

QUASI REDUX by Christina Bauer

EXCERPT

I step past the trio of thrax guards writhing on the ground.

Meh. They'll live. Plus, it serves them right for trying to tackle me.

My best friend, Cissy, stares at the same scene. "This isn't right," she snaps. "Before you said and I quote, when we break into Antrum, there will be no fighting."

"True, but that wasn't a real battle. I just tripped those guards by mistake."

Cissy rolls her eyes. "Myla, you punched that guy in the nuts."

I give an eye roll right back. "Same difference. He's down, isn't he?"

Cissy shoots another nervous look at the guards, who remain passed out on the ground. Except for the junk-punch guy. He's awake, just not moving yet.

Cissy narrows her eyes. "And why are we here again?"

"Because at this time of day, Lincoln will be training the young lords. I can catch up with him, easy peasy."

Cissy nibbles her thumbnail. "And he's your husband."

"In another reality, yeah."

"But he won't know you here."

"No." My tail arcs over my shoulder. The arrowhead end points right at my face. I've seen this move before. "I know, bud. Cis is acting strangely." I refocus on my friend. "I feel like we've covered all this before. Why do you keep asking the same questions?"

Cissy shifts her weight from foot to foot. "Just give me the plan one more time."

"I'll talk to my guy and all our troubles will end." Cissy still looks skeptical, so I continue. "Lincoln is a rock. I haven't changed; he hasn't changed. Sure, there's probably some spell on his memories and—just like you—he won't know me right away."

"I don't remember you at all."

"Doesn't matter. Once I explain things, Lincoln will believe me. Then together, we'll fix this mess."

"So you say." Cissy throws up her hands. "How can I be sure?"

"Here's the deal. When it comes to me, you always have a healthy dose of skepticism, but I bulldoze you into things anyway. Come on, let's go before the guards get mobile."

And as I suspected, that speech works perfectly. Without another word, Cissy follows me as I step off to find Lincoln.