

Moonstruck

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Moonstruck

by [Sixteenthdays](#)

Summary

[GRIAN]

Can you tell me what happened?

[PEARL]

...I can try. I don't know how much of it was real.

[GRIAN]

That's fine. Just tell me what you remember. From the top.

[PEARL]

I remember... dreaming.

Notes

A big one!! This is another with a lot of context behind it- specifically, I would recommend reading [Stargazer](#), [Supplemental: Moonsick](#), and [Ad Astra](#) and at least the frame narrative of [Hypomyces](#) to understand what's going on here!

Though frankly, like, at this point, why aren't you just reading the whole series. I promise it's good.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

[Click]

(All audio slightly muffled, as if recorded through a layer of fabric)

(The slow, regular beeping of a heart rate monitor)

(Phone rings)

[GRIAN]

Oh, for goodness sake-

Hello? Whoever's there, I'll have you know I've had a *very long day*, and-

Oh.

(Sighs, rustling)

Hi, Timmy. No, I did... I did forget. *(Pause)*. No, no excuse this time. Sorry. Don't have one ready. You'll just have to make one up yourself.

(Pause)

It's that obvious? ...It's Pearl. She's... well, she's asleep right now. She got- hurt. I think. It's hard to- I still don't have all the pieces of the story. Won't until she wakes up. Whenever that is.

Hm?

The invitation? Of course it's still open. Whenever you like. I'm there most of the time, so- yeah! As soon as... once Pearl's better. You can get the story from her.

(Pause)

Yeah, sounds good, Tim. Talk to you later.

(Soft beep of call ending)

[GRIAN]

Well, now look what you've gone and done, Pearl. You've even got Timmy worried.

Mumbo's gone to get food, by the way. He'll be back in a little bit. I told him I wasn't hungry, but he insisted. Frankly, I think he just wanted something to do. Scar went home to get some rest and feed his cat... and I think Impulse went back to the Institute to help clean up. I'm sure they'll all wander back in eventually, if you're not awake soon. I know I'm not planning on going anywhere.

(Long pause)

I wish you hadn't lied to me, you know.

About the dreams, I mean. Way back when they first started... that feels like a long time ago, now. You told me it'd only happened once. I don't know if it would've changed anything if you'd told the truth- I mean, you're not a very good liar. I knew. But I still wish you'd have told me.

Not like I can really be that upset. I haven't been entirely honest either.

Something's up with me, I think. Something's *been* up for quite some time. Something that goes a lot deeper than just the feathers.

When I first got hired at the Institute... at the time, I figured I was just *lucky*, when all the horrible thoughts I'd been having finally started to fade out. I certainly wasn't about to question it too hard. I was just happy to maybe be able to get my life back on track.

But that's not what happened at all, is it? I'm just on a different train entirely.

Hopefully this one doesn't also end with me smashing Scar's head open. Had quite enough of that the first time.

(Long pause)

[PEARL]

(Sleepily) ...With you *what*?

[GRIAN]

PEARL!

You're awake? You're awake! ...How *long* have you been awake?

[PEARL]

I'm... oh.

[GRIAN]

What?

[PEARL]

Nothing. Is this a hospital? ...I was in the sky... and then I was at my apartment building... and then the Institute?

[GRIAN]

Yeah. I was... hoping you could tell me what happened. Goodness knows I still don't understand. I actually think I remembered to bring a- *(Fabric rustling; sound clarifies)*

(Pause)

[PEARL]

Well.

[GRIAN]

(Dubiously) Maybe something hit the record button in the bag when I was on my way here?

[PEARL]

Come on, now.

[GRIAN]

(Sighs) Yeah, yeah, I know.

(Pause)

[PEARL]

Grian?

[GRIAN]

Yeah?

[PEARL]

What do I look like? Right now?

[GRIAN]

(Long pause)

Mostly the same, except your eyes. They look like the night sky. But other than that... still you.

[PEARL]

...Good. That's- good.

(Pause)

[GRIAN]

Can you tell me what happened?

[PEARL]

...I can try. I don't know how much of it was real.

[GRIAN]

That's fine. Just tell me what you remember. From the top.

[PEARL]

I remember... dreaming.

It wasn't any different than it has been the past few months, at first. The stars, and the moon, and the vast empty sky, and me. I was looking up at them, so many more than I can ever see when I'm awake, not really paying any mind to anything else around me because there wasn't anything else to even see. Or... there shouldn't have been.

But then I had... a feeling. Like, a little tickle at the back of my neck. You know how people describe the feeling of being watched? So I turned around, and-

You were there. Falling.

[GRIAN]

Me?

[PEARL]

I think it was you. I couldn't see you very well. It was like you were too far away to see clearly.

I couldn't reach you from where I was, though. I had to move. But when I tried to... I felt stable, where I was, even though there was nothing but stars and sky under my feet. But when I moved to walk towards you, to help, whatever I was standing on started to... wobble. Or... tilt. It didn't feel *dangerous*, not really, but it made me very aware of just how precarious it was to stand on nothing in a way I hadn't been before, in the dreams.

I reached out into space, and grabbed your hand, and pulled you out of the fall. And then...

I should've woken up, I think. I felt like it was *time* for me to wake up. I *knew* I should wake up, and I just didn't, and I *didn't*, and I was *trying*, I was trying to reach out and feel my blankets so I

could wake up in my bed, and I *couldn't*. And... I looked up.

And the moon was there.

It was so close. Closer than it had ever been before. And it was still getting closer, and there wasn't anywhere I could go, and I was alone and I couldn't *wake up*.

It was so bright. I could feel the light of it on my face. And I know- the moon doesn't really *have* its own light, right? Not really. It's all reflected from the sun. But I could still feel it. It felt warm. Like an old, familiar blanket.

And then it crashed into me, or I crashed into it, and there was nothing *but* light.

I woke up.

I think I woke up.

I might have still been dreaming. It was hard to think. My skin felt too tight and too loose at the same time, like it didn't *fit* right over what was under it, and my vision was all funny. I could see my bedroom, and the city outside my window, but it all looked... fake. Underneath it, I could still see the sky and the stars. It was like I was awake but I was still in the sky, and the real world was just... superimposed over it.

I knew- I *knew* that if I wanted to, I could slip right through it and go back to the sky. Part of me wanted to.

But I was... *hungry*.

I got up and went to my kitchen to look in my fridge, but nothing in there looked appetizing. It didn't even look *real*. It looked as half-translucent as the walls did. I didn't even really want to touch it. Instead I went to my front door and went out into the hall. I don't really know if I decided to. My feet just... carried me. I still felt like I wasn't really awake. Moving felt all... disconnected. Like I wasn't really... physically *there*.

One of my neighbors was there, when I stepped out into the hall. I don't think I knew them. Or maybe I just couldn't make out their face... my eyes weren't working right. I took their face in my hands, so I could see better. They didn't run, but I could tell they were scared. They looked right into my eyes, and said... something about them being pretty.

And I think... I think I thanked them, and asked if they wanted a better look.

And they said yes. Or maybe they just didn't say no. Or maybe they did. I can't remember. I don't think I cared.

The moon was overhead, big and close and bright, so I tilted their head back to look at it. I watched it fill up their eyes, and then they just sort of... slumped, and I let them fall.

And then I blinked, or I woke up, and the world was a little more solid around me, and instead of the sky underneath the world being nothing but bluish-black, it was starting to bleed orange in the east, like early morning. The person I'd seen was gone. I don't know where they went. Or if they were ever really there at all.

My feet kept moving on their own. I wasn't sure where I was going, but I didn't really care. I felt... floaty. Like my head was still all full of moonlight. Everywhere I looked, there was morning sky, and it was beautiful. I couldn't really... *think*. I could see, but it felt like I was sleepwalking, or

dreaming still. Like I could close my eyes and I would just... keep moving, wherever I was supposed to be.

The next thing I remember after that is standing at the doors of the Institute.

I don't exactly know why I went there. It just felt like where I was meant to be.

The world was still all thin around me, wherever I moved. It felt like the closer I got to anything, the more the world faded out around me, and the brighter the stars got. I think I walked right through those big carved front doors.

And then... I don't remember quite what happened next. It gets all patchy. But... you were there?

[GRIAN]

Want me to fill you in?

[PEARL]

Please.

[GRIAN]

Right. So... you'd been missing for five days, at that point.

[PEARL]

Five- *really?*

[GRIAN]

Yeah. Nobody could get in touch with you. When it had been two days with no word, I borrowed Scar and his lockpicks and went to your apartment, but you weren't there. Your bed looked slept-in, but you weren't in it. But there was no sign of anything *bad* happening, so I wasn't sure what to think.

And, um, the moon was big. That was the other thing happening.

Mumbo and I first noticed it the first night you stopped responding to messages. It was like... twice as big as it should have been, then, and just over the course of that night it got bigger. It was... well, for a few nights there I wasn't the only one sleeping in the Archives. We were all spending basically every free moment going through the library and the old statements trying to find any mention of something that might explain it, but we couldn't find anything.

