

Their Warrior Luna Chapter 96

“Just like that. Push it.” He grunted while his sweat dripped onto my body, mixing with mine.

“I can’t get it no higher!” I huffed and puffed, but that bar wouldn’t go up no matter how hard I pushed. Finally, he helped me put it back into the things that held it in place, giving me room to roll off the bench to his padded floor with every muscle in my body screaming for relief. My sweat-soaked curls were sticking to the padding, my legs were shaking, and I already knew I would be sore in the morning. After the run, we went into his basement and have been here ever since. He had put me on machines I had never seen before, pushing me to the point where I couldn’t finish the exercise before he would put me onto something else. We have repeated that process for two hours now.

He hovered over me for a second, looking down at me. I knew we weren’t done when his dimpled smirk crossed his face. He poured the rest of the icy bottled water he had been drinking all over my face and chest. Clearly satisfied with his shenanigans, he went to the last machine. When I didn’t willingly get up and follow, he grabbed me by the ankles and pulled me where he wanted me.

“Last one, I promise.” He grinned again and then took his place back beside the machine.

“No. You said that about the last one.” I whined, putting my arms above my head.

“I lied.” His answer came quickly, but the shit-eating grin never left his face.

“I’ll make you a deal. You get your a*s up and finish this, and I will give you a present. If you don’t, I get to give you the punishment.” My eyes shot wide at the word. That word was like shooting ice into my veins. I crawled to my feet on shaking legs and headed for the machine’s seat.

“Hm. That’s interesting... Did you get up because I offered you a gift or threatened you with a punishment?” How do I answer that without making myself seem weak?

“Neither. I want this to be over so I can have coffee.” I mocked his curious tone.

He put my legs up in a thing and told me to push against the weights. But I could tell by the look on his face that it wouldn’t be that easy, and I was right. I don’t know if my legs were sore or if I was a mere weakling, but those weights came down on my legs, and in that instant, I thought my guts would be squished out of my butt like a ketchup packet.

“Get it off! KNOX. GET. IT. OFF!” he finally focused on me instead of his laughter and helped me. I rolled off of the bench thing, looking at him with daggers in my eyes, but he paid my scowl no mind and dropped to the ground laughing so hard that he was crying.

“Were you trying to f*****g kill me again, you d**k?” I grumped.

He couldn’t answer me for laughing, so I just laid on the cold mats that were padding the floor.

“Get up, princess. You’re tapped out for the day.” He grabbed me by the arm and helped me stand to my feet. My legs were quaking with a threat to drop me back to the padding, but with his help, I managed to return to the kitchen.

“Go shower and put on the bathing suit we got you yesterday. I’ll make the coffee.” He was trying so hard not to burst out in laughter at the stance that I had against the kitchen counter. But I was mortified. I can’t swim. No one ever taught me, and I never tried. I was always too scared I might drown. That seems silly now, though. I missed out on so much because of fear.

“I... I don’t know how to swim. So... if that’s what you had in mind, I hope you have a kiddie pool.” I smirked at him before trying to walk down the hallway to my room.

“We aren’t swimming. But you will love it, I promise.” He called out as the sound of the coffee pot sang to me.

“Yeah, yeah.” I waved him off.

Finally, I made it back to the shower, thankful when the hot water started easing my sore muscles. I can’t handle doing this every day.

Once the sweat, dirt, and blood from my fall washed away, I stepped out of the shower. Everything still hurts, but something tells me Death doesn’t have a bottle of ibuprofen.

“Come on, slowpoke! Your coffee is going to be cold.” He knocked at the door, encouraging me to hurry up despite my body screaming at me.

I grabbed a dry towel and wrapped it around my body. I yanked the door open with a scowl that slowly faded with the sweetness of the coffee. I followed him out of a side door onto a patio where a hot tub was bubbling away. I haven’t ever been in one, but if that hot water can do anything for me right now, it would be to relax my aching everything. I dropped the towel and sank into the steamy water with a sigh.

“Oh yeah, this is where I’m sleeping tonight.” I groaned, relaxing into the pillow thing at my head, but Knox just laughed at me.

“You were incredible today. I still can’t believe you got back up and kept running after chewing dirt like that. I hope you can keep that fire.” He relaxed into the spot across from me with his own sigh.

“Yeah, well. Don’t get your hopes up. I’m not sure I will be able to walk tomorrow, let alone run.” I chuckled, grabbing my coffee.

“Bologna. You’ll be fine after you sleep. Soul eaters heal quickly.” He laid his head back with his eyes closed, and I took a moment to look at him.

He had taken his shirt off when he got in, and his muscled torso was littered with scars that made his attractiveness seem that much more. He had clearly survived something, too... Or maybe not. I filed that question away for later and traced his tattoos with my eyes instead. From underneath the bubbling water, I couldn’t tell what the pattern was. Still, I could tell it ran into his swimming trunks, and catching myself checking him out made me choke on my coffee.

