

## Pinioning

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## Pinioning

by [Sixteenthdays](#)

### Summary

#### [PEARL]

Statement of Pearl Moon, regarding-

Ah. *Ha*. I *see* what she meant.

...Well, you can't hurt me. I'm bigger than you could ever be, don't forget. No matter *how* many eyes you've got.

Statement of Pearl Moon, regarding... a friend. Statement given today, um- direct from subject, to... the Archivist. Given- what's today? Twenty-first of November. Or something like that. (*Inhales shakily*)

### Notes

normally i would put the suggestions for what to read for context here but im too lazy to link them all so im just gonna say if you read this without being caught up on the series thats on you

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

[Click]

*(Rapid knocking on door)*

*(Door swings open)*

**[CLEO]**

Can I *help* you?

**[PEARL]**

Yeah, I think you've got something of mine, and I'd like it back, please.

**[CLEO]**

...I think you must be mistaken.

**[PEARL]**

You won't mind if I have a look, though, right?

*(Footsteps, wood floors creaking, rustling)*

**[CLEO]**

*(Angrily)* Hey! I have a lot of delicate work in here, you can't just-

**[PEARL]**

Where is he? I *know* he's here, he's not smart enough to not be.

**[CLEO]**

*(Irritated)* If you're going to be like that, why don't you just stand *still* for me, and-

*(Pause)*

**[CLEO]**

...What?

**[PEARL]**

No, I don't think so. That might work on Grian, but it's not going to work on me. I think you're going to tell me where I can find him, and then we're both going to *leave*.

**[CLEO]**

How did you do that?

**[PEARL]**

*(Giggles)* You think you can hold what's inside of *me* in place? You think you can stop the cosmos from spinning? *You?*

*(Pause)*

**[CLEO]**

...Fine. Fine! I've done everything I was going to anyways. He's through there. ...I put a sheet over him.

**[PEARL]**

A sheet? Why?

**[CLEO]**

You'll see. I...

He wouldn't stop *staring* at me.

*(Footsteps)*

*(Pause)*

*(Cloth rustling)*

[Click]

[Click]

*(Car engine running)*

**[PEARL]**

*(Breathing rapidly, voice somewhat muffled)* Oh, no, *ohhh*, no, oh no, oh no.

*(Shifting, feathers rustling)*

*(Pause)*

**[PEARL]**

Grian!

...Can you hear me?

*(Pause)*

I'll take that as a no. Um, if you can hear me, can you try... no, never mind. I- hold on. There *must* be-

*(Rustling; voice gets closer)*

**[PEARL]**

Yes! Okay, here. You can hear me now, right?

*(Feathers rustling)*

**[PEARL]**

Okay. Okay. *(Inhales deeply, exhales slowly.)*

Here.

Statement of Pearl Moon, regarding-

Ah. *Ha*. I *see* what she meant.

...Well, you can't hurt me. I'm bigger than you could ever be, don't forget. No matter *how* many eyes you've got.

Statement of Pearl Moon, regarding... a friend. Statement given today, um- direct from subject, to... the Archivist. Given- what's today? Twenty-first of November. Or something like that.  
*(Inhales shakily)*

I had... a feeling, you know? When you didn't come back with the rest of them, and nobody knew where you were, just like last time. I thought, maybe- but it didn't make *sense*. Why would you go *back* to her house after what happened?

(Pause)

Impulse said he never even saw you after you got separated, and I'm sure you can guess how helpful Scar was. You've been gone for nearly two months, in case you didn't know. I'm assuming she didn't keep you updated.

Of course you couldn't have left her address around the office. That would've made everything a lot easier. Even once I felt like I had a good guess where you probably were, I couldn't *find* you.

And then I started having the... dreams. I didn't even know I *could* still dream of anything except the sky, and I... I never know if I'm sleeping or awake these days, you know. It all blurs together, with the stars behind everything I see.

But in this dream I was in a house. Her house. It had walls I couldn't move through, and it was full of shadows, and there were no stars in sight. And you were there.

I couldn't see you properly. Just an eye, or a flash of feathers. But I knew it was you. I could feel your fingers around my wrist, and I could feel your eyes on me. I knew you were pulling me somewhere.

I followed you down a hallway, then through a series of rooms lined with horrible twisted shapes I couldn't quite make out clearly and didn't want to, for what felt like a very long time. There were eyes on me, from all directions.

I opened my eyes, and I was standing in the middle of the street in a little suburb, staring at a house, as if I'd been sleepwalking. The sky was huge and dark overhead.

I opened my eyes again, and I was at home.

It took me another couple days to actually find the house. I knew the number, and what it looked like from the outside, and, you know, I *can* walk through walls, but I still didn't know the street or town. I had a sense, though. I knew where to look.

When I stood on the sidewalk outside, it looked exactly like it had in my dreams.

She didn't seem happy when she answered the door. I don't think she recognized me as the assistant who escorted her out, way back when she first came in to give her statement. I guess I do look different now. Do you remember that? It was just a few days after you started as the head archivist. It feels like it's been so long since then.

She didn't want to let me in, but I walked in past her. She couldn't stop me; she tried, but it only worked for a moment. Between you and me, I'm glad she didn't try any harder. I don't know *exactly* what would've happened if I'd... broken open, but I think it would've made what I did to the Institute look like spilled paint.

She pointed me through to where you were. There was a sheet over you, so I couldn't see what she'd done right away, but just from the silhouette, I could tell the shape wasn't... right. Lumpy where it shouldn't have been. I had a horrible sort of feeling in my stomach.

I hate to admit it, but I was actually a little scared to pull it off. And- you know *you've* never scared me. But I was scared of what might be under that sheet.

