

# Their Warrior Luna Chapter 81

Harley:

It has been two weeks since things have calmed down some. Since my informal Luna ceremony after the battle, I have been able to step into that role a bit more with the help of Doris, but for the most part, I have been helping Nathan and Denny with the pack training. Who knew that I would be going from training every day at Evergreen with Drew and I complaining about being bored, to all of the insanity that has happened over the last couple of months?

“There you are.” Alistair’s husky voice sent tingles around my spine.

“Here I am.” I chuckled dryly, wiping the sweat from my palms.

“I knew it! I was right, you two get out here!” He stood yelling towards the pack house.

“What are you three on now?” I asked, rolling my eyes at the twins coming out with doe eyes.

“Your blood has tasted sweeter, your coffee is making you sick, and you are exhausted. Pee on a stick!” Alistair counted all the reasons that I should take a pregnancy test, but I only needed one to convince me not to take one. I think it is positive too and that scares the hell out of me. I don’t know how to be a mom.

“No. Not yet.” I shook my head, fighting the urge to cry.

My wolf has been hounding me as much as they have. She thinks we are too and, since she started, she has been constantly pressuring me to test.

“Don’t you want to know?” She howled, doing little happy taps in a circle. She knows I don’t want to know yet and my wolf, Alistair, and Atlas have conspired against me to get their answer. Atlas is the only one giving me space and that makes a whole other set of questions burn in me. Does he not want to know the answer or is he just being respectful of my decision to wait for the test?

“Don’t cry, kitten. I don’t mean to pressure you. I’m scared too.” Alistair scooped me up, sitting me on his lap. I know he is scared. He has already lost one mate and a baby and I’m sure this is putting him in a fearful spot mentally, but I just need to prepare myself to see the answer.

The goddess said this child was written in the stars and he would be more incredible than anything before him. How can I willingly just make a kid that will have hell for the rest of his life just because fate demands his existence? Life is hard enough without having all of

that on your shoulders. Can I be selfish enough to put all of that on him just because I want a child?

“He will not be alone in anything he is forced to face, Harley. We will back him until the walls fall in on us in anything he chooses or faces in his lifetime.” My wolf’s cheery attitude had calmed down and her wise old lady self was back.

“What if we aren’t enough?” I asked her.

“b\*\*\*h, we are enough for ten pups. Don’t you get it? We are the most powerful being in existence right now. If a time comes when we are not enough though, you seem to be forgetting he will have three awesome dads, a crazy uncle, a badass auntie Ferra, and a super wise great godmother. It takes a village to raise a child and we couldn’t ask for a better village.

I snuggled into Alistair’s chest letting him calm my raging nerves. I just can’t process how I thought my life was getting boring and now I may be pregnant.

“If it isn’t my favorite little bunch of royalty all in one place.” Denny and Ferra walked up, taking my mind off my drama.

“Hey, what are you two up to?” I asked Ferra, more so than Denny. We have gotten really close over the last couple of weeks and I have gotten my taste of what it would’ve been like having a sister and I love it.

“I brought you something!” Ferra chuckled sweetly, handing me a bag from my favorite fast-food place. My stomach growled violently at the smell of the warm condiments on the burger.

“Mmmm, you are incredible.” I groaned, taking a big bite.

“Yeah, I am. I figured if I have to get big and round with this baby in my uterus you should at least have a food baby since you are my best friend and all.” My chewing stopped and those tears I tried so hard to fight off fell free.

“I’m gonna be an auntie?” I whimpered, trying to pull myself from Alistair’s grip to hug her.

Axel scoffed at our interaction, and I turned to him with fire in my eyes.

“Harley would be giving you two a cute little announcement too if she would just pee on a stick.” He crossed his arms, looking at Denny.

“Are you pouting right now?” I growled.

“Yup.” Atlas laughed, patting his brother on the back.

“Are you pregnant, Harls?” Denny’s eyes watered, but I just shrugged, fighting my own tears.

Ferra squealed, pulling me by the hand to the pack house leaving all the men behind. At least in the mix of her pulling me, I didn’t lose my burger, which was suddenly making my stomach feel heavy even though I couldn’t stop shoveling it in.

We went into her and Den’s room. She took my burger, sat it on the nightstand and I growled as she jerked me into their bathroom, handing me a stick.

“I’m not ready.” I clutched the stick in my fist.

