling canter. We blazed past the other night mares, who caught up with us within a heartbeat.

Just as they had on the walking trail, the night mares stretched out, galloping at an insane speed that blurred sights and sounds.

I’d just fought a monster, and it wasn’t a good thing that the magic my prism channeled had slowed down drastically during the fight, but that didn’t matter right now.

*We’re going to win—to prove to the fae who underestimate how wrong they are about the night mares...and to show them I’m not going to back down from their stupid games. I’m going to end this obsession of power in my Court, and show them just how a half human/half fae rules!*

I clutched my prism, tangling it in the reins, and a smile crawled face as my night mares thundered around me.