

Mid chapter 2 -SAMPLE

The girls went back downstairs and the sound of the heavy raindrops that were slowly hitting the roof increased their tempo as another loud crack sounded, this time it was extremely close. The entrance to their small wooden home burst open making Pip and Molly scream! Eve fell inside soaking wet and breathless.

“Girls! Thank the gods you are safe! I am so sorry I took so long but I had to try to find your father. He is OK but he has gone into the South side of the Bottlegrove with the other scouts and volunteers. Oh I hope he is safe!” Eve started to cry as she stood up and paced back and forth. Pip watched her mother’s pained expression, as she tried to think of what they should do. The elders had told them to stay in their homes, but had they imagined that the fear would grow this great? Whatever was nearly upon Willowfield was capable of knocking down the ancient trees in the Bottlegrove as if they were made of sticks. Eve had quickly gathered her emotions, and as if locking them away to an area unreachable in the back of her mind, she pulled herself together and said, “OK Pip, Molly, you have your things sorted? We are leaving, right now.”

She hustled off to the kitchen as Pip picked Molly up and held her, the two girls listened as the kitchen cupboards opened and slammed shut, as if a tornado was ripping through their home. Eve emerged shoving some fruit, nuts and carrots into a small bag which she then slung onto her back. Eve took Molly from Pips arms and looked at her eldest daughter intently.

“Pip, my darling, we have got to leave now. I want you to remember what the elders said to us all today. You have your wings, and you have your power.” Her eyes locked onto the stone around Pip’s neck. “Do not, under any circumstance, let anyone know about the strength this stone possesses. Only use it when you have no other option. I want you to promise me though, if we end up with nowhere to go and danger arrives, you have to fly. Promise me you will fly.”

Pip stared back at her mother and didn’t understand fully what she was asking of her.

“Mother, are you telling me to leave you and Molly if it’s not safe? If you are...I don’t think I can promise you that.”

“Pip you *have* to. I can protect Molly, I can use my own power, but yours is different. I am scared of what’s out there; I don’t know what they are capable of! If this darkness gets a hold of you and recognises your strength, then I fear there will be no hope for any fae on Amalshar.” Eves tone changed from fearful to determined. “If you get away, you can go to the mountains like the elders said and you can be safe. You have such strength within you more than you realise right now.” They looked at each other for a brief moment but before another word could be said there was a loud growl and a dark shadow bolted past the front window. Overcome with terror the two girls froze as Eve slowly brought the candlelight she was holding up to her face. Pip watched her mother’s lips quiver as she silently blew the flame out.

“Come on girls, this way.” Eve held Molly in her arms and Pip followed behind her as they headed towards the back entrance of their tiny home. The rain was pounding against the window as Eve peered outside into the darkness. Behind their home lay the north side of the Bottlegrove and in the distance lay the shadowy outlines of the Cambria mountain range. Pip’s ears twitched, sensing the sounds surrounding them. She could hear her mother’s heart pounding as fast as a humming birds and Molly’s breathing was jerky as she tried to gulp down air as silently as possible. Around the front of the house there was an unusual raspy rattling noise. Pip couldn’t quite put her finger on it, the rasps got closer and the rattles got louder. As the trio huddled close at the back entrance they could see the window at the front of the house. It was pitch black outside and with the candle light out they had to rely on their

touch rather than sight, however the frame around the front window caught Pips attention and as she looked at the pane of glass another low rattle sounded, this time it was longer and louder than the others. What happened next made Pips legs collapse, Eve caught her and pulled her close as they held their breaths. A shadow moved again at this window except this time it was looking in, showing them its bright white, crescent moon eyes. As another rattle escaped its lungs the beast snarled through to them, revealing rows of dagger tipped, white teeth, stained with golden blood, faerie blood.