“No one is, Harley. I don’t even know how to change a diaper and I have spent the last three weeks crying about it. At least this way we can cry together. Pee on it.” She urged with a happy grin on her face.

I sat down with my heart on the verge of rupturing and the moment I started peeing I cried. How did my emotionally unstable a\*s go from being afraid that the test would be positive to suddenly being worried it would be negative?

“It will be okay, Harley.” She rubbed my shoulder the second that the longest three minutes of my life started.

I paced the floor for what felt like hours. Back and forth rubbing my sweating palms on the legs of my jeans. My head thumped with the stress of not knowing. I had avoided this moment for a week, and I still don’t know if I want to know.

If Ferra’s jumping up and down wasn’t enough to tell me the answer on the test that she just flipped over before the three minutes were up, the two pink lines on the test screen that made me want to fall over were plenty enough.

It’s positive.

## **Their Warrior Luna Chapter 82**

Axel:

I met Ferra and Harley getting in the elevator when the doors opened to let me out to go find her. I couldn’t wait anymore, and I didn’t even know if Ferra was able to get Harley to test. She stuck her hand out to me, her hand unfolded, showing me a test, the oval screen on the front was marked with two pink lines.

“What does that mean? Are you?” My hands were shaking waiting for someone to answer me. Ferra nodded and I nearly lost it.

“I knew it!” I pulled her into my arms, kissing her like it was my last breath.

Joy, excitement, and fear that I wasn’t expecting hit me like a rock.

“I’m gonna be a daddy!” I whispered into her hair. I don’t have a good example of what a father would do with his kids, but I have plenty of examples of what NOT to do.

“Yeah.” She chuckled while wrapping her little fists in my shirt. Her whole body shook, and I wasn’t sure if it was a mix of fear and excitement or just fear.

“What are your thoughts, little bird?” I packed her into the elevator so we could tell the other two the great news. The elevator opened and I walked around the lower level of the pack house until I finally found the other two.

“Talk to me.” I kissed her hair.

“I’m scared.” She whimpered, breaking out in soft sobs. The other two were looking at us and it looked like their hearts were breaking.

“Oh, kitten. Don’t cry. We can try again if you want. Most couples don’t get pregnant right away.” Alistair tried comforting her by scratching her back.

Her little hand reached behind her back, showing them the positive test, and I thought Alistair would combust. A string of excited cuss words and a whole lot of chest bumping, and high fives erupted between the two, making her laugh on my shoulder.

I sat down on the couch with her little frame wrapped tightly around me. I ran my fingers through her hair until her sobs turned to hiccups and her cries turned to soft snores.

“We’re going out for a bit. Do you guys wanna come?” Atlas’s smiling face looked ready to bust.

“I think we will stay here. She needs to rest.” I whispered to him, still running my fingers through her hair.

When we were left alone, I stretched out onto the couch with her in my arms. These three months will go by so quickly and I need to figure out how to make sure this transition is easy for all of us.

“Please Goddess guide me.” I sent up a silent prayer before falling asleep wrapped in the warmth of my pregnant queen.

Five years later:

Harley:

“Cassius Alexander Grimm, let your cousin go!” I yelled.

“Leave him be, Harley. Barrett took Fallon’s doll. Barrett has to learn that if he messes with Fallon, Cassius will take up for her. I swear they fight more like siblings than cousins.” Ferra said, fanning her face. Poor thing ended up pregnant at the hottest part of the year.

“I want her to learn to take up for herself... Are you miserable?” I asked her.

“YES! You should have another little one. Make it a tiebreaker since this one is a girl.” She laughed at the scrunched face I made.

“What and have another set of twins? No, thank you. Cassius and Fallon almost killed me.” I could laugh about the memory now, but then I was mortified.

“You may not have twins this time... it may be triplets.” Her laughter bounced around like a happy tune but I didn’t think it was funny. I tossed a piece of sliced lemon at her.

“There’s my kiddos!” Alistair came out into the backyard scooping up Fallon first. She is a sucker for her dads.

“My princess.” He peppered her rosy cheeks in kisses before scooping up Cassius.

“Axel and Atlas will probably be home late. The Holy realms people aren’t adjusting to the merger just yet. Some of them have talked about going into the human realm.” He said, letting the kids down to go play.

“No one goes into the human realm. We do not risk the supernatural’s safety by the mindless actions of a group of people who are angry over space.” I grumbled.