He had dozed off, though, so thankfully, he hadn’t noticed my ogling.

I sat there enjoying the silence and the night’s music until his breathing turned to soft snores. When I decided to get out, I crossed the water until I was in front of him.

“Knox...” I shook his shoulder, but he didn’t respond with anything more than a grunt.

“Knox. We need to get out. You fell asleep.” I shook his shoulder again.

I yelped when his muscled arms reached out to snatch me. He pulled me into his lap, settling me in his clutches. My stomach fluttered at the feeling of his skin against mine. He laid his head against my chest, inhaling me deeply. I froze when he placed a soft kiss on my collarbone.

“Just a few more minutes, Lily. I don’t want to get out yet.” He called me a different name, and then I realized he hadn’t pulled me in. He had pulled Lily in. Whoever the hell that is. I shook him again, harder this time.

“Knox, it’s Lennon. Not Lily. Let me go.” I pushed him away when he finally woke up.

My skin was on fire from everywhere his skin had been, and I could still feel his soft lips on my collarbone, erasing any trace of pain from my skin.

“s**t, I’m sorry, Lennon. I guess I fell asleep.” His face was as red as mine, and when we both made it out of the water, I finally found my voice.

“Who’s Lily?” I murmured, wrapping the towel around me.

“You’ll meet her on Sunday. She comes by, and we... you know.” He couldn’t look at me when he said that last part, but the thought made my skin prickle.

“Is she a reaper too?” I asked as we made our way back inside.

“No.” He laughed.

“I’m the only reaper. Other people can help me collect souls, but I am the only Death. She is a... Demon... You probably know her as Lilith.” He cleared his throat.

“Wait... THE Lilith? As in the first woman ever to say no to a man? OH, my GOD! She is coming on Sunday. Like this Sunday?? What should I wear? Should I make her cookies or dinner?” I couldn’t stop fangirling until Knox grabbed my shoulders and forced me to listen to what he had been saying in the middle of my rambling.

“Lennon, breathe. It doesn’t matter what you wear. She is coming so I can f**k her. You can say hi, but that will probably be the last you see of her until the Sunday after.” His voice was stern, but his eyes were soft.

“Oh... Right...” My face flushed at his words. I turned quickly on my heel and headed for the bedroom.

“Lennon.” He called out after me, but I just casually threw my hand up and waved him off.

“I’m going to bed, princess. Wake me up with coffee so I can get my fuel before you murder my muscles tomorrow.” I laughed around the rock on my chest, hoping that by calling him the nickname that he calls me, I had made light of the awkward situation.

I could care less who he has s*x with. That is nothing to me, but... the way he said it... I grabbed my chest, confused at how his words and his touch affected me. I never want to be close to another man again, and yet, if he hadn’t called me Lily, I might have sat there for a minute before waking him up, which makes me creepy and gross.

I tossed a baggy shirt thing over my head. I flopped down onto the bed that was slowly becoming my best friend. I stayed awake only briefly before sleep consumed my exhausted mind and body.

Knox:

“What the f**k just happened?” I grumbled quietly while washing our coffee cups out.

I can’t believe I grabbed ahold of her like that. I can still smell her on my skin, and she didn’t punch me in the face for kissing her, but I can taste or on my lips. I can’t believe I had shut her down when she had gotten so excited about Lily. She is far too innocent for me to be saying things like that to her and I regretted them the minute the blush on her cheeks ran down her chest.

I stomped off to my room kicking my own a*s. It’s going to take some getting used to having her here. I let very few people into my bubble, and she is by far the most innocent of them. I stayed awake just lying in bed for some time waiting for her nightmares to

consume her again, but when those screams never came, I drifted off into the nothingness of my own mind.

Their Warrior Luna Chapter 97

Lennon:

I was chasing a silver wolf in my dreams. It had run through the forest, and I stopped at the tree line debating whether I should go into it. This felt like a trap, and despite my twisting gut, I followed him. I found him sitting beside a pile of disrupted dirt, and I knew why my body didn't want me to go into this forest. I am buried here... or I was. The wolf was howling loudly because my body had been dug up, and the carnivorous creatures of the forest that I had often heard yipping when I sat beside myself those few days had finally gotten to me.

I picked up a stick and started swatting at the wolf, blaming him for disrupting my grave, but he just c****d his head at me.

“Shoo! Get away from there.” I yelled.

I was quickly ripped from my dream by Knox laughing at me. In my dream, I had been chasing the silver wolf, but in reality, the stick I had was the broom, and the only thing I was shooing away was the shoes in Knox's closet. I dropped the broom the moment I realized the embarrassing situation I was in.

“Shut up, anal worm. Don't act like you never have stupid dreams.” My usual scowl had returned.