Eve reached for the door handle behind them and Pip heard the springs inside creak as she pressed the handle slowly down. The beast was looking in the window straight at them but it had not moved any further, could it see them? The door opened slowly behind them and the three of them slid outside and were instantly saturated, the rain was relentless. The rattling breath from the beast started to move around the side of the house and was getting closer, if they stayed in that spot any longer they would surely be caught. This time it was Pip that took the lead as she grabbed her mother and pulled her towards the Bottlegrove forest. Their small, delicate feet pounded the sodden soil and they knew they had been spotted, a cry like thunder exploded from behind them so loud Pip felt her heart vibrate, it stopped them in their tracks as the three of them cowered at the outskirts of the forest protecting their ears with their icy cold hands.

“PIP GO, RUN, *FLY!*” Eve shouted. “Take Molly with you, you must Pip!” Eve grasped Pip by the collar of her dress and pulled her inches away from her face. Love, madness and total desperation, painted vividly over every inch of her expression, as she let Pip go and hastily pressed Molly into her chest.

“No, no, mother!” Molly cried. “Please no, don’t leave us! Please don’t do this, that beast will kill you! Let’s all run together now, come on!” She tugged at her mother's arm and used all of her strength to pull her into the mouth of the forest.

“NO MOLLY!” She exclaimed, her tone then quickly softened as she knelt down to look at her youngest child, she pulled her in tightly and said softly in her ear, “You must leave with Pip, she will protect you. I can distract it, I will fight and I will find you again, *I promise.*” She stood up and handed the bag of supplies to Pip encouraging her quickly then she looked at her daughters. “I am so proud of you both, remember whose bloodline you are part of, you must be strong just like Lowen was for us, I love you both.” Eve took one last look at them and then ran back towards the beast. Pip grabbed Molly’s hand and took off into the forest, her uncontrollable sobs echoed around the damp, moist air making it even harder for Pip to try to hold all the pieces of her shattering heart together. They stopped at the base of a large oak tree, where the roots had grown and lifted out of the earth opening a small, underground hollow, calling them to shelter. The soil was soft, and Pip was thankful that the forests giant canopy sheltered them from the rain. Molly crawled under the tree first and Pip guided her, helping her to duck her head through the roots and squeeze herself as far out of sight as possible. She followed Molly and stopped to raise her head from the ground and look around the forest. Back towards Willowfield she could see bright flashes; the elders were fighting back, each flash highlighted large shadows of unknown creatures. Her thighs crumbled beneath her as she backed her way deeper towards Molly, just as her ears picked up the unmistakable low rattle of the beast with the crescent moon eyes. Twigs from the forest floor snapped beneath the sound of heavy feet. Pip closed her eyes and held Molly’s hand whispering so softly, only a faes ears could hear, “Stay here Mol, I need to try to see it.” Prizing her hand away from her sisters she silently slithered her way towards the opening to the hollow under the tree, stopping just as her bright emerald eyes found a gap to peer through, to catch a glimpse of what had turned their lives upside down. As her eyes landed on the beast she clasped her mouth in horror, too scared to breathe incase it heard the fear escaping her lungs.

The beast's skin was coated with two layers, the top layer was covered with black scales, its under-coat glowed through a dazzling silver with every deep, rattling breath it took. Standing on two feet, the four, long, needle-like claws on its toes penetrated the soil and its tall, strong build easily made it a competitor against the thousand year old oaks. As Pips eyes travelled up this creature's enormous body she stared at its face, which made her stammer backwards against one of the exposed roots. A sudden flashback in her mind to one of the dreams she had woken from weeks ago, sweat dripping from her clammy skin. She had seen those before, those crescent shaped eyes, watching her in that dream. As the beast blinked, black scales covered the silver eyes, it started to breathe in deeply to smell the air, exposing a row of six diagonal slits for its nose. At first Pip thought the beast had no mouth at all as it was covered all over with those scales, then she remembered what she had seen back at home through the window. Inspecting its face closer she could make out the opening for the mouth, it was the entire width of its lower jaw, and as it exhaled in frustration it bore those sharp, white teeth. A drop of golden fairy blood fell from its rough, cracked, black lips and sank into the dirt. Raising its arms to the side, claws exposed, the beast took another breath in, over-inflating its lungs it expelled all the air back out with such force that the soil blew outwards away from it. Pips face got coated with the flyaway dirt and she quickly rubbed it clean from her eyes just in time to see a wall of black flames erupting from the mouth of the beast. She dove back down and landed on her back with her eyes now looking straight up at the canopy above, now engulfed in black, shimmering fire.