If I have to step in I will. My men handle the face of the operation but I am the one behind the scenes making the calls. I won’t have creatures in this realm put at risk. I won’t have it.

“I know, kitten. We will figure it out. I brought dinner, let’s go eat.” He kissed my forehead, walking back over to the kids.

I couldn’t help but watch my sweet mate with the babies he was so excited about. I looked up to the sky that I made sure stayed the same when I created the merging of all realms and I sighed, taking in each moon and each sun.

“Please Goddess guide me.” I groaned before making my way inside with a very pregnant Ferra’s arm looped through mine.

## **Their Warrior Luna Chapter 83**

“Lennon!... Lennon Faith Montgomery!” the shrill voice of my mother yelling from behind the bedroom door had me throwing pillows and cussing under my breath.

“I know you are awake, little girl. If you are late for school again, you’re gonna get it.” I’m so used to her threats it doesn’t phase me anymore. It doesn’t matter to her that I was up all night studying for the exam that she demanded I pass, it doesn’t matter. I don’t matter... nothing matters.

Jeans, tee, sneakers.

I grabbed the clothes I had laid out the night before and ran across the hall to the bathroom. The rickety faucets groaned from the pressure of the water rushing through the pipes. I didn’t recognize the red-headed thing in the mirror. Who knew green eyes could be so dull?

I dressed quickly and ran back to my room to grab my bag off my bed and then I ran for the door. I wasn’t quick enough though. She caught me.

\*THWAK\*

A hard slap across my face had my ears ringing.

“Mom, stop!” I grabbed her wrist before she could smack me again. Hot tears were pricking my eyes, she was off her meds again and had been for far too long this time.

“Get your little slutty a\*s to school. I know you were up all night trying to get Teddy to f\*\*k you.” She spat in my face and shoved me towards the door.

Any initiative I had to fight with her about her accusations was long gone. Years of her mental health hanging by a thread would do that to anyone. Hell, Teddy is just another one of her hallucinations that she has been dating for two years now. I think she will kill me one day over him and our affair and, as much as that used to scare me, it would be a welcome comfort now.

The halls of this place are just another reminder of the things I can’t do right. The people that are supposed to be “peers” and or “friends” make sure their attendance is perfect so they can try to ruin me on a daily basis and, without fail, the sea of people parted from me like I was contagious. My mother’s whelped handprint was across my tear-streaked face and even though I visibly had a hard morning, they added to the mix of bull s\*\*t threatening to push me over the edge.

“Ms. Montgomery, a word please?” Mr. Rockland popped his head out of his office asking for my presence. Reluctantly, I stepped inside knowing he was probably about to rip me one for missing P.E. this morning, but it’s just another thing. One more thing to add to the never-ending pile.

“Who gave you the shiner?” His smirk told me he thought that I got this here and that it was funny to him.

“I fell.” I smirked feeling satisfied with my one small victory when the smile fell from his face.

“Listen, I heard you were good at school.” His question made no sense to me and yet he looked at me like I was the one that was a french-fry short of a happy meal.

“I need someone to tutor Grant. We have a big game coming up and the team needs him.” My jaw dropped.

“Grant? As in... captain of the football team, Grant? I laughed until my ribs hurt from the unfamiliar sensation.

“No.” I admit it was almost tempting. Handsome, successful, apparently a bit airheaded Grant Conley. He is fun to look at for sure, but he is an a\*s and that ruins it all for me.

“No?” He asked me, standing up to close his office door.

“No.” I repeated.

“Do you want to pass your senior year, Lennon?” Am I being blackmailed right now?

“I will pass my senior year, Mr. Rockland. I work hard and my grades show that.” My graduation is the only thing holding my freedom from this Podunk town and the shitty people in it.

“Really?... Mrs. Rockland, your second-period teacher, and my wife, who is the one who recommended you as the tutor, said you were Grant’s best choice. She also said if you didn’t agree, she would fail you. Like I said, Lennon. The team needs Grant. Meet him in the library at 3. You two can have the whole space every day until four in the evening. Have him ready in two weeks or I will make sure you never get away from your crazy a\*s mother. Capeesh?” Yes, Mr. Rockland... capeesh.

