

Excerpt from Defender of The Lost Book 2 of The Verities Silex (Fantasy Novel)
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What's going on? Kren was growing nervous. This never happens when my dad uses The Silex. Did I do something wrong? Should I release my magic or... There was no time for the thought to continue. Kren's mind was suddenly bombarded with an army of thoughts. They poured into his head at such a rapid pace he felt as if his mind was going to explode. Fighting to keep a hold on his sanity, he struggled to make sense of the scenes and emotions that wouldn't stop coming.

At last, after what seemed like an eternity, he began to remember... As first it was just one memory but for each one that came back to him another five returned as well. Tears flowed down Kren's face as the light vanished. He remembered it all now. The attack on the village, Lucia dying in his arms, his journey over the Regon Mountains, Linka, Xalane, Ghaleon... As he held The Silex up once more the entire hall seemed to waver unsteadily around him.

"No..." Kren's every feature reflected the sheer anguish that tore at his soul. "NO!!!" he ran, The Silex still in his hand. Barely stopping to open the door, he was oblivious to everyone and everything around him. The entire village was wavering now, like a mirage in the midst of a desert. Reaching his house, Kren burst through the door, causing Lucia and his parents to jump up in surprise.

"Kren! What's wrong?" Lucia hurried towards him.

"Stay back!" his face was screwed up in pain and despair. "The villagers, the houses, even you, none of this is real... Burn you Ghaleon! Burn you in the flames of Moniordeith for making me go through this!!!"

"But Kren," Lucia took a step towards the young man, "so what if this isn't real? You can still stay here. Here you have your friends and parents and me... What do you have out there besides pain? Remember our wedding? We promised to stay together forever. We can do that right here! Why go back? Stay with me, please..." she began crying too.

"Lucia..." Kren felt as if his body and soul were being ripped in two. Why, why did he have to make this choice? "You're right, this is what I always wanted. I'd love nothing more than to live out my life right here... But I can't..."

"But Kren!" Lucia's gray eyes filled with tears as he embraced her for one last time.

"No matter how wonderful, how perfect this is, it's not real!" the two lovers tears mingled as they clutched each other desperately. "I can't live in a lie, especially not now. Xalane and Linka need my help, and if Ghaleon gets both halves of The Silex,"

"Forget the world, forget Linka!!!" Lucia's eyes locked onto his. "I need you!!!"

"I can't just forget about Linka!!!" her face filled Kren's mind as realization finally dawned on him.

"But why?"

"Because, because I love her." Kren's thoughts about Linka were no longer a jumbled mess. It all made sense now, every thought, every feeling... "I love you too Lucia, I always will. But nothing here is real, not even you... I did my best to protect you and I'll never forgive myself that it wasn't enough. But that's behind me now. I have another person that needs my help, another person to protect. I'll never forget you but I've moved on and I'll die before I fail again!"

"Kren..." Lucia's voice trembled. "You're right... If you just stayed here and pretended to forget, you wouldn't be the Kren I know and love." she offered a sad smile. "You'd better hurry if you want to save her. I hope that the two of you can find the same happiness that we had together." Lucia held Kren tighter still and kissed him tenderly in parting.

Though there were a thousand words Kren wanted to say as the two of them broke apart, he could only manage a single one, "Goodbye." Wiping away his tears, Kren stepped back, held The Silex high above his head, and called upon its powers. The scene began to waver more and more as the light from the stone grew brighter.

"I love you..." Kren could just make out Lucia's last words as everything vanished in a flare of blue light.