

CHOSEN

(BOOK #4 OF THE VAMPIRE LEGENDS)

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Also by Emma Knight

SWORN (Book #1 of the Vampire Legends)

TAKEN (Book #2 of the Vampire Legends)

BITTEN (Book #3 of the Vampire Legends)

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“I love thee, I love but thee
With a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold
And the stars grow old.”

--William Shakespeare

Chapter 1

Rachel looked down at her green, scaly mermaid tail and her long, flowing red hair, and for a second, she couldn't help but wonder why she looked like a mermaid. Holding her hand as she swam under the sea was Benji. She looked down at his legs, which were no longer legs, but a green, scaly tail as well, and the water flowing through his beautiful mane of hair made it look irresistible as he gazed into her eyes. The warm water reminded her of the tropics. She could feel the sun beating down on her through the crystal blue water as she gazed back into Benji's eyes.

He leaned in and kissed her, passionately, as if it were their first kiss. She felt tingly through her tail and hands and she could feel the little hairs on her arms stand up. As they kissed, Rachel could feel something being slipped into her hands. It was cold and metal with sharp edges.

She looked down to see Benji had handed her a shiny, gold key.

She looked at him, confused.

"What's this?"

"It's the Gold Key, let's use it," Benji said.

"Where? How?" Rachel asked, looking around the sea floor as if a treasure chest would magically appear.

"C'mon, Rach, you've done this before, don't you remember?"

“Um, I think you’re mistaken, I’ve never seen this key before in my life!” Rachel assured him.

“This key is to the Golden Chest. You remember, the one that came out of the old ship.”

Rachel stopped and thought for a moment and then a smile came across her face. Suddenly, she remembered it. Benji had found the key they’d been looking for for ages. The key held the answers to what lie inside the ancient Golden Chest.

“Let’s go!” Rachel said in excitement, as she grabbed Benji’s hand and started swimming up towards the rays of the sun. “We don’t have much time!” Rachel said, swimming faster.

“I know, we have to move quickly!”

The two swam quickly up towards the shore, passing other schools of fish, swimming around them. As they reached the top of the water, Rachel leaned in and kissed Benji one more time.

“I love you,” Benji said, in between kisses.

“I love you, more,” Rachel said back, smiling. “Promise you’ll never leave me?”

“I promise!” Benji said.

“Say it again,” Rachel begged.

“I promise! We will be together forever. Now, let’s go find that treasure,” Benji said with excitement.

“OK!” Rachel said.

As they emerged from the water, their mermaid bodies quickly turned back into human bodies, with legs and feet. They no longer had their tails and now they could

breath oxygen. As if this were completely normal, it didn't faze either of them as they skipped together towards the Golden Chest.

The sun quickly went behind the clouds and the sky grew dark—darker than Rachel had ever seen before. It was almost black, like midnight on Halloween. There was a bright orange streak where the sun had gone behind the clouds that cast an ominous shadow over the land. Rachel became scared and slunk into Benji's arms.

"Don't worry, Rachel. We will be OK, we just have to get to the chest," Benji assured her.

"No, I'm scared. What's happening?" Rachel asked.

"There's no time for questions. Hurry!" Benji pleaded. "There's the chest, I see it, over there!" He pointed towards the rocks next to the ocean.

The two ran quickly towards the rocks where the Golden Chest lay on its side. As they approached it, the two looked around to see if anyone was there or if anyone was watching them. They knew they had to move quickly so they didn't get caught.

"Hurry, get the key out!" Benji said to Rachel.

Rachel fumbled around and reached into her skirt pocket and pulled out the shiny golden key. Her hands were shaking as she lifted it towards the key hole.

"I hope this works!" Rachel said.

As she put the shiny key into the hole, a loud crash of thunder boomed above her, making her jump backwards.

"Try again!" Benji yelled. "C'mon, Rachel!"

She quickly got back onto her feet and put the key back into the hole. She turned the key to the right, and a beam of light came out of the cracks of the chest. As she

and Benji worked together to pry the lid off a huge wave came and crashed over them, getting them soaking wet. The waves kept coming, faster and faster, and Rachel felt drenched.

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Rachel woke with a start, and felt as if she were falling from a high cliff. She sat up, out of breath, looking around her as if it had all really just happened. She touched her legs to see if they were real or if she still had a tail. She couldn't remember how she'd gotten to this place as she looked around to find herself washed up in a dark, damp cave. Panicked, she looked around for Benji. She couldn't find him anywhere, but heard someone breathing loudly around the bend.

She leapt to her feet and peered around the bend of the eerie cave she'd woken up in.

