



*From the night,
The Prince Rises*

An Ashen Twilight Short

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by [Rae Lori](#)

Highlands, Scotland - 1465

The guard stared down at the loch, watching the thick leather bound journal slip under the rippling black water. Years had passed since he started the first entry. Much had changed in the lands during the course of time. Now it was time to let the past sink into the river while they focus on the future.

He brushed a dark strand of hair away from his face. The biting cold air hit his face, sending a shiver despite the amount of heavy armor he wore over his tunic. He rested his arm on the sword sheathed at his side, hearing the soft neigh of the horse behind him. He was lost in his memories at that moment. Remembering the way his wife looked in the last days before she gave birth to their son. Her dark wavy hair fell over her damp, tired face in the birth. He waited outside until it was time. The large thick door wasn't thick enough as he heard the name that still haunted him to this day.

That name.

The guard balled up his fists. She didn't need to fret over him, even if he was her first husband and their son's true father. It didn't matter that he left them behind. He felt him. And with his own eyes, he watched as his former laird's wife cried in his arms over his death. How could he tell her the truth? It was his duty, as first guard, to step up and continue the protection of the people in Inverness and raise the child as his own so he can one day take over the lands.

Yet things had changed over time.

The new wife he took to protect from the English invaders, and had fallen in love with years prior, was his main priority. He appointed his own first guard to watch over the castle in case the English's hold would stretch to their lands. As much as his heart belonged to her and as much as he gave her, she never looked upon him like she had her first husband. Her warm eyes never sparkled with passion nor did her touch feel as warm. Her heart still belonged to *that man* and it made him angry with a passion to destroy him if he ever were to see him again.

Even as she died in the birth of the son *that man* had created with her, the very man that had left her, she still uttered his vile name.

I wish you could have seen our son.

A scream had erupted throughout the room and he rushed in to see the warm light leave her eyes as she said those words. He scooped her up into his arms, held her close to him as he felt her heartbeat slow to a quiet rhythm before it died to silence. Then she was gone. He heard her chamber maids talking amongst themselves.

She died of a broken heart she did, they had said. The poor dear.

He dared them to say those words in front of him. After he had stepped up to take over what *he* had left behind, he was repaid with a piece of her heart. He should have been the one to have it all. Ever since she arrived from France and he saw her on the hand of her father Baron Henri Germaine, her regal beauty accentuated by the soft velvet gowns draped over her body. Her long dark hair was pulled in intricate braids framing the crown

of her head to cascade down her back. He desired her then but knew his laird would care for her. Now he regretted not taking her for himself at that very moment, for even as she lay dying she still thought of the selfish husband that left her.

No matter now, though. They will focus on the future and the destiny that stood before them.

The sound of horse hooves against the soft damp grass invaded his thoughts. The horse sighed and a thump followed by the crunch of boots against the ground alerted him that one of his men made their way over to him.

“The men are ready to start the travel, *mo athair*.”

The guard turned and looked into the eyes of his son. He was young, about mid-twenties with wavy dark hair and bright blue eyes that sometimes reminded him too much of his true father. A man he would never know if he had anything to do with it. The boy leaned on his sword with one arm and looked ahead at the river.

“I shall miss this river,” he said softly. “We had lots of memories. Many nights I looked o’er the water and dreamt of mother. How proud she must be.”

“An’ she shall be proud of ye, boy,” he said, patting his son’s shoulder. “I promise that. She looks down upon us now from above. I can feel her.”

His son looked down at the ground, shuffling his feet as he thought his words over before speaking. “What will become of me? The man hasn’t returned since...since what happened at the inn.”

“I know.” The stranger he had come across helped to change his boy. He gave him more strength and a promise of a longer life in exchange for helping him to combat a larger threat. Immortals he had called them. Soon a man would rise who would be able to use these immortals to help give them all life. He saw the effects that the change had on his son. The boy seemed to die one night before awaking the next thirsting for blood. He couldn’t feel the boy’s heartbeat nor any sign that said he was alive. Yet there he was just like the stranger said. So it would be for as long as the sun shines. The boy had told him he felt alive whenever he fed and it was like nothing had happened back there at all. Perhaps this was for the best. And if it was true what the stranger said *they* would be out there, preying and waiting. *He* would get what was coming to him then, from his own blood no less. If he had to become an immortal himself, so be it. Just as long as he can stop the former laird in his own tracks.

The guard turned his back on the river and led his son back to their pack of horses just as the other guards rode up. They had until morning before they left Inverness and their past behind and his son must sleep again. Another quirk that perked up in his mysterious change, he would only be able to wander at night. In the light of the sunlit day, his body was literally dead with no movement or sign of his life until night. As long as his skin didn’t touch the sun’s rays, as the stranger warned, he would be well.

He climbed onto his horse and clicked his heels together, leading the men back onto the green covered road ahead. His mind raced to plot how he would wait and rest as he conspired to bring about their demise.

For in the hall of the boy’s legacy, there will only be one left standing. As he looked at the boy sitting up tall as he rode beside him, he knew the fates were sealed.