I nodded and left the office. I needed to wash my face or cry... or maybe just leave. If I didn’t have work after school, I would go home and pray I got around my mom unnoticed so I could hide in bed. I don’t know when the depression got so heavy, but here I am with it weighing me down so badly that I feel like I have concrete in my shoes and my head is pounding from the tension gathering in my shoulders. I couldn’t pay attention in my classes. The only thing on my mind was how, for the next two weeks, I would make it through associating with Grant Conley every day. That doesn’t even sound fun. At least he is handsome.

At the end of the day, I flopped down at a table in the stacks waiting for his highness to arrive.

3:15...

3:30...

3:45...

The door opened and shut with a slam and Grant and his best friend Carter came into the library talking about some party they were going to have at the lake after prom. It was like he didn't realize he was forty-five minutes late for this tutoring thing that I was being forced into to graduate.

"You're late." I grumbled, sliding the open book across the table that was turned to this week's assignment.

"This is the assignment for this week, sit down and we can go through it, so I know what you need." I couldn't even make eye contact with him. This will never work.

Carter scoffed at me, fist-bumping Grant, leaving us alone in the stacks.

"Here's the deal, Lennon. I need to know this stuff, sure. But just for this week could you use your big, beautiful brain to help a guy out this week? Then next week, I will be on time, and I will work hard. I promise!" He covered his heart with his hand.

"I have work." I jumped to my feet and started putting my books away. I ran from the library with Grant calling after me.

The whole walk to Bill's Diner was fuzzy. I can't believe his arrogant a\*s. This is my freedom that he is f\*\*\*\*\*g with here and I know that if I were to tell Mr. Rockland that Grant wanted me to do it for him, I would be the one that got screwed over. I was so wrapped up in my own thoughts that I went into the diner and started my shift on autopilot.

"Order up." The cook rang the service bell, snapping me out of it.

It's just been me for the last two hours because the other waitress had to run home to a sick child. Which is fine, I won't have to split tips for this time and I don't have kids, but I am sure it isn't easy when they are sick.

The last three orders were out, things were running smoothly and now I can clean up a bit while I wait for tables to need me.

The ding of the doorbell wasn't enough to get my attention and man... I wish I would've looked up.

"Welcome to Bill's. How many?" I stood from under the counter where I had been s tocking straws and silverware to see Grant looking me dead in the eyes. Carter, Alyssa,



and Alice were all there. The four people who I would give my left leg to never see me here were looking me dead in the eyes. I broke out in a cold sweat. I had to fight my hands to steady themselves.

“Four? Booth or table and what can I get you to drink?” I went through all the formalities before giving them their drinks and menus. My cheeks were red hot and even with the air conditioner blowing in the diner, it wasn’t keeping me from burning inside out.

“I am so sorry about that!” Jennifer came back looking as disheveled as I was.

“Goodness, you are burning up! Are you getting sick too?” I flinched when she went to touch my forehead.

“I’m fine. Just some kids from school came in. I wasn’t expecting it, that’s all.” I dropped back down to finish stocking the counter.

“I will take that table then. Go take a break, Lennon.” I didn’t miss the way she reached out to touch me again and then changed her mind.

She knows now too. She will treat me like I am contagious from now on... just like everyone else.

I stepped out into the alley, taking in the warm summer evening. I don’t usually smoke, but when the cook’s cigarettes caught my eye on the table, I took one, inhaling the first draw of it deeply. I stood there hoping that if someone was up in the sky listening that they would hear me begging for relief. I need this to be over, I need the pain to stop. But no, nothing from the above took me out of my misery.

The rest of the shift went off as normal. It got much easier when Grant and his friends left, but that heaviness that I had been carrying around all day inside of my shoes just kept getting heavier and heavier.

The whole way home it was like the entire planet was baring down on my chest and as if that weren’t enough. I opened the front door to a ransacked house. Mom was nowhere to be found but her liquor bottles were shattered everywhere, and the furniture had been turned over. Two hours and a lot of Band-Aids later, I finally fell into bed, praying once more that if there were someone really there that they would hear my call. Maybe when she gets back she will think that, because the house was cleaned after her rampage, it never happened and she would just go on to bed. Or maybe... maybe tonight is the night she sneaks in to end the misery.

Just imagine my disappointment when the low buzzing of my alarm clock broke me from the only peace of mind that I ever get. I made sure to give myself extra time to get out of the house this morning. I couldn’t handle a repeat of yesterday. Getting caught up in her chaos is only a sour reminder of what I will look like if I live to see thirty-five.