"Benji!" she cried, her voice echoing. "Are you here?"

Silence filled the air. The breathing she'd heard just moments before grew louder and louder, as if following her. She started to whimper and tear up thinking that she may be alone in this cave with nobody to protect her.

"Benji, please! I need you!" Rachel cried.

Rachel looked around to see stalagmites and stalagtites surrounding the ceiling and floor of the cave. She had to dodge them in the tight areas. Then, suddenly, she saw him, lying on the floor with blood coming out of his neck.

Benji.

She ran over towards him, slinking her body down next to his and lying across his body hysterically crying.

“No! Benji! No!”

Chapter 2

Rachel could see Benji's chest rising and falling. He was alive, but in great danger. The wound on his neck was still bleeding, dripping into a large puddle on the floor that looked as though it had been dripping for quite some time. She stood back cautiously, not wanting to hurt him, not wanting to cause any more damage to his body. What she really wanted to do was pick him up and hold him, kiss him and tell him everything would be OK—but she couldn't. She didn't know if it would be OK. From the sight of Benji, she knew he was in trouble.

"Benji," she whispered, hoping for a response.

His quick breaths filled the air as she watched the blood continue to ooze from his neck.

"Benji, are you OK? Please tell me you're OK, PLEASE!" Rachel pleaded quietly, almost in tears.

Nothing.

Rachel got closer to his body, reached out and touched his ice cold hand, which sent a shiver down her spine. For a moment she'd forgotten they were vampires. She tried to remember.

She remembers clutching the Blue Tablet. Holding Benji's hand and jumping. Plunging to what she was sure would be her death. But, here she was, alive, breathing, trying to figure out how they got into this cave. Had the jump killed him?

She looked down at her wrist, hoping her watch was still on, and it was. The time said 11:05am and the date was September 15th.

"September 15th?" she asked out loud.

How could it be September? she thought to herself. The last thing she remembered was the Halloween Ball and it being almost Thanksgiving. She thought something must have gone wrong with her watch, maybe the battery was low or maybe it was broken. She grabbed Benji's arm and looked down at his watch in disbelief.

September 15th. How could this be? Had they really been in this cave for almost a year?

Then, out of nowhere, Benji started coughing and spitting up water.

"Benji! Are you ok? Answer me!" Rachel cried.

Gurgling noises came from his throat as one of his eye lids opened and Rachel caught a glimpse of the whites of his eyes and his pupils rolling back in his head.

"Benji, please, don't die, you can't leave me!" Rachel begged. "I love you."

Rachel looked at Benji's lips, which appeared to be mouthing something to her. She couldn't quite make it out. She listened carefully and heard a slight whisper.

"The Red Amulet," Benji whispered softly, his eyes still not focusing.

"Red Amulet?" Rachel asked. "What's that?"

Then without another word, Benji's body slunk back into a state of unconsciousness and his body lay limp on the cave floor. She took another look at Benji and realized she needed to find help fast. She tried to pick him up—but he was too heavy. She couldn't lift him. She realized the only way was for her to leave him and go get help. She hated the idea of leaving him here alone—but she had no choice.

Rachel walked quickly through the cave, trying to find a way out. It was dark and damp, and the screeching of bats echoed off the wall. She thought for a moment that she was still dreaming, or in some sort of horror movie.

Terrified of being alone, she began to breathe quickly, and her heart started racing. She had to get out of there—and fast. She ran towards a ray of light she saw towards the far back of the cave, but when she came upon it, realized it was only a small hole leading to the outside. She couldn't possibly fit through it.

She walked towards the other end but found nothing but darkness and stalagmites. She walked to another end and luckily she saw a narrow passageway, just big enough for her to squeeze her way through.

Sucking in her gut and barely breathing, she pushed her way through the small opening and followed the smell of fresh air and the warm rays of sun that were hitting her on the face. Thankfully, she'd applied Hex Lotion in anticipation of getting out of the cave alive and so she wasn't worried about getting burnt or killed.

With only the Red Amulet on her mind, Rachel knew she had to figure out what the Red Amulet was and where to find it. She knew Benji was in great danger, and perhaps this Red Amulet was the only thing that could save him now. She felt like a

lost puppy and didn't know where to begin. She needed Benji now more than ever and he was unable to wake up or help her. She'd wished he could have finished telling her about the Red Amulet before he fell back into his state of unconsciousness, but he didn't. Now it was up to her to put all the pieces together. It was up to her to make it right and save his life. After all, he'd do anything for her. Now it was her turn to prove her love to him.

Rachel leapt into the air, felt her wings spread, felt the cool wind hit her in the face and knew, that no matter what she had to do, she would find it.

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