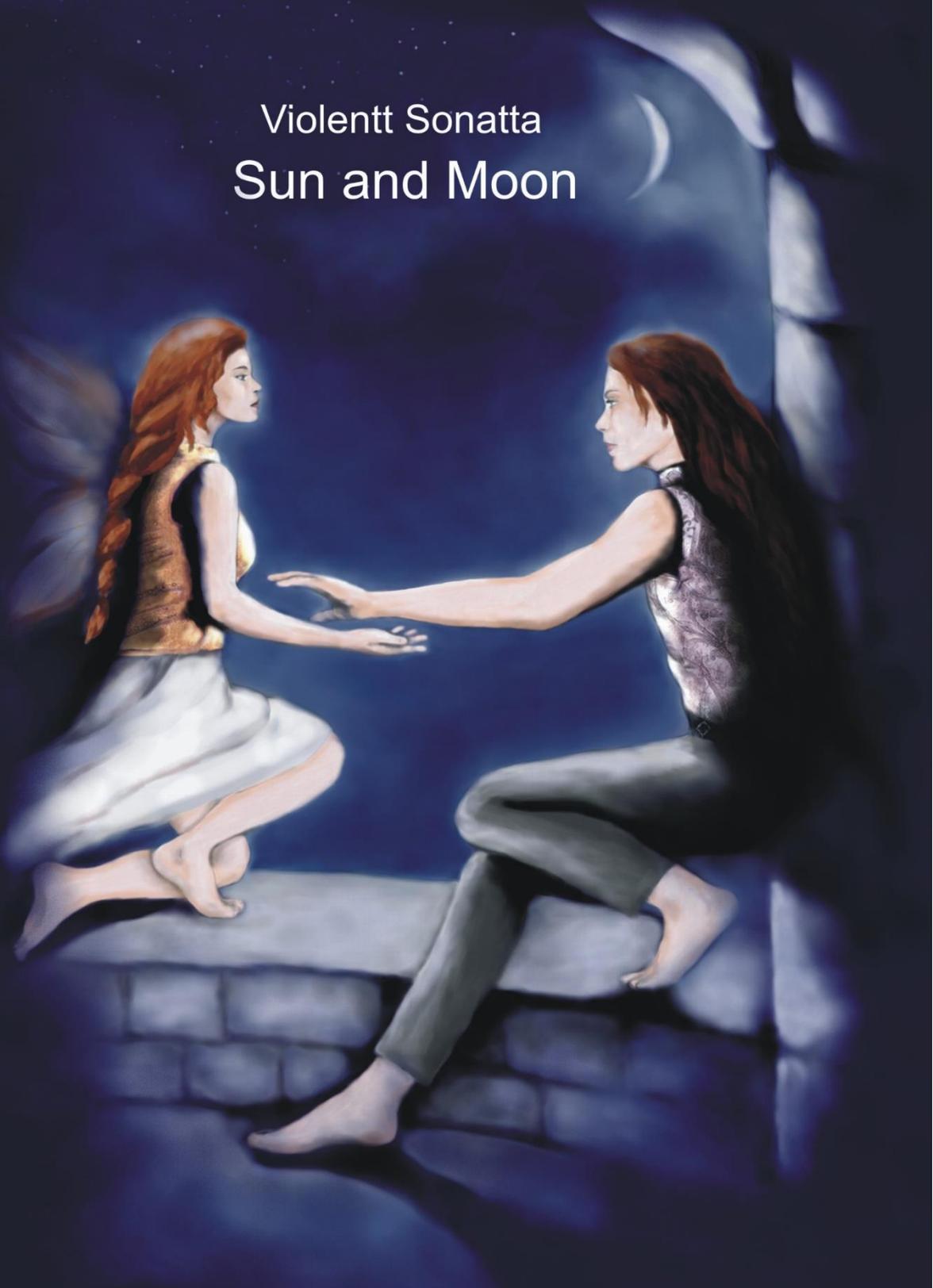


Violentt Sonatta
Sun and Moon



Sun and Moon

by Violentt Sonatta

Roman

Fantasy- Romance Story:

The sun nymph Sai is in love with the breathtakingly beautiful moon prince William. A love that seems hopeless, because the two kingdoms of the moon and the sun can never reunited. In search of hope for themselves, they endure adventures that demand courage and perseverance. Will the two still find happiness together?

