

Banished...

'Go!' the king shouted. 'You are no daughter of mine! I will not have you in my kingdom a moment longer!'

The breath caught in my throat. I was banished.

He gestured at Aidan, the commander of 'The Vultures', his elite guardsmen.

'She is in your care, Aidan. Take her to the border and make sure she crosses. Once she is outside, my magic will ensure she can never return.'

Aidan saluted the king and turned to face me. Through my tears I could see Aidan's concern. I would not acknowledge him, yet. 'My lady Maia, accompany me please!'

'No need for that tone, man!' the king muttered angrily. 'She is your prisoner, nothing more! Choose your guards, let them stand before me.'

'Yes, sire.' Aidan chose three companions.

'She's devious, that one,' my father proclaimed. 'Vultures in name, be vultures in nature!'

The spell was cast; Aidan and the guards were transformed.

'Now go, take one of the horses for her. It will make the journey quicker.'

Aidan led the way, whilst the vultures hovered round me, pecking me, fluttering their wings in my face. We went to the stables, I mounted the fastest stallion, and we were gone.

The journey was long. And the stallion, who was not used to long journeys, expired in the heat of the desert which fringed our lands. I was alone, deserted; I had no one to talk to, apart from Aidan.

For my beloved is still there, in his mind. Our desperate plan is working.

And we are near the coast, I can see it through the haze. Aidan has kept the choicest cut from the stallion to feed me, whilst he and his companions have feasted on the bones. And I see my future, with my love Aidan. I wonder at my father's spell though, will its powers fade when we leave? Or will we be doomed to live as we are now, princess and vulture companion? Only time will tell, and we are both strong. Whatever happens, our love is true, it cannot be broken.