

No Sun in Sight

“Greer, have you seen the—” Alexander’s question withered on his tongue. Greer was lying in the field, leaning against the fencepost, a bottle in her hand. Alexander hurried over, heart pounding faster and finally easing when he saw she was breathing. Her quartz-coloured eyes were fixed on the night sky, reflecting the constellations and brewing clouds too perfectly. Alexander realised with a start it was because there were tears in her eyes.

“Greer?” he asked tentatively, but she didn’t acknowledge him. “Are you alright?”

She only moved when he gently closed his hand over the bottle’s neck, and she snapped it away from him, taking a sip. “Shh, I’m trying to hear them.”

“Hear who?”

She reached a hand dreamily out to the stars, chuckling slightly.

Alexander crouched next to her, suddenly impatient. “How much have you had to drink?”

“Quiet, Corwin,” she muttered, then closed her eyes and smiled in satisfaction. “Hear that?”

Alexander strained to hear, and the sound of distant thunder met his ears.

“They roar. The stars don’t sing; they roar, Corwin.”

“Greer, it’s... I’m Alexander,” he tried. “Your son. We have to go inside, there’s going to be a storm soon.”

Greer hummed, eyes still closed. “Let it come. You can’t outrun the sky, darling.”

“Just come inside, please.” Alexander put his hand on her shoulder. “Please, Mum.”

Greer’s eyes snapped open. “Don’t call me that.”

“You’re my mother. Just please, Greer, come inside.” Alexander tugged on her wrist, and felt like he was trying to pull a skeleton that had already decided it wanted to be swallowed by the dark earth. “Have you eaten anything today?”

“The stars are speaking, dear,” she crooned, oblivious to his question. Another wave of thunder rolled over the fields, then a bolt of lightning struck the forest. Alexander cursed.

“Greer, we have to go *now*. The lightning’s going to hit the field soon, we can’t be here.”

“Be where?”

“Come on,” Alexander grunted, hauling her up and half dragging her back to the house. She went quietly at first, eyes fixed on the sky with nothing short of adoration. When he closed the door and she couldn’t see the stars anymore, tears spilled from Greer’s eyes as she weakly reached out for the door. Alexander had set her down on the chair by the hearth, and it broke his heart to see her act so much like the helpless child he felt like. He almost wanted to take her out to the field, to let her be with her blessed stars, to let her feel that happiness and love he’d never seen on her before, but he’d rather have her alive. A weeping mother was more preferable than a ghost at peace in the field; without her worries, without her senses, without her son.