“I don't. But seeing as though you broke in here swinging a broom at my shoes, interrupted my beauty sleep, and called me an anal worm, we can start training early. Go put some clothes on, princess. It's going to be a long day.” He laughed heartily at my expense, heading towards the kitchen.

I stomped off, fighting the raging embarrassment that was telling me never to show my face anywhere ever again, and put the training clothes on. Today, I chose black shorts and a black bra because I may have ruined the green one when I fell. I wadded my hair up in a messy bun and stomped towards the kitchen with my sneakers squeaking on the wood floors.

I snatched the cup of coffee from his hand and sucked it down angrily.

“You're grouchy in the mornings.” He smiled, and I noticed his lips were pink from the heat of the coffee, and I thought about the heat that spread through my body when his lips kissed my skin.

“I’m always grouchy.” I murmured, taking my eyes off his lips.

He rounded the counter with the ankle weights in his hand and a fiery look in those orange eyes, and if his earlier threat hadn’t been enough, that look in his eyes told me I would be crawling into that hot tub tonight.

He got on one knee and started latching the weights around my ankles. I continued my scowling until I felt that familiar ache in my stomach.

“When will I get to eat again?” It embarrassed me to ask that question, but I didn’t want to feel that pain again. I can still feel that chainsaw in my abdomen feeling from the first time if I think about it.

“Whenever you’re hungry. You don’t have to ask. But what I gave you should do you a few weeks. Why?” He finished on the second foot and stood.

“Is it normal for the hunger to hurt?” My voice was barely above a whisper, and I couldn’t look at him. This is so damn embarrassing, and I don’t know why.

“Uh... So much is still unknown about your kind... you are a rare species, Lennon. So, I can’t really answer that. I can tell you my hunger doesn’t hurt... are you hungry?” He was peering at me through the dark brown hair hanging over his eyes. Right now... right now I would eat anything.

“Yes.” I admitted.

He ran his hand through his hair and let out a long breath.

“What?” I asked, noting the irritation in his body language.

“It’s nothing. I’m not sure you are ready to feed on your own yet.” He was tapping the counter in front of his coffee cup.

“I could try. I don’t want that pain again... I’m not weak... it just hurts really bad.” I couldn’t look at him, so I just drank my coffee. The thought of not being able to eat bad that gnawing feeling worse. Sweat started coating my forehead, but I maintained my casual demeanor.

He rounded the corner and cupped my face. I could tell the moment he began feeding me. The sweating stopped, the ache in my stomach stopped, and my energy went up. It made me feel... stronger. I latched onto his wrists, not wanting it to stop.

He pulled away from me. His face was stained red, and with everything swirling in those orange eyes, I couldn’t read him. I didn’t know what to say, so I only said what I could think of.

“Thank you,” I whispered.

I was trying to control my breathing. A buzz under my skin made me want to run through a wall. I took my coffee in my shaking hands and finished it quickly before making my way on wobbling legs to rinse it and put it away.

He never took his eyes off of me; something about how he watched me made me feel high. I brushed off that ignorance, and I turned to him. If these damn weights weren't keeping me anchored here, I am pretty sure I would float away, but thankful I stood steady.

“Let's get the torcher over with, cunt cake. Maybe I'll get lucky and won't car kill myself today.” I smirked at him.

“Doubtful. You have two left feet.” he chuckled when I looked at my feet. I punched him in his chest and went to the front door, still feeling the buzz from the feeding.

Knox:

She walked away from me, she was heading out for our run, but I felt like I had been glued to this spot. I thought I had more time until her next feed, but I didn't. I had to feed her again, and I was thankful when she was full. She hadn't felt the imprint snapping to life between us. I imprinted on someone with a mate bond in this realm... the goddess will have my a*s if she finds out. But she won't find out because Lennon doesn't feel it, and I can control myself. I think.

I followed behind her for a moment, but when it came time to run, I flew around her just as I had yesterday. I left her in a cloud of my dust and laughter.

“Show off!” She yelled, flipping me off.

If she knew that her weights were heavier than mine, she would be pissed, but I have no idea what a soul eater can do, so I'm training her on the fly. Today she is doing hand-to-hand combat, and I can't wait to see what she can do. I will make sure that if she isn't with me, she can protect herself.

I waited for her at the top. I can't wipe the smile off my face right now. She is taking the hill much better than yesterday, but that isn't why I can't stop smiling. I know she's gonna slug me when I make a smart-a*s remark, and I can't wait for it.

“You run like a grandma.” I tried to keep a neutral expression but grinned the minute she scowled at me like a pissed-off mouse.

“You smell like a grandma, b***h. I'm amazing.” She slugged my shoulder just as I had predicted.

“Whatever, princess. No slacking. Try not to bust your face again.” I took off down the hill listening to her grumbling cuss words after me.