The heavy thuds of the beast's steps faded away, and as if Molly had been holding her breath the whole time she suddenly burst, and was gulping down air to satisfy her hungry lungs. The thick smoke from the black fire started to fall to the ground and smoke started to fill the hollow space they were hiding in.

"Molly! We need to get out of here before we suffocate!" Pip waved her hand around blindly searching for Molly's and their fingers locked together. They crawled out of the hole and tried to look around the clearing before they exposed themselves. As their eyes searched the forest floor the heavy smoke started to choke them, they climbed out and Pip scooped Molly up in her arms. She stretched her wings out behind her and started to beat them back and forth causing the smoke to swirl around their feet. Pip started to run toward the centre of the clearing, each stride getting longer and lighter and then she leapt up causing the ground to fall from beneath them and the forest spun around their bodies in three hundred and sixty degree turns. Soon they had risen above the canopy, bursting through a gap in the singed trees displaying themselves to the cool night air, damp from the rainfall which had taken a break from its relentless downpour. The thick clouds overhead still blanketed the stars and the moon and Pip felt there would be another shower soon, they must decide where to go quickly as it would be hopeless trying to fly in the rain. As the girls looked south they could still see bright golden bursts coming from Willowfield, each glow highlighted the black, bellowing smoke surrounding the lagoon as their homes got engulfed by the tar like flames. Pip spun to face north, the faint outline of the Cambria ranges stood strongly in the distance and as her eyes narrowed locking in on their destination, heavy drops of rain started to fall onto their skin. She tightened her hold on Molly and flew north for a few minutes, racing against the rainfall, her goal to get far away from the clearing where she saw the beast. As the drops got heavier and faster, they started to dampen her wings, making it impossible to remain steady, for their safety she found an opening to land in and softly touched down, her toes sinking into the mulchy earth. Molly wriggled free from Pips embrace and hugged the closest oak tree, her glistening tears that fell gracefully from her cheeks dampened the bark that had escaped that night's excessive rainfall.

"What will we do Pip? The Cambria ranges are so far away and even if we did make it alive, what are we supposed to do then? It won't change that fact that everything we have ever

loved is now lost! Gone!” Molly bellowed uncontrollably as she grasped the tree tighter, her nails digging into the bark.

Pip raised her hands to her head and looked up, the opening from the canopy above dropped clean, cool rain onto her face and she came to the realisation that she also felt lost. She looked over to her sister and rubbed the water from her face, she then moved slowly towards her.

“Molly, I will be honest with you. I don’t know what we should do, or where we should go. The one thing I do know is that we have lost so much tonight and the one thing in the world I have left is you, and you have me. I promised mother I would look after you and I will keep that promise, I will keep you safe.” Pip crouched down next to Molly and rest her head against the bark. They looked lovingly at each other and shuffled closer together.

“I think we will be safe here for now Mol, I want you to rest and when the sun breaks we will start to head north. The elders would not have advised us to go there is they did not think it was a safe place. I am sure we will find our way.” She wrapped her arms around Molly and kissed her on her forehead, brushing her damp, red curls from her eyes. Pip felt Molly relax in her embrace and the sound of her soft, shallow breathing was a relief on her overworked lungs. They huddled in the darkness as Pip listened out for any sounds indicating danger and they waited for the golden sunrise to break through that nights black storm clouds. As she focused on the hypnotic sounds of Mollys breathing her eyes got heavier and heavier, until the weight of her eyelashes shut them tight.