Another fantasy romance novel by Violentt Sonatta will be published soon: Infernal Lover

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Sun met the moon beneath the bright stars,
Desperately hoping to sleep neath his arms.
But tales of woe in their union they feared,
A veil of hate drowned their passion in tears.
Yet, pining for warmth they'll fight for their love,
Against twilight's dread poison like kisses of frost.
For the sun and the moon were meant to be one,
To bring forth rebirth in the sweet arms of dawn.

Dedication

For Mr. Ville Hermanni Valo musician, and poet.
Thanks for the inspiration you have given us...
You are a healing light in our darkest moments...
Muse of music, art and the courage to go forth...
Thank you eternally...



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***** Book excerpt *****

PROLOGUE

Aura, the lady of the dawn, created the sun from a strand of a comet. Acheron, the lord of night, created the moon from the tears of a weeping star. Acheron fell for Aura when he laid eyes upon her as she walked along a forest path. Aura knew of his intentions and though she feared the darkness, she also felt drawn to it. So it came to be that Acheron wooed the lady, and despite her hesitation, she fell deeply in love.

He was a mystery, a secret, a puzzle. Those things she had been denied while she resided in the Silver Palace, Temple of the Moon and all gentle things. Acheron was drawn to her innocence, intrigued by her wisdom and courage. They were things he had not seen in the women within his Sun court. Those women were callous and envious of each other, that they resembled shadow snakes in his eyes.

Despite the fact that many thought they were too foolish, too young to be wed, they defended their right to live passionately. They overcame trials untold to be together for eternity.

Yet it was meant to be doomed. Their story as the elder ones had to end as predicted long ago. Jealousy is a cruel poison, lathered in shadows and wanton desires of the heart. Tis' more painful when it seeps its tendrils like smoke into the hearts of those we deem are our blood. Aura had an older sister, called Lucielle. The twilight princess had always felt as if her father Orobis and her mother Ygdraissa had preferred the gentle Aura over her. Maybe it was because Aura was beautiful, sought after by many men, and blessed with life giving powers. Lucielle the lady of twilight, lived in the dark, she was tasked to protect and shelter Aura from those that might harm her.

She was trained to be Auras's shadow and eyes, to act as her counselor and princess of night, but never of day.

Oh how she envied Aura and her ability to thrive in the sunlight, to go balls with her friends. Her right to be free to see the world without having to hide was something she craved. It was to the tragedy of the cosmos that Luceille had once been with Acheron.

He had once promised her to have freedom, to have her own kingdom and be free of her duties to the sun king, moon princess and the moon queen. Yet when she found that he had married and fallen for Aura, she knew that like all men before him, he had lied and ripped her heart out. "You must always protect Aura, for without your shadow she would fade," her mother would tell her. "Without your eyes Aura would be blind, you are her guardian. Never take from her, never mistreat her, Lucie. Please, help her rule this kingdom in peace and glory shall be your reward my daughter" her mother would often say. Yet, she could not forgive her for taking Acheron, and more so for giving him a daughter. Nu was the daughter that should have been hers to give to him. Why couldn't Aura have taken another man? One more akin to her light. It was thus, that Lucielle decided it was time to take back what she claimed was hers. She had plans, and so, for those evil seeds to come true. She decided to wait for Acheron and Aura to bear this child. Like her this child would be of twilight, neither of sun or moon, so it would be so easy to make her do her bidding. And so it was that after consummation, a beautiful daughter was born from their union, her name was Nu. She was responsible for creating all the gentle things on earth and caring for them. Yet Nu was also trained to be responsible for learning the secrets of war and strategy. She was to be the perfect ruler. Unlike Lucielle she had been born of Queen Aura and King Acheron, the current rulers of the realm. As for sweet Nu, she had only one rule, to not leave the palace without an escort. For her birth and rule was meant to keep balance in the cosmos. She was at first obedient and understood what would happen if she should ever leave the palace walls unguarded or disobey her parents. With time though, she began to grow curious about the outside world. Nu pondered why her mother could not let her leave them. 'Why was she not allowed to do as she wished? She often asked herself, why was it her sole duty to pray and keep the universe in balance, was she alone, would she be always as such? Aura constantly reiterated to Nu that she may leave one day. But while the cosmos was being balanced, and she came to her calling she could