I fooled myself into thinking today would be a good day just because I had time to stop for coffee. I don't often treat myself but I did this morning and it was ignorant to think that one cup of coffee would change my life.

"Freak."

"Pathetic."

"Ugly."

The whispers in the hall were no different than usual. The coffee did seem to make their whispers quitter and for that I was thankful. Unfortunately, my thankfulness was short-lived when Grant's f\*\*k buddy Alyssa Sinclair caught me at my locker slamming my fingers into the sharp metal with a clank.

"I don't know what you are planning, but you had better not speak to Grant outside of those library stacks, and if he doesn't pass and the team loses the championship, I will make sure your pathetic a\*s doesn't have working legs to walk the graduation stage." She stormed away with a flip of her hair leaving me to fight the locker door open on my own.

The blood ran down my hand as the metal dug deeper into my skin. Finally, I stopped fighting, forcing myself to get control of the pain radiating from my hand and the anger washing through my already haywire system. I wanted to rip her head off and lay down and die all at the same time, and if that isn't a f\*\*\*\*d up confusion, I don't know what it is.

"You are late, Ms. Montgomery." Hissed Ms. Hundley.

I wanted to scream at her for worrying about my tardiness when my damn hand was being crushed but she saw it the moment I turned. Her face paled and she ran to me to help me pry the door open. My fingers didn't look broken, just busted up good.

"What happened, Lennon?" Ms. Hundley asked, trying to wrap my hand up in her handkerchief.

"Nothing." I snatched my hand away from her and turned to go to the nurse. I knew if I didn't, that I would break over and cry my sorrows to the only teacher in this building who ever seemed to give a rat's a\*s about me. Instead, I snapped at her, and I hated myself for that. If she starts treating me as an untouchable virus, I will have lost the only person who offered me any kindness that I had accepted.

The nurse wanted to call my mother and in a panic, I came up with a lie from the seat of my pants about why she couldn't come down and pick me up. Much to my surprise, she let me sign myself out.

I ran home, climbing up the tree that would lead me through my window, and just like every time something like this happens, I pulled the kit from under my bed and started stitching the deep wounds closed. I was getting used to numbing physical pain. I would give my two front teeth to be able to numb my mental pain in the same way, but a girl like me... I could never get so lucky.

With the wounds closed off, there was only one thing left that I could think of doing. If I hurry back to school I can finish out the day, do Grant's tutoring, then do my shift at Bill's. I can hear my mom talking to God knows what downstairs and trying to stay there with her that way,

I just can't do it.

I climbed back down the tree, careful not to snag my hurt hand and within twenty-five minutes I was back at my desk in school. But I could barely pay attention to anything besides the throbbing in my hand. Luckily, I had some ibuprofen left in my locker, but it still didn't cut it because, by the time I got into the last period, it was throbbing so bad I couldn't focus on anything but the beating of my heart radiating through each stitched area.

I waited in the stacks just like yesterday. Sweat soaked my forehead and, no matter the distraction, I couldn't stop looking at the stitches that ran across the top of my index finger. If I paid enough attention, it was almost like I could see it throb every time my heartbeat. I didn't expect Grant to show up on time, so when he walked through those doors alone at three o'clock, I forced myself to stop paying mind to my finger and give his studies my attention. Showing up on time shows initiative and if he wants to put in the effort to graduate, I will make sure he does.

## **Their Warrior Luna Chapter 84**

He made his way over to me, flopping down in the chair next to me. He was so close that I could smell soap and warmth radiating from him. My stomach twisted up when his brown eyes looked into mine for the first time.

"I have less than two weeks to get ready for these tests. I need your help, and I promise, I won't ask you to do the work for me again. I have to pass." I nodded, trying to actively listen to him, but I was really struggling with the pain in my hand.

"Look, if you aren't going to help, I need to know now so I can get the coach to find someone else." He snapped at me.

"NO, I've got you. Here is assignment one for this week. Go through it and show me what you can do and we can go from there." Slowly, he took the paper from my good hand. He looked over the paper in front of him with his forehead scrunching up.

Thirty minutes later, he still hadn't answered the first question.

"Is it okay if I..." I made the motion of scooting closer to him and with his nod I went closer with my own paper and pencil. We sat there until 4:30 and while doing the problems on my own paper, I explained the process step by step of how to get the answers. We got about half of the questions done and he was really getting the hang of it.

