

Last Star 169

Star XLVII ~ The Flowers There... Are Always in Full Bloom ~ Part I

A lone planet appeared in the pale light of the forty-seventh star – Northern Lily. It was an Earth-like celestial body, but with pink oceans and land masses.

Although nothing indicated that the planet was largely populated, there were a few space stations in its orbit, and the docks for spaceships were still active.

“Do you remember what we are looking for?” - Luna asked Avi.

“Yes, you don't have to remind me.” - Avi complained as she rotated in her chair.

“I was just making sure.” - Luna replied. - “Well, you know, in case you want to change our plans temporarily, we can still slow down.”

Avi stopped turning, her face now directed at Luna. - “Do you want it, though?”

“It could be nice, but I'm not sure if it would help.” - Luna uttered as she twirled her hair around her finger.

“‘Could be’ is enough.” - Avi declared and shot out of her chair, to the planet's hologram. She began sorting the data by locations worth seeing. Dozens of photos were shifting until Avi forced it to stop, then pointed. - “Here! Looks good?”

Luna gently smiled. - "Yes."

"A quiet place." - Luna commented as they walked along the path in the forest of blooming, pink trees.

Avi nodded and rubbed her arms. Although it was spring, it could still be chilly at dusk, which Luna didn't realize before they left the ship. She quickly summoned a scarf and a jacket for Avi, to make sure she wouldn't catch a cold.

Avi smiled and recalled all the days when she and Luna were this close. She was grateful to the universe for this familiar fragrance and warmth.

Luna noticed. - "What's with that goofy grin?"

"Nothing!" - Avi uttered. - "For a short moment... I simply noticed a few sun rays piercing the clouded sky."

"What are you talking about?" - Luna asked as she looked up. - "The sky is not only clear, but also almost dark."

"I was talking about hope." - Avi said with a peaceful contentment. - "About a better tomorrow that will come."

Luna reflected on Avi's words and added. - "The light of each star also reminds me of it."

Avi extended her hand, as if she were trying to reach them. - "You're right. Every person out there has a dream, and we've created so much so far... we only have to carry it a little farther, to the last of the stars."

"...and then, each dream will give birth to a new star, and they will be impossible to count." - Luna summed up.

After a short stroll, Luna and Avi reached a small pond in the shadow of a large half-willow, half-oak. Amidst the pink grass and weeds, red ducks and their offspring rested, and on the other side of the small lake, a pair of spotted deer was drinking water and not paying attention to the guests.

Luna summoned a blanket and sat down with Avi, gazing at the animals.

"Do you see the flowers growing in their fur?" - Luna pointed at the deer. - "I think they're supposed to attract insects and small birds, but I have no idea why."

Avi glanced at it. - “They're pulsating with spiritual energy and look like white-pinkish spirals of cotton candy. Each flower has its own miniature soul.”

“Oh?” - Luna uttered. - “So it's a different species?”

“No.” - Avi explained. - “To me, it seems like these animals have over a dozen smaller, separate units of psyche, which share a single 'self'. I don't know how to better explain it.”

“Deer with split personality?” - Luna asked. - “I've never heard about anything like this.”

When Avi continued studying the animals, Luna pulled out a thermos of hot chocolate from her bag and filled their cups. She prepared the plates and a bowl of fruits, which made the deer curious. They both approached, but stopped about two to three meters away from the picnic.

Avi took a few berries and reached with her hand towards the animals, encouraging. - “Come, don't be scared.”

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“They won't approach. They're not used to people.” - Luna noticed.

Resigned, Avi put the berries away and continued to sip chocolate.

[I don't like the way they look at us.] - Eva commented.

“Huh? They seem normal to me, Eva.” - Avi replied.

[They've bad intentions.] - Eva added. - [I'm sure.]

Avi looked at the deer again. Indeed, their breath seemed heavy, and their eyes were wildly intimidating.

“Luna? How about we give them our food basket and leave? They can eat it in peace... it won't hurt.” - Avi suggested.

“If they want something, then they should behave...” - Luna said as she tried to brush away a few flies buzzing next to her ear. - “...but you're right, they're ruining the mood. Shall we move?”

“Yes. It's a pity, because this place is nice.” - Avi replied, also trying to fight a few mosquitoes. - “What's with all these insects!?” - She shouted, frustrated, because there were too many.

“Wait.” - Luna summoned a force field, pushing the bothersome intruders away. - “They're acting strange, as if they weren't interested in fruits at all.” - Before she could grab the bowl and cups, there were so many insects that they almost completely obscured their vision. She could hear them tap

against the barrier, while some were even hitting it at full speed, splattering against the surface. - “What the...?”

She couldn't finish, because a small bird crashed against it with its skull and immediately dropped dead.

Avi, scared, fell. - “Have they gone mad!?”

[No.] - Eva informed. - [Take a closer look.]

Avi quickly figured out that there was a cloud of barely visible, white-pinkish spirals surrounding them. They were just like the deer's multiple souls and deeply penetrated each body.

“They're being controlled!” - Avi shouted without hesitation.

“I won't ask how you figured it out...” - Luna replied. - “...and I don't think they will be willing to give up easily.”

“Let's give them these stupid fruits already and leave.” - Avi asked, clearly angry.

Luna sighed and put the bowl away. - “Sure. We'll find a better spot.” - She took Avi's hand and let themselves be chased away.

The birds and insects were following the girls until the pond was no longer visible. Angry, Avi exclaimed.
- "We can't even have one nice evening for ourselves! Of course, something had to go wrong!"

"We were unlucky." - Luna tried to calm her down. - "This forest might not be the best relaxation spot."

"Why did I try at all!?" - Avi continued. - "I was stupid thinking that it's a good moment to forget about all our problems!"

"Avi, that's not about it."

Avi stopped for a moment to regain her composure. - "I'm done. It's like the world itself wants us not to be happy."

"Avi." - Luna called loud and clear, so Avi would focus on her, then smiled brightly. - "I'm still happy, because I can be here with you."

Avi was embarrassed. - "I'm sorry... I also enjoy your presence."

Luna was about to take her hand. - "Let's try again. Shall we?"

Avi sighed. - "Here?" - Seeing that Luna optimistically nodded, she accepted Luna's offer. - "Eh. I guess it won't hurt."

Luna sprang ahead, pulling Avi.

"Why are you in such a hurry?" - Avi asked.

Luna just looked at her mysteriously. - "You'll see."

The dark tree shapes quickly faded from view behind the girls, and a full moon shone in the sky. Luna jumped onto an overturned trunk, then helped Avi climb up, and they both arrived at a meadow of knee-high grass.

"I think we're on time." - Luna uttered, then crouched and signaled Avi to be quiet.

In front of them, on a pointy rock, a bird with a long neck landed. It had flowers between its feathers, which glowed with dark-green light. As it spread its wings, it began calling out with a song toward the sky.

Another, ink-blue shadow passed in front of the moon, then landed next to her male partner. The female bird started to sing along, spreading her wings just as he did and swaying to left and right, as in a dance.

"It begins." - Luna signaled. First, a sound of cicadas joined the bird orchestra, then a pack of large foxes passed next to the girls, then stopped below the rock and began howling at the moon.

[They're like deer... but different. Their souls autonomously connect.] - Eva observed.

"I can see it, Eva." - Avi added. - "They're beating in unison, like a heart made of many lights."

Across the clearing, green and yellow fireflies began to rise from beneath the grass, creating a web that swayed to the music. However, the connections between them broke as they formed pairs and began to dance around each other.

Although Avi never experienced a scene like this, her eyes were focused on the birds, whose necks wrapped around each other as their soul-light united and radiated with a dim, turquoise glow. The new soul traveled to the female bird's chest, and the male collapsed lifeless just as their song stopped. The foxes howled one last time, and when the bird flew away, they climbed the rock and began feasting on the corpse.

"It was..." - Avi uttered.

[Weird.] - Eva commented.

"...so natural to them. He accepted death to create a new life." - Avi finished her sentence. - "Luna. How did you know it would happen here?"

“Uhm... it was a ten-percent guess, and ninety-percent cheating. I just quickly checked the planet's internet after our incident.” - Luna admitted.

“I don't understand the nature of souls at all...” - Avi uttered. - “...and the miracle that occurred during their union. I've never thought it could happen... uhm, without close contact.”

Luna giggled. - “If it were to happen in an alternative way, I obviously would've never invited you here.”

[...but is it not how we had united?] - Eva asked.

Avi wasn't sure about this question. - “Uhm, no. Our union was different, Eva. It resembles conjoined twins, I think. Also, it didn't create new life.”

[Oh. Okay.]

Luna, with a smile, waited until the dancing fireflies disappeared in the grass, then looked at a still captivated Avi and took her hand. - “So? Us three against the world?”

Avi smiled back and nodded. - “Yes!”

“...once we return, I suggest we make up for the lost picnic.” - Luna suggested.

Eva figured out what she meant. - [Parfait!]