I slowed down to let her pass me like I had yesterday. She is competitive, and when she thinks she can win, a fire ignites in her and burns as brightly as her red curls. “Suck on that!” She laughed when she got around me, and then it happened. The rush hit her. Her focus sharpened, and her movements became more graceful.

She didn’t have to catch her breath at the bottom of the hill, and something tells me it involved her feeding this morning. Does that mean she is stronger full? One soul can last me weeks, and because of that, my hoard stays full. But with Lennon, her hunger returns quickly and causes her pain.

I could make a call and get Ace to come by. He is a whiz with s**t like this and trains packs daily. He may even be able to help me with her training.

“Who’s the grandma now?” She stuck her tongue out at me, making me laugh.

“Still you, shorty... What would you think about me calling a friend to help us with your training? He is the head warrior of the king’s army, and I think he could help in your training and let us know more about your feeding needs.” I watched the red drain from her cheeks. Her excitement fell. I think I moved too quickly.

“I trust you for some reason, Knox... If you think that would be best, then I believe you. But if I agree you have to promise me, you will be there the whole time. I don’t want to be left alone with him... or anyone else. Okay?” I was aware of the way her voice had changed. She is fighting so hard to swallow the fear in her throat.

I pulled her into a hug without thinking. Her whole body stiffened, but I didn’t want to let her go. I leaned down so I could whisper in her ear.

“No one will ever hurt you again, Lennon.” Her whole body relaxed, and her arms wrapped tightly around my waist in a hug I thought we both needed. I try to keep things lighthearted and fun so she doesn’t have time to think about everything that happened to her, and I sometimes forget that it is still there beneath her bright smile and sparkling green eyes, like a parasite sucking her dry.

She pulled away from the hug and shifted on her feet for a second before answering.

“Make the call.” Her hands were balled in little fists at her side. Just now, she took a piece of her life back. I saw her stand a little taller, knowing she was safe, and those shattered pieces they left her with were slowly coming back together.

“You got it, princess. Now... To the basement!” I trotted off like a knight on a white horse with her groaning behind me. Making her laugh is slowly becoming my favorite hobby, and when the goddess finds out what I’ve done, she may choke me out or try to kill me. It

was an accident that I hadn't intended to happen, and at the end of the day, I just promised Lennon her safety, and no matter what anyone has to say about it, no one can fight Death's wishes.

Their Warrior Luna Chapter 98

Lennon:

"Come on, one more!! You got this!!" I was pushing my guts out the leg thing again, and I couldn't have been more thankful when the doorbell rang, and Knox let me stop before leaving to answer it. I flopped onto the cold mats covering the floor like I had yesterday. Knox and the guy I can only assume is his friend started back into the basement, but I was too tired to get back up. I grunted when Knox grabbed me by the band of my shorts and sat me back on the leg machine.

"Stop slacking, princess. You still need that one more that was left." I let the weights loose and pushed harder before locking the thing and flopping my sweaty a*s back into the floor.

"Are you trying to kill her, Knox?" I followed the voice to see who had said what I was thinking.

My eyes traveled up and up, and even though he wasn't as tall or built as Knox, he was intimidating as hell. He walked over to me and stuck his hand out. I took it and stood. He shook his head, taking in my entire body quaking.

"You can't kill her. She's already dead. Besides Ace, I need to teach her how to feed, and I can't until she is strong enough to access The Nothing. Which is why you are here. I need to know everything you know about soul eaters." Knox shrugged his friend off and put weights on the bench things bar.

"Rest, and we will jump back in, in like five." He patted my shoulder, and I flopped back down on my a*s this time. He walked over to the bar where Knox stood and took two weights off the bar on each end.

"I want to see what is easy for her before we move on to what is hard for her." The guy he called Ace said.

"Why do you need info on soul eaters?" his eyebrow was crooked at Knox.

Knox looked in my direction, and then so did Ace.

"You are a soul eater!?! WOW! I've never seen one before. You look so normal! I was expecting like...." I cut his words off there with my response.

“A dementor from Harry Potter? Cause same.” I laughed at my own expense.

“Yes. Like a dementor.” Ace eyed Knox, who looked away quickly.

“Come on, tiny. Let’s see what you can do.” Ace waved me over, but I just looked at Knox, who nodded.

I laid onto the bench, finding it much easier to lift what Ace had wanted, and by the third one, I put it on the notches.

“I don’t think that’s enough,” I told Knox.

“I told you.” He smirked at Ace popping the clamp things off and adding back the two weights Ace had taken off.

Once those weights were back on, I fought through the struggle of lifting them, but I liked it better when that burn started aching in my muscles.

We went through the same routine as last time until, finally, I heard the magic words.

“Go shower. I’ll make you some coffee.” I wiped the sweat from my brow with an excited expression that he clearly picked up on because he laughed after telling me I was free.