"I have to get to work, but good job today. You can work on the rest of those by yourself and we can work on more tomorrow." I was gathering my stuff when he snatched my hurt hand, making me wince in anticipation of a pain that never came.

"What happened?" My stomach fluttered when he softly turned it over, examining the wounds caused by his girlfriend. His touch was so tender that it made me want to laugh. How could a boy so burly be so soft? He was caressing my hand like it was made of flower petals that were far too delicate to touch.

"It's nothing." I murmured, pulling my hand away from him.

"Cool. See you tomorrow then?" He patted my shoulder on his way out.

"Yeah, see ya." I felt idiotic for letting my face flush for a boy so far out of my league.

Pulling my head out of my own a\*s, I made my way to Bill's to start my shift and I couldn't stop thinking about how tenderly he had treated me. Just thinking about it made my stomach tie up in knots. With my mind so wrapped up, I dug through my bag, pulling the old leather-bound journal out. I wrote the words of my heart onto the old paper until one thought made me stop scribbling entirely.

What if he was mine?

Maybe... No.

I should kick myself for letting such idiotic thoughts cross my mind. Grant Conley is, well... Grant Conley and I'm just me. Plain, unextraordinary me.

Bill's voice pulled me from my scribbling pity party. I hadn't even realized I had made it here yet.

"Hey. Sorry kid. We're closing for the day. I have a family emergency. Here's some cash for the day, just come back on your next scheduled shift and we'll get back to it." Bill tossed me a wad of cash that was tied off with a rubber band. I rolled it over in my hand, he gave me more for missing work than I would've made during my whole shift. But... I need to work... I can't go home. I don't want to face her demons with her.

"Bill, I could put the truck away or something. You should at least let me do something for all of this." I shook the money at him, praying he could see how desperate I am.

People talk in small towns, it's no secret that my mother is a f\*\*\*\*\*g basket case. Maybe he listens to all of the gossip that has soaked into the walls of his diner over the years. Maybe he understands that I can't go home.

"You know what? You're right. We did have that truck come in yesterday." He tossed me the keys and a one hundred dollar bill and told me to have at it.

With a sigh of relief, I did just that. I put the truck away. I cleaned the grill, polished the floors, restocked, I rolled silverware and did everything that I knew I could do to keep from going home and that may have been where I f\*\*\*\*\*d up this time. If I had been there, I wouldn't have the mess on my hands that I walked into when I finally went home. Anything I had left in my reserves was long depleted and between the ache in my hand and the hunger in my stomach, staying awake was just a chore. But from the sidewalk I knew something was wrong.

I slid the key into the front door. The old thing groaned under the weight of the years of neglect that still had a chokehold on this "fixer-upper". That's what she had called it before she lost her s\*\*t. It was a fixer-upper. But now that pretty blue color that we picked out to paint the crusty siding was chipping away just like her sanity... and mine.

The house wasn't empty this time. No, she was there... the tears were rolling down her face, and the blood down her wrists and the sobs... those sobs will haunt me. She's tried to do the one thing that I've thought about doing for the past four years and couldn't find the balls to do it.

She sat in a puddle of her blood that was soaking through the white silk fabric of her nightgown that she'd worn for the past three days. Her hair was matted and she truly looked insane right now.

"Teddy left me. He left us, Lennon. How will we survive?" Her sobs continued.

Teddy hadn't kept the bills paid. I have. I don't know why she can't see that. I'm never there and I'm always tired because I work and I go to school and I make sure she is taken care of when she's not trying to kill me.

"You sorry f\*\*\*\*\*g bitch." I snarled at her.

"Get up. Teddy isn't even a real person, mom. He doesn't exist. I'm the one who pays our bills and puts food in the fridge." I yanked the wad of money I made today out of my pocket. That's our power bill and the groceries for the week, but she is so sick in the head she doesn't even realize she's nothing but skin and bones and smells like piss, she doesn't realize that I am killing myself to keep us going and she doesn't see that I am circling the same damn drain she is.

"Don't you see how f\*\*\*\*\*g crazy you are right now? You're off your meds again and look at you. You've cut yourself all to hell and over what? A freaking hallucination." I grabbed

her by her arms, her wide eyes were locked on me like for the moment she had dipped her toes into the pool of sanity.