not go. Nu began to feel frustrated and started to desire more freedom. It was this that Lucielle knew she had a chance. Jealous and ready for revenge, she began to get close to Nu and began to lure her to the dark side, using presents and lies to gain her trust. And so it was that her shadow demons began to corrupt Nu. Upon every present she opened she would let one seep into her soul, tightening Luceille's mark over her. And so it was that she committed the greatest sin of all. She took her mother's life and used dark magic to lure Acheron to bed with her. Lucielle wanted to corrupt them, to break Acheron and Aura's marriage as they had broken her. If Nu lost her innocence before the universe was balanced, so should the cosmos fall into chaos. So it was that Nu became impregnated, and upon realizing what horror had occurred, she went mad. And so it was Lucielle observed, as Nu launched her body into the void and burst into the heavens becoming the stars. At this Aura wept and Acheron despaired. He tried to make her understand that he knew not what witchcraft had befallen upon him. That he knew not what led him to commit such treachery. But Aura distraught also left him. She faded into Nethelia, the world beyond worlds. At this moment, Lucielle used her veiling powers to escape unscathed. She watched in delight as a red eclipse shook the cosmos and everything was destroyed and split asunder. Thus, the moon and sun were separated for eternity. Feeling pity for Nu and her misguided heart, Aura created both planes. Yet, she could not leave things as such. So as she did, she also laid a curse upon the kingdom. That no lovers were to be moon and sun forevermore, or lest the cosmos would collapse into the void. And so, the sun and moon were torn apart, and thus it was said that, "If they should ever lay together, a curse would bring about the end of all that was..."

CHAPTER 1: MOON PRINCE AND SUN NYMPH

The stars danced around his head, upon which lay a silver crown woven from the leaves of elder trees of eons-long gone. He laid upon the crescent moon, a mere mirage of the kingdom he ruled over. The Moon prince with emerald eyes and chocolate curls, whose skin shined like encrusted diamonds was dreaming profoundly in his inner world. He could not see the small girl, a mischievous Sun nymph that had sneaked into the palace.

She gazed hungrily at his divine form. She approached him but sat not too close. She pulled out a small stencil and summoned some parchment made of fireflies. She thought of doing this so that she may preserve memory and hold a portrait of this beautiful angel. She knew that if she were caught, she would face execution. Perhaps she would not visit after tonight, it was too risky. Still, she would give anything in the world to do this again, just to be so close to him. For years she had admired him from afar.

Still, the laws of the sun kingdom prevented her from being close to him. So she would have to do this. It would be enough to sketch out his beautiful face and his divine radiant form, 'So close, and yet so far' she thought. She wept for a love that could not be, a love she had felt since his arrival at the Illumination ceremony in Lorelaine, her hometown. That was a day she would never forget. She saw past his royal persona to see the kind heart he held. She startled a bit as she saw him stare.

His beautiful eyelashes fluttered amidst his dreams. She had only heard his voice once. It was the most beautiful sound that would put Orpheus's lyre to shame. She blushed as she finished her sketching. For the dawn was here for him and her time to sleep was upon them. Once again she parted heartbroken and full. It was then that as she turned to jump out the window made of opal's that she heard his voice of thunder and ocean. "You could stay for once sweetheart, too many nights have you left me without you.

Come to me, let me hold you kulta," he said in the language of the silver kingdom. It made her lose her breath as she turned to face him. "But...the laws," she said, afraid that this was a mistake, and she

would be executed." I will never let them hurt you, for, in my darkest night, you have been the only one to comfort me and guard my dreams," he said, holding her close to his lips, silencing her fears. With those amaranthine lips, he gave her a gentle deep kiss that aroused her nymphomaniac needs, as he lay above her. If he did not stop, she would lose control and ravage his soul, inciting a war between kings that would end in misery.

She lay in his arms, trembling. She wanted to stay. Still, the guards were sure to come in. She had used glamour to cover herself as best as she could when she had sneaked in. But she was still nervous, "They will not come to my quarters unless I call," he said. "And you can relax, sweetheart, as beautiful as you are, I am not merely asking for intimacy," he added. "I truly have felt the need all my life to have someone to talk to. It gets lonely here in Sylvant," he said. His hair like chocolate fell over his angelic face, his forest eyes clouded with longing.