I shuffled on my aching legs to my room, grabbed my suit, and toddled to the bathroom. I showered, put on the bathing suit, and sank into the hot tub with a sigh in just minutes.

“I’m impressed that Knox let you back here. This is his place.” An unfamiliar voice came from the shadows of the yard that had me jumping from the hot tub and wrapping my towel around myself.

“Knox!” I became frustrated that the one word I tried to scream came out in a shaking whisper.

A tall, broody man stepped from the shadows with a smile.

“I didn’t mean to scare you. I’m a colleague of Knox’s. I’m the one who has been collecting for him. I just came by to give him the ones who hadn’t moved on.” He held up a bottle that, to me, sparkled like a meteor shower in the dead of night. The bottle had been secured tightly in a leather belt strap and swayed back and forth like a pendulum begging me to fall under its trance. The smell radiating from the darkness in the yard was making my mouth water, and that ache gnawed at me.

“You look... famished.” His growl snapped me back into reality, and I hadn’t even realized he was so close to me. Just mere feet. I had let myself get distracted and let someone get too close again. How could I have been so stupid?

He snapped the cap off the bottle, and the sounds of tortured souls surrounded me. I felt terrible for a second because those aren't sounds you can easily forget, but it wasn't until the smell hit me that I realized the bottle wasn't sending me into a fever. It was him. I could smell the sins wrapping around him like barbed wire on a fence.

"Back. Get back." My voice sounded stronger this time. But it didn't matter. He was closing in on me and fast.

"I can feed you, soul eater. Imprint with me instead, and I will make your wildest dreams come true." He had attempted to make his voice sound sexy, but it only made me cringe. He reached out to grab me by the waist, and before his disgusting hands could touch me, he was gone. He just... disappeared.

"Lennon, are you okay?" Ace's voice snapped me out of my trance, letting the night's sounds pour back into the yard.

Knox was on top of the creep beating his face in. But I still couldn't move.

"Did he touch you?" Ace's eyes were black. Even as curious as that made me, I couldn't take my eyes off Knox.

He pulled the guy to his feet, dragging him before me. The stranger's proximity made me back into Ace, and I barely recognized Knox because of the blood splatter kissing his handsome face. And his eyes, his gorgeous piercing orange eyes, were like hell fire glowing in the night.

"Did he touch you, Lennon?" Knox's voice was more animal than man. I managed to shake my head no before he shook the guy awake.

"Apologize to her, Venny." The guy couldn't stay awake to do anything, so Knox turned to face him before sucking the soul from his now limp body. He dropped the guy to the ground with a thud and made his way to me. His body was rigid, and his face was dark. This is Death, and he is backing me against the wall. My heart tried to escape my body as he quickly blocked me in. His hand settled on the wall beside my head, and his other hand gripped my chin, making me look him in the eye. He fed me the soul of the man who had scared me so badly, but not before he beat him to death. He had kept his promise.

Once he was done feeding me, he scooped me up and sat me back in the hot tub. He snatched my coffee from Ace and handed it to me, his face was regular again, but his hands shook as badly as mine.

"I'm going to step inside and get cleaned up, and then Ace and I will join you. Do you feel safe if Ace stands by the backdoor with you while I step inside or do you want to come with me?" I opened my mouth to answer him but couldn't find the words, so I just nodded at Ace.

He patted my head before stepping inside, and as my nerves and the commotion died down, I sat back into the bubbling water, trying so hard to fight the thought that had popped into my head about Knox.

No, I can't go down that road again. He is my friend, the only one I have ever had, and I won't jeopardize that or my shattered mental health. He took up for me because he thinks that I am his responsibility. Nothing more. Both finally came to the hot tub, sinking into it with relief like I had. I was thankful they had come because my thoughts were getting the best of me. Knox still looked mad as hell, and his knuckles were bandaged. Ace looked like this was a typical Saturday for him and seemed entirely unphased by the whole thing.

I opened my mouth to apologize for causing trouble, but Ace beat me to the punch.

"Are you coming to the party on Sunday? Cas is coming back home, and we're celebrating... Lily will be there." He smirked at Knox.

Knox looked between us for a minute before settling on me.

"Do you want to? If not, we will stay home. No harm, no foul." His question took me by surprise. Ace had asked him if he was coming. Not us. I wasn't expecting to meet his friends, but the thought of meeting Lilith made me overly excited.

I smiled...

"He said Lilith would be there." My fangirling took over again, and I fought the squeal threatening to escape me.

"I will take that as a yes." Ace chuckled, settling deeper into the steaming water.

"Wear your suits. The ocean will be perfect tomorrow." He groaned as the bubbles relaxed him the same way they had Knox, who was still staring a hole through me.

"I'm sorry... I don't know what happened; I couldn't... I froze. Are your hands okay?" I watched the water bubble, unable to look him in the eyes until he said nothing back. Slowly, I let my gaze wander to him to find his usual cocky smirk plastered across his face.