I wrapped her arms tightly in dish towels and ran upstairs to get the same kit I had used earlier on myself. I slammed it on the counter beside her and when she saw the contents of the kit she spoke.

“Lennon, what’s going on?”

“You f\*\*\*\*d up again. I can handle your physical abuse and your mental abuse. But if I am forced to live in an existence I never asked for, then you don’t get the liberty of Death’s peace either, you crazy bitch.” The second I started stitching her she screamed. I remember the first time I stitched myself. It sucked. The burning pain of your skin being tied back into place is nauseating. She fell over on the counter with a thud passing out from the burn that I had grown used to.

“Weak bitch.” I grumped, as I kept stitching her wrists. When I was done and my mess was cleaned up, I dragged her over to the couch, managing to get her awake long enough to shove her meds down her throat. I’m done taking care of her. Once I graduate, she can kill herself, commit herself, or stay in this hell hole and fight with herself. I don’t care!

I stomped upstairs leaving her blood coating the kitchen. It’s her mess to clean up.

I cranked the shower wide open, wincing when the hot water hit my stitches. I wanted to just stay here and rot away in the steam and the anger that is strangling me. How dare she? If anyone could justify those actions it’s me, but here I am trying to wash her blood off my hands with the sounds of her wailing for a man that doesn’t exist to come back home to her.

When the water ran cold, I stepped out. I stomped to my room, throwing an outfit out for school, and then rolled up into my bed like a pissy little burrito, falling asleep with a prayer that I’d be the next one on Death’s list.

It seemed like I floated through the week looking forward to nothing but the simple conversations Grant and I had started sharing. We talked about life and music and the things we enjoy and he is really picking up on everything with the tutoring. I think he will be fine for the finals. In fact, I’m sure of it. But... if I told anyone that he wouldn’t need my company anymore. I had never felt more connected to another human being and it made this mundane existence more bearable. We had started talking outside of the stacks even though it pissed basically every girl in the school off. People had stopped their hateful whispers in the hallway and that was only one week of being his friend.

Mom was like a zombie, devastated by the loss of Teddy still. But I had managed to get her medicine in her for three days now and I wondered if that was why he hadn’t returned. A small part of me had hoped his absence meant she was getting better. That the mom who picks porch paint and makes me hot chocolate when I am upset was coming back to me.

But that is barely even a pipe dream at this point. It's unrealistic to believe that she will ever be anything but the hollow version of the woman she once was and I mourned her loss long ago. There is no reason to think that person will come back from her grave now.

"You know, I was thinking. The prom is next week. We have the championships the day after tomorrow, and thanks to you, the team will be bringing that trophy home. Why don't you come to the after-party with me?" I fumbled at his words, spilling my books onto the floor of the empty library. The noise echoed from the walls like the eruption of a volcano and I just knew I hadn't heard him right. I turned, looked around, and when no one else was there, I had to do a double take.

"Me?" I cringed at the way I sounded. My voice was dripping with nerves and hope, and my face flushed thinking he could sense how desperate I was for him to say yes.

He stepped towards me with a look in his eyes that made my blush run deeper. My heart was trying to escape from my chest and I felt like if I didn't hold it down it might leap right out of my shirt. My back hit the bookshelf and his muscled arm pinned me in. I sank deeper into the books letting them dig into my back as the cold sweat coated my skin.

"Yes. I really like you, Lennon. You are a beautiful girl and I think we have more in common than we know. I thought maybe you could be my date to prom. We could celebrate and go to the party together after." My throat closed off entirely at his words, locking away any sound with it.

I nodded yes, and the moment his lips touched mine I lost it.

Call me starved for touch, or a w\*\*\*e. Whatever you want. I let go of the fear that someone else's touch would only cause me pain and when those walls I had carefully built around me crumbled, I ran my fingers through his thick blonde hair, leaning in closer to deepen my first kiss.

## Their Warrior Luna Chapter 85

I floated through my shift high enough on that one kiss to reach out and take a handful of stars. It was an awkward kiss and his tongue tasted like a bad school lunch, but it was my first and I couldn't stop thinking about the way my heart almost ruptured when his hands slid into my back pockets, pulling me closer to him. Grant Conley kissed me. ME!

Maybe I should go look for a dress on Saturday... a prom dress. The urge to squeal in girl was real and as hard as I fought the urge, I couldn't stop the smile on my face. I never would have thought that I would go to prom and here I am looking forward to something normal girls my age look forward to.

I left the diner with a smile on my face. I don't know if this buzz will ever fade away, and I hope it doesn't. I skipped up onto the porch, creaking open the door, and the second I stepped in I was blasted with a couch cushion.

"Turn around! Don't look." I could hear my mother scrambling from the couch snickering and I thought maybe she had a man over and I guess I was close. I heard her say Teddy's name and I rolled my eyes as her laughter drifted up the stairs heading for the bedroom she never steps foot into anymore.

I tossed the cushion back to the couch and grabbed myself a snack and a pop before making my way quietly upstairs in an attempt not to further irritate her. I flopped back on my bed. My fingertips grazed my lips hoping I could feel that feeling in my bones again. I hadn't let anyone touch me in so long that I almost forgot what another person's skin felt like. Grant's is rough from football I would guess, but I liked the way it felt against mine.

I shook my head, pulling away from my moment. I grabbed the bag of chips off my bed, groaning when the first Dorito touched my tongue. How long had it been since I ate? A few handfuls of chips later and the warmth of my full stomach mingled with the warmth of Grant's touch and I was lulled into a deep sleep. I didn't even have to think about it, it just pulled me in, relaxing every inch of my skin naturally. Is this what it is like for normal people who go to bed at night and just fall asleep? You know those people, right? The people who don't live in a constant battle just trying to survive. It's nice... it's warm.

That soul-warming feeling carried me through Friday. School was easy, work was easy, my mother was scarce, a hot shower had me dozing off warm in my bed, and visions of black tulle were dancing in my head when I drifted into a deep sleep. Tomorrow I have plans to go to the mall and look for the dress that I have pictured since Grant asked me to prom.

But I was an i\*\*\*t for thinking that this would last. A bloody f\*\*\*\*\*g i\*\*\*t for not paying attention to the way she watched the toaster at breakfast. If I hadn't been so wrapped up in the stupid prom, I would've known it was talking to her. If I had paid closer attention... her fingers wouldn't be wrapped around my throat, choking me so hard that prickling numbness was running through my face.

"You stupid little b\*\*\*h, you are the worst mistake I ever made. I should've aborted you. Did you think I wouldn't see Teddy leaving this room? I see the way he looks at you!" Her tears were falling onto my face. While I dug my nails into her hands and her neck trying to get free before she killed me.

Then it dawned on me... why am I fighting the thing that I have been praying so hard for? I let my arms relax. I let her choke me.

When the stars started dancing in my eyes, slowly fading to beautiful darkness, I smiled at her. I smiled at the woman that birthed me. With every way she has destroyed me these



last few years, she has finally done something useful for me... she is putting me out of my misery.

“f\*\*k, Lennon! I-I’m so sorry!” She yelled, rolling off me, slamming my door behind her, knocking every picture in the hall off the wall, and I rolled onto the floor huffing and gasping for air. It felt like blades of fire were being shoved down my throat and the coughing made it worse.

I sobbed, pouring all my anger and hatred into the tears rolling down my face. The stupid b\*\*\*h couldn’t even kill me right. I screamed as loudly as my aching throat would allow. I rolled up into a ball of myself, wrapping my arms around my legs, but I couldn’t stop the shaking from the emotions devouring me.

“Come back!” I yelled at her. She was still in the hallway having her own breakdown.

“Come back and kill me. Please, come back!” I yelled. She owes me something. Anything.

I tried so many times to end this life and the only thing I ever managed was to chicken out. I have spent years waiting for this day. She was supposed to do the job for me and when she finally did it, she f\*\*\*\*\*g failed the same way she has failed at everything else.

I wanted to cry myself to sleep, but I couldn’t stop thinking about the first time I fell asleep tonight. Having that sense of normalcy for that small chunk of time was worse than never tasting it at all.

Now it feels like a drug. So sweet and addictive and so far out of my reach. Who knew stability would be so damning to me? I never knew I needed it until the moment that crushing weight settled on my chest. That same crushing weight that had disappeared without my noticing as the good stuff that was happening started feeling normal. I could never get off the floor, so I just lay there. I lay there on the hardwood pushed to a point where I thought maybe this time I wouldn’t chicken out.

But instead, I yanked my journal out of my bag that had been spilled to the floor in our struggle, releasing my anguish through the ink lining the pages.