"Instead, tell me more about yourself, sweetheart, about the sun kingdom" he said. "Since I was young, I have never left the halls of this moon palace, and my heart yearns to explore," he said excitedly in his deep green eyes of jades. She looked at him in surprise, she had thought that his salacious request, which now held her captive in his pale arms, was to consume his sudden desires for her. After all, she was a nymph. Despite her admiration for him, she was used to men holding this desire and not more. Even if he was no mere man, but the moon prince of Sylvant himself. However, at that moment she knew he was truly above mortal men and men of other species she had met. He truly just wanted to talk. She pushed him away gently assuring him with her body language that she would not vanish.

He invited her to sit on his ivory table laced with silver mantles, and glassware, moon flowers decorated the small vials on it. It seemed for now she would be returning, she blushed at the thought.

"Now before we begin, let me introduce myself, formally. I am William Aylin Sylvant, the first in line to the throne of Sylvant, and you are?" he asked, serving her some Lingonberry tea. She blushed

to thank him for his kindness, "My name is Sai Arani Vibhi. I am a fire nymph from the eastern part of the sun kingdom. I first gazed upon you upon the new year festival in Lorelaine," she said, blushing. She recalled how beautiful he had looked like he had stepped out of a painting. The stallion he rode was the legendary Arion the immortal steed of legendary speed. William was regal wearing a sky-blue tunic made of starlight, with sylvan symbols on it and sylvan steel.

It was armor woven with the language of Kuu. She was the chief goddess of the moon in his land's pantheon. His long hair of oak fell over his shoulders, decorated by a silver circlet adorned with stars and sapphires. "I was around five years old, barely a sun sprite when I saw you, during the Illumination Ceremonia of the 14 candles that night was," she sighed seeing his blushing cheeks, "Divine," she said. He smiled, giggling. "Yet it was the help you gave our town, the vanishing of those thieves, and the rebuilding of the homes. I realize you do not just resemble an angel, you are one," she added blushing. "You are too kind," his laugh was like the rain upon spring.

"Yes I recall that night, and those thieves, I had to free you, that town so small and charming was, so full of light promise," he stopped. He closed his emerald orbs as if recalling a long lost memory

"Sunflowers, the town's official symbol," he said, making her smile. That he recalled such a small detail meant he did care about his foreign subjugates.

"Yes, sunflowers adorn the town all year, they are a beauty to behold," she said. She sipped on the tea, savoring the berries of the silver kingdom in her mouth. "Not as beautiful as the sight before my eyes," he said, making her almost choke "T-that's too kind," she said. "Thank you, your grace" he smiled graciously "It is but the truth, wildflower," he replied blushing.

He walked her out to his porcelain balcony, and they sat upon the crescent moon looking at the unending nebula of galaxies below them. It was enormous and eternal in its void, compiled by galaxies, planets, star systems, and other planets. Cosmic rays and comets, shooting stars, and angel pixies passed by.

Their wings left behind a glimmer of ethereal beauty. "It's majestic," Sai said looking out at the encompassing void of dark eternity that the universe withheld as she and William sat upon the moon.

"Perhaps, but it is more so when you do not feel alone," he said and shyly extended his hand to touch hers. His moonlight fingers tracing her sunlight ones, with a gentle touch, as if that of a star upon the plains at night. She looked at him, incandescent and magnificent, the galaxy had nothing on his ethereal beauty, and it seemed that she was now his friend. Yet in her heart, she knew this would not last, a moon and sun could never be together. Although an uneasy balance existed between the sun and the moon kingdoms, if the holiest truce of forbidden relationships was broken, and more so by the moon prince, the war would break out.

It was set into the laws by their ancestors. If the moon and sun bonded in the deepest intimacy, the balance of the world would be gone. The night and day would merge, producing a cataclysmic event that would send the universe into strife and chaos."It's...It's late William, your majesty, I should be going," she said as the light of the moon began to wane and the sun arose. He felt her hesitation, and it hurt his heart to see her go.