"No need to worry about me, princess. I'm as right as the rain." I rolled my eyes at him and settled down to drink my coffee before I stuck my foot in my mouth.

The three of us sat there for some time, chatting and laughing like regular friends. I was almost sad when it was over. After Ace left, Knox and I made our way down the hallway stopping at our doors. I felt like I needed to tell him I was sorry again. Or try to make up for his constant need to feed me. I feel like I am stealing his life from him. His time and his job, and his friends have all been put on hold because of me.

“Good night, Lennon.” His words were soft. I turned to tell him what was on my mind, but he had closed the door already.

“Good night, Knox,” I called out before closing my door. Something tells me sleep won’t come so quickly tonight.

Their Warrior Luna Chapter 99

Lennon:

I tossed and turned until I realized the possibility of sleep was slim. I rolled from the bed, threw on the workout clothes I had laid out for in the morning, and made my way to the kitchen. I was too scared to go back outside alone after what happened tonight, so I stood there looking into the darkness that used to be a massive part of who I am... or who I was. Somehow, my death was my beginning. Now without even forcing it, I feel happy and determined.

I saw Knox’s headphones and cell lying on the counter. I cheerfully stole both, half expecting him to have a passcode, but I was ecstatic that he didn’t because I popped his headphones in and made my way down to the basement. I made a playlist of all my favorite songs. With the jams of rock and metal playing through my ears, I wrapped the same weights around my ankles like Knox had and climbed onto Knox’s fancy treadmill starting out slow. When that pace didn’t give me the same buzz the hill that Knox had made me run for the last two days did, I turned it up, and I ran my guts out chasing that cloud-eating high. I sang my favorite Us From Outside song at the top of my lungs, and then when the sweat started dripping onto the treadmill belt around my feet, I realized I had been here for some time now. I turned it off, pulled Knox’s headphones from my ears, and leaned my forehead against the treadmill.

“You smell like shit.” Knox’s husky voice snapped me out of my failed attempt to tire myself out. His hooded eyes were locked on me, his dark brown hair was disheveled, and his shirtless torso begged me to look.

“Yeah? You look like shit.” I rolled my eyes, pretending I didn’t just check him out.

“Bullshit. I know I’m aging like fine wine, Princess. Why can’t you sleep?” I don’t even know how to answer that. I don’t know why other than the darkness has lifted.

“Something happened when you tore that creep off me... I don’t know if it was the fear that froze me or the realization that I let someone come close enough to hurt me like that again, but I don’t ever want to feel that helplessness again.” When I look into those orange eyes, I find an unwavering strength. It is as steady and as sure as the beating of my heart, and I know with him at my back, I will find the strength I need to stand on my own without the help of anyone.

“Come on then.” He yawned, walking over to the machine that I hated the most.

“Not that one.” I groaned.

“Just get it over with. You can nap after we finish training. That way, you aren’t a total dish rag at the party tonight.” He smirked, crossing his muscled arms over his chest.

I had forgotten about the party and regret not trying harder to sleep. I pouted the whole way over to the machine. That is the machine from hell. It always kills me faster than anything else here. I climbed on, letting him help me release the weights. Just like that, the absolute misery began.

Knox:

We have been at this for hours, and now the sun is rising. She has pushed herself harder this morning than she has in the other two days, and it makes me wish I had let her watch me beat someone’s a*s for her before we even started.

“It’s hand-to-hand combat time, princess.” The way her face fell made me smug.

“Knox, I don’t think I have anything left.” Her whimpers were enough to let her have a coffee break, but I wanted to show her why I needed her to be strong. I need her to be brave.

“Come here. I need to show you something.” She trudged over to me with a pouty look that would make anyone want to kiss her pretty lips.

“The Nothing is a realm of banished souls. Originally it was created as a cage to hold a god named Eros. Years ago, it was found that when the queen banished him here for a second time, her power was so great that she created a whole new spiritual realm, and he was never seen again. This realm, this realm, is where soul eaters should feed from. I can’t enter this realm, so to teach you to feed, I have to prepare you physically and mentally to enter without me.” I used my index and middle fingers to open a portal to The Nothing. I opened a small window large enough for her to peep inside, and whatever she saw made her face pale.

“I need coffee.” She rubbed her face with both hands.

“We have a lot of work to do if I am going to survive feeding in that place.” A shutter shook her small frame. But the second her green eyes met mine, I knew the fire that flowed through her loose curls had spread to her soul. There is nothing helpless about this girl. She just doesn’t know that yet.

Lennon:

The images of my feeding grounds are on replay in my head. I'm unsure if he knew what it looked like there, but it is as close to hell as I could imagine. I will be doing those souls a service by removing them from there. Maybe that's why beings like me are created... Population control for planes like that one.