I guess if I'd thought about it more, I probably could've guessed what she'd done to you. You did say that last time she'd talked a lot about needing more... materials for you. It makes sense that she would've prepared better, this time.

Do those... hurt? The...

...Silly question, probably.

I didn't recognize you, for a moment. The shape stayed wrong, even after I could make out the details. It distracted my eyes. It seemed like all I could see were the *wings*. The feathers fanning out behind you, and the eyes nestled in between them, blinking at me.

It took me a little time to find your face. Your head was down, so I couldn't see it right away. When I pushed your chin up, you met my eyes. I don't think I really believed it was you until then. There were... marks on your neck, like it had been cut into, and dried blood all down your chest.

When she let you go, let you drop, you fell like a sack of bricks. Didn't close your eyes, didn't even make a noise. It was scary. It was like you were dead. When I knelt down to check your breathing, I couldn't find it at first.

When I picked you up, you seemed too light, but those wings were so heavy. They draped over my shoulders like a blanket.

I asked Cleo what had happened. Some of it was- I could *guess*, obviously, but... it was strange. She'd followed me into the room where you were, but she had her back up against the wall, like she was worried something was going to sneak up on her, and she wouldn't take her eyes off you.

I could tell there was something wrong- something hadn't gone according to plan, for her- but she wouldn't tell me what.

*(Pause)*

...It happened, didn't it?

When the moon hit me and split my skull apart, and I *lost* something- what happened to me then, the thing that's had me wandering every night since then, and getting so *hungry*, and turning people's eyes towards the sky... It happened to you, in there, didn't it? Guess maybe you've been waiting for it, huh? Like I was.

I don't, um... *(nervous laughter)* I don't know if I can really fix this for you like you did for me. Hopefully you won't mind too bad.

*(Rustling)*

**[GRIAN]**

*(Pained noise)*

*(Brakes screech)*

*(Clatter of movement; yelp of pain)*

**[GRIAN]**

*(Uneven, pained)* Pearl! Don't- ah, *ow, ow, ow-*

*(Words fade off into mumbling; pause)*

*(Engine noises cycle down, then stop)*

*(Pause)*

**[PEARL]**

Grian? Sorry, sorry! I- Hey, you still there? *(Snapping fingers)*

**[GRIAN]**

*(Hazily)* Keep talking. Please? I need... 'm hungry.

*(Pause)*

She was gonna cut my *head* off, Pearl.

**[PEARL]**

She was-

**[GRIAN]**

*(Laughing raggedly)* She was gonna... she *cut*, right in, and I thought I was going to die, and she didn't say why, or what she wanted to do, but she had a scalpel in my *neck*, and if...

I thought I was going to die. I really did. I thought she was going to cut my head off, or slit my neck, or... *(Unevenly)* Like a chicken.

Everything already hurt but- I remember, before, I could feel the way she'd torn my back open but I couldn't feel- they were just weight. *(Laughs)* Decorative weight. And I'd figured out... how to sleep, a little, or to... stop paying attention, so I didn't feel it as much.

But then she cut into my neck and I shouldn't have been able to bleed but I *did*. It got everywhere. She was scared. She stepped back. *(Giggles)*

And I could feel the wings, and *all* my eyes were open. I could see her, and me, and everything she'd- *aha*, it *hurt*, *really* bad, Pearl, and I didn't want to look but I had to because if I didn't I'd die. So I had to look.

I could see myself and I could see her and I could see all the people in her house. And I could see myself all full of feathers. I could see where she'd torn the muscles in my back apart, and there's something wrong with my ankles, and- look at my fingers, Pearl, look, she did my- *(laughs)* she did my nails.

And I could see you, too, and you were in the stars and I needed you to come find me.

...Thanks. By the way. For that.

**[PEARL]**

...'Course. Any time. I owed you, anyways. Just don't make a habit of it. Twice is already too much of a pattern for my liking.

*(Pause)*

*(Feathers rustling)*

**[GRIAN]**

*(Slower, almost sleepily)* Where's Scar?

**[PEARL]**

Scar? Um- probably back at the Institute. Or at home, I guess they all might've gone home by now, it's getting late. Why?

**[GRIAN]**

...No reason.

He and Impulse got back safe, then. That's good.

*(Long pause; keys turn, engine starts again)*

**[PEARL]**

Why did you do it, really?

*(Pause)*

**[GRIAN]**

Go back?

**[PEARL]**

Yeah. You must've... I mean, you must've known it wouldn't end any better than last time.

**[GRIAN]**

...I thought I'd finally figured it out. I thought I could get answers out of her. But she didn't... it didn't work. I asked and she didn't answer. I don't know why. Maybe I did it wrong.

*(Yawns)*

*(Feathers rustle)*

**[PEARL]**

Do you mind sleeping at mine tonight? You can have my bed, I don't use it.

**[GRIAN]**

*(Hazily)* I want to go home.

*(Pause)*

**[PEARL]**

I'll take you back to the Institute tomorrow.

[Click]

## End Notes

pinion - verb: (1) restrain or immobilize (someone) by tying up or holding their arms or legs. (2) cut off the pinion of (a wing or bird) to prevent flight.

hahaha heyyy gang how's it going! how've you been? i've been great. this one has been in the back of my brain for nearly a year now, and i'm very excited to see it finished. what did u think? did u enjoy?

i listened to the dismemberment song while editing this. consider giving a view to this little [animatic](#) to really get the mood right.

as always [make sure you listen to the podfic](#) and give our crazy talented voice actors and editors some love in the comments!! and u can find me to yell at/heap praise upon/ask questions of/etc at @sixteenthdays on twitter and @sixteenth-days on tumblr. also check the hermit archives tags on both sites!! there has been a resurgence of really cool art recently!!

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