I even went back to listen to your statement, a few times. I knew... they *had* to be connected, somehow, your dreams and you going missing and the moon. I just didn't know *how*. And I couldn't shake this feeling that it was my fault somehow, because the last time I'd seen you before you disappeared was... in a dream, I think, and...

Anyways.

That morning, just after the Institute opened for the day, the receptionist at the front desk pulled the intruder alarm. There weren't many people in the building yet at that point- just the four of us down in the Archives, the administrative staff, a few early patrons, and X in his office, I think.

I hurried upstairs to see what was happening, and by the time I got there, the lobby was... destroyed.

All the lights were out. The doors were... *melted* open, dripping apart into ink and stars, and there was a trail burned into the floor, footprints that looked like nebulae. I... you know, it was stupid,

but I don't regret it in the slightest. I followed the trail- the footsteps got deeper and cracked the floor open further and further as they went- until I caught up to what was leaving them.

It didn't... really look like you.

It didn't even really look like a *person*. It looked like a hole in the world into *nothing*, just... darkness and distant stars. All blurry around the edges, like they were torn, or... drifting apart. Disintegrating. The only feature I could really make out were the eyes. They looked like the moon. But I looked, and I knew it was you.

I walked up to you, and once I was standing in front of you, I could-

I could *see* you. Inside. You looked... scared.

The first time I tried to touch you, I couldn't. My hand went right through into nothing. You didn't even seem to really notice, just kept walking. I don't know where you were going, but the trail you were leaving was *eating* the floor, chewing it apart into this... chasm that just seemed to drop away into space. I didn't know...

To be honest, I didn't really care what happened to the building? Or even most of the people in it. But *you* kept getting blurrier around the edges, losing more and more shape, and I was terrified you'd just... fall apart in there, and I wouldn't be able to see you anymore, and there would be nothing left but space.

So I tried again, and the second time I focused on the version of you I could see inside, the one I knew, because I *knew* you were there, and that time when I reached out to grab you I could feel your sweatshirt under my hands, and I dragged you in to hold on to you as tight as I could.

And you just... stopped.

For a moment we were just standing there like that, and then you sort of collapsed- *almost* dropped you, but I didn't- and I could feel your hair against my cheek. And when I opened my eyes again, you were just... you. Pearl.

And then we brought you here, and I've just been... waiting for you to wake up.

So, um. How're you feeling? Really.

[PEARL]

Um... weird, mostly. But... better, I think. More... solid.

...I can still see them. The stars, behind everything. But they're not as bright anymore. They're... comforting, almost. And my head is a lot clearer.

I think... I'll be okay. I just need to adjust.

[GRIAN]

Well, you better be! Who's going to tell me when I'm being an idiot if you aren't around?

[PEARL]

Honestly, how *did* you last five days without me? Surprised I didn't wake up to find you'd run off to Cleo's again to get turned into a stuffed parrot.

[GRIAN]

...Okay, you could give me a *little* more credit.

[PEARL]

Absolutely not, you've proven you can't be trusted with it.

(Both laugh)

[PEARL]

Actually, that reminds me, *what* were you saying about Scar when I woke up-?

[GRIAN]

Nothing!

(Light knocking)

[MUMBO]

Grian? I've got sandwiches- oh! Pearl! You're... um. Are your eyes...?

[PEARL]

You've fallen into my trap! I'm actually not Pearl. *(Dramatically)* I'm the witch of the stars, come down to bring wreck and ruin upon this world-

[GRIAN]

(Laughing)

[MUMBO]

Stoppit. You're the *worst*. You know what, I'm going to eat all these sandwiches myself. I don't even know why I bother.

[PEARL]

Noooo, wait, I haven't eaten in almost a *week*-

[Click]

End Notes

MAN THIS IS ONE I'VE BEEN WORKING TOWARD FOR AWHILE

i hope this is fairly satisfying as a conclusion (for now) for this particular plot! i'm pretty happy with it, at least. feel free to come talk to me on twitter at [sixteenthdays](#) or tumblr at [sixteenth-days](#) if you've got any questions or comments! also be sure to check out the art masterpost and marginalia sideseries linked in the series description if you haven't!

just a heads up: i'm going back to school in the next couple days, so posting may slow down as we head into the fall semester, but i'm still gonna try my best to bring this story to the end i've got planned for it, no matter how long that takes. thank you guys for sticking along for the ride <3

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!