"Snap out of it, Princess. You are almost to the top!" Knox yelled from the top of the hill, where he always waits for me. After this, we are done for the day, and to say I need a shower is an understatement. After the combat stuff he tried to teach me went south, we decided to go for our run and then try the fighting stuff again tomorrow.

"Shut up, d**k weasel. I'm running as hard as my little legs will pack me!" I yelled back, noting how my stomach fluttered at the sight of his dimples. His laughter pushed me. It was like being close enough to the stars to touch them, and when I can make him laugh without even trying, when I least expect to hear the tune, that is when it is the sweetest.

He ran past me without even letting me get to the top. That bastard is trying to cheat!

"Do you really think cheating will help you beat me to the bottom?" I zoomed past him on my way back down. If he can run down before I even hit the top of the hill, I don't have to go to the top at all.

Like every day we have done this, I beat him to the bottom and stood there with a snarky grin when he finally reached the bottom.

"You are a cheater." I had to force my eyes not to look at his chest again, and knowing that it was becoming a habit of mine was pissing me off at myself.

"You are a sore loser." He replied immediately.

"NOT ME!" I gasped in mock disbelief, making him chuckle.

"Go shower and take your nap, Princess. We leave for the party in three hours... If you don't want to go, we can stay here. I don't want to make you feel pressured." I had honestly thought about staying behind. I don't want to crash the party or anything, and I don't want him to feel pressured to hang out with me instead of enjoying his time with his friends.

"Do you think I will be a bother?" He looked at me like I had grown three heads.

"NO! I mean, I may have to kick the king or his betas a*s over you, but that's because both are the world's biggest man whores. Other than that, I think you would really get along with Fallon, and there are a few other people that are likely to be there that you will really like." His gaze softened. He turned to face me and kept walking backward.

"You aren't going to be a bother, Lennon. You will be safe with everyone there, I assure you." I nodded, trying not to think about the last time I was at a party. Not to mention it is

a beach party. I will be half-naked in front of everyone there because I would refuse to let the green blotches still covering my skin keep me from enjoying my first time seeing the ocean. Water has always been my happy place, and nothing or no one can take that from me.

Their Warrior Luna Chapter 100

“Wake up, princess. It’s party time!” Knox busted through my door wearing a goofy straw hat, sunglasses, and swim trunks. I shot upright in bed with drool drying on my face. I took one look at him and busted out laughing.

“You look incredible. How am I supposed to make friends when you look like that? All the attention is going to be on you!” I croaked.

“I know, right? I look fine as hell.” He pretended to adjust his boobs in a bra with a goofy look on his face.

I jumped from the bed and grabbed a suit and some shorts. I don’t have any sandals, so I’m stuck on just going barefoot or slipping my sneakers on.

“Here, I hope you don’t mind. I had Ace deliver something for you while you were napping.” He grabbed a giant gift bag from the hallway and held it out for me.

“I don’t want that. You have spent way too much on me already.” My heart thudded in my ears when my arm raked against his bare chest and when I stepped around him to go to the bathroom, he snatched me by the elbow and lowered his head, almost whispering in my ear.

“Present or punishment.” The darkness in his tone sent shivers through my warmed skin, making my face scorch.

“What’s the punishment?” I barely choked out around the lump that had formed in my throat from the closeness of our bodies.

“Pick punishment and find out for yourself, baby girl.” The way his tongue slowly licked his lips had me snatching the bag and running like hell to the bathroom.

I slipped the suit on and the denim shorts. I stared at the bag until curiosity got the better of me. I pulled the bag apart, smiling at the straw hat inside. He had bought me the same goofy hat that he was wearing. I pulled the hat from the bag with a smile that quickly fell from my face when a cell phone box toppled from inside the hat. That rat bastard.

“KNOX! I am not taking this!” I stepped from the bathroom with my straw hat and the box.

“What? You don’t wanna match hats?” I ran into his chest, not realizing he had been waiting for me. I scowled at his cocky smirk and shoved the phone box into his hand.

“That is too much! You have spent thousands of dollars on me, fed me twice, given me a place to stay for free, and now you are trying to give me a phone. No.” I crossed my arms in protest of his gift-giving. I don’t know what his punishments are, but I am ready to accept one to avoid taking that damn thing.

“Lennon, we are going to a party. I want you to be able to find me if you wander off. I want you to be able to call me when you need to. This is nonoptional. If you don’t take it, we won’t go.” I groaned, snatching the phone from his hand.

“Fine, but I’m returning it when we get home.” I pointed my finger at his face.

Once I got over my pouting, we went to his garage, and I climbed on his bike even before he had.

“You like being my backpack, princess?” if he doesn’t wipe that cocky look off his face, I may beat his a*s.

“I don’t even know what that means.” I wrapped my arms tightly around his waist when he sat on the seat. I fought the rising wave of flutters in my stomach when the bike roared to life between us.

The ride was silent, and my nerves were unbearable. No one has ever befriended me other than Knox, and frankly, I don’t think his friends will, either. I don’t think if we found ourselves in a crowded room, he would’ve picked me as the person to hit it off with, yet here we are. When I opened my eyes from the hiding spot I had chosen behind Knox’s back, I felt the salty air blowing through my hair.

“This is incredible!” I don’t know what I expected of an ocean in a supernatural universe, but this is more than I could have imagined.

The sand is white, and the water is clear blue. As badly as I want to join that party, more than anything else, I want to sink into that water and let the waves wash away the last bits of my past that still cling to me like a second skin.

“Will I have time to swim?” I couldn’t hide my gaze from the crystal waters begging me to dip my feet in.

“You can do whatever you want. You don’t have to ask. I can let everyone know we are here, and then I can come back and—” I cut his words off. I don’t need him to take his typical Sunday fun and use it on me. I can be more than happy with the waves as my friends right now.

“No, I’m okay. I have your phone and if I need anything I can call. I just want to...” I couldn’t find the words to describe the need swirling in me. I just knew I needed to be in that water.

“Say less. Ace was right. The water is perfect today... I’ll be back soon. You can swim, right, princess?” his kind understanding faded into his usual cocky-a*s attitude.

“Like a fish, baby.” I grinned, finally letting my focus break away from the waves long enough to show him my cockiness. It is the only thing I’m sure of, after all. I learned long ago that even after everyone who swore they would never leave me goes, the water will always wash away their wrongdoings.

I watched him walk away with the excitement of what was to come nipping at me. He turned one last time, blessing me with a grin before cutting up a sandhill and walking out of my sight. I tip-toed on the sand until I was so close to the waves licking the beach that I could feel the mist on my toes.

With a quiet squeak, I stepped into the warm water. I felt at peace, and I felt excited. But I waited and waited for that normal feeling to wash over me. That precious feeling of belonging, of feeling at home, but no matter how deeply I sank into the salt waters of this fever dream, those feelings never came. What did come were two insanely attractive people. I was still in the water but knew they were calling my name. I sank into the warmth of the waves crashing against me, using my arms and legs to get close to the pretty strangers. But not too close. I remembered where my comfort zone was, and I put them in that zone. Just close enough to hear, never close enough to cause me harm.

“Lennon! Knox said we could find you here. I brought you some food.” The girl’s delicate voice called out to me.

Flashes of that night at Grant’s house flashed in my mind. Knox knows that I don’t eat food.

“Knox told you to bring me food?” that was the only question I knew would confirm if Knox did, in fact, send them after me.

“No, I did not. I told them where you were swimming because they wanted to join you.” Knox reached around the girl and took the plate.

“Soul eaters don’t eat food, Fallon. That is why they are called soul eaters.” He snarked at her.

The relief that flooded me was scary, but what scared me more was that my first thought was that they would hurt me.

“Right! I forgot.” She blushed slightly.

“Lennon, this is Fallon. Princess of Clearwater, and Barrett, their Beta. Is it cool if they swim too?” It embarrassed me that he asked, but I turned on that fake smile I had gotten so used to painting on my face before I replied.

Cassius:

I was too tired to be at this damn party and to pretend to be happy when rogue packs were at every border. I should be in my office strategizing. But no, my mother and sister chose to throw this damn party. When all I need to do is crap out in my bed for a few days or drink until I collapse, but instead, I broke away from the crowd for a bit. I just need to breathe. I sat down in the sand, letting it run through my fingers, and that’s when it hit me.

I could smell her sweet scent long before getting this close to her, but I had to see her. I needed to know what creature had a scent that could captivate me so profoundly that even amid a crowded party, I could pick her out of the herd of friends and family that had gathered to welcome me back. I sank into the shadows to avoid being caught as I chased the smell of her honey-sweet love. Just feet away, my first glimpse of her was life-altering. She was standing in the waves watching the tide roll out. Her toes wiggled in the water, and her melodic laugh danced around my frigid skin, wrapping me in warm sunshine.... an extraordinary ray of sunshine.

That’s what she looked like standing there with her red hair being blown wildly in the evening wind.

Like a fire, that I could touch without being burned, but damn, I want to be burned by her so badly. After years of searching for my mate, this tiny human has rolled in here like a hurricane drowning my self-control into nothing. The bruises that painted her soft skin had rage seeping from me. How dare anyone lay their hand on something so innocent? I left her in my sister’s capable hands, who was playing in the water alongside her.

If I go there if I get too close... I would take everything I could from her until nothing was left of that happy, bubbly person dancing on the beach with my sister. No... I would ruin her. The moment she cried her first tear, it would be too hard to handle the pressure against my denim jeans. I would have to f**k her until I painted those now light green bruises purple again, and I can’t... she deserves the universe on a platter, and I can’t give her that.