"Promise me this then, Kulta," he said endearingly, caressing her face gently, making her shiver. "That you will come back my sweet. I fear dawn if no one is here and my nights have always dreaded the loneliness of moonlight. The shadow wolves in my mind, they doth not leave me," he said with a look in his eyes that melted her resolve and made her weak."I...I will, your maj-" he touched her lips with an icy finger. "William, just William, please," she smiled taking in his scent of the ocean. "William, I promise, I'll return," she said, and standing up they both bowed. He leaned in, kissing her hand, drowning her in light. She bowed to him and he did likewise as she summoned her parchment and fireflies disappearing into the sky. She left her heart behind with him. His heart ached, how long till he saw her again he did not know. After a long day of negotiating and not ripping the throat off some corrupt sun guards for a false charge, on some moon merchants, William was exhausted. He sat in

meditation upon his ebony bathtub. The water warmed his tired limbs as he pondered on how to push back the sun monarchs without inducing their fury more.

He looked at the moon dial on his wall, it was late, would she dare come today, or was she scared. He wanted to hear another perspective from one of the people. Perhaps she would have an alternative plan. In any case, he simply enjoyed talking to her. He sighed looking at the hour perhaps she would not come. He jumped out and almost forgot his towel, as he saw her standing outside looking around. His heart jumped in elation, she was back. "Kulta! I am so happy you have returned!" he said with a beautiful smile on his face "I..I did not think you would come back so soon," he said. "I..I knew not if you would be occupied, William," she said, making him smile. "I always have time for you, please come in, I have tea ready," he said. She followed him feeling chirpy, she was happy to be here. She was the luckiest girl to have his friendship, but she was scared this could end in tragedy. "William...I," she said as she sat across him, crestfallen as she looked at his angelic features. "I came to say...goodbye," she said, her heart hurting with each word. "This...it cannot be," she added as he looked down with his eyes sad and lonesome.

"I don't want to risk you, or me," she said standing to say goodbye, but before she could leave, she felt his arms on her waist. His silver voice in her ear said, "Please...please don't go...stay...I need you," he said, his voice so transparently sorrowful that it tugged at her heartstrings. "I...but William," she said as he turned her around holding her in his arms. "I care not about the consequences, this once, please don't go," he said, fearful of the shadow demons threatening to cross his mind. "I...I'll stay, William but," she said, her heart aching for his tears. "But...we must promise, to be careful, I don't want us to get hurt," she said, looking into those emerald ocean eyes, drowning in them.

They laughed and talked under the moonlight and stars, but soon enough, William wanted to ask her about her thoughts on the status of the country. "It's complicated, I don't want war, but diplomacy seems to be failing along the same lines," he said, sighing frustrated. Sai watched him with a mixture of sorrow and compassion playing with a moon rabbit that was frolicking nearby. "It's like, no matter how much I try to make things peaceful, the sun kingdom does all it can to take more from us," he said, frowning. "It seems they insist on blaming us for everything, the infertility of the princess, the raids in Talim, everything.

Their fears of invasion by my kingdom are putting my people in jeopardy!" he added, slamming his fist against the walls, as Sai looked empathetically at him. The moon rabbit cuddling in her arms jumped, a little frightful of the commotion. "I cannot even imagine what you must go through daily," she said, letting the rabbit go. "But all I can say is, perhaps, well...no it would prove too wild, and your parents might not acquiesce," she said, biting her thumb in thought. "What is it? Sweet one," he asked. "Well... perhaps if you become one of us...you know, send a letter to your parents. Tell them this would be the best way for you to learn about what is going on, a job from the inside," she said. Pondering on it, his eyes darkened. He had thought about it many times.

Still, he always feared that leaving the kingdom could brew disorder. His parents were good monarchs, yet they were planning to retire to the Silvernar planes, and leave the nation to him. So without his input and only his council leading the kingdom, the war might break out. Even if Damian, his brother, who had rejected the throne was beside him. He sighed, running his hands through his curls.

"I have thought of it, but there are many complications," he said. "My parents expect me to stay here and rule when they are gone. I can't leave this behind," he stated, frustrated.

"If you don't make a decision you will have no world to save, you know it will end in blood, and.." she said boldly.

"And didn't you say you wanted to leave this gilded cage and explore!" she added, smiling. "Or was that a sweet ruse to get me to

stay?" she asked, winking. He giggled, it sounded like music then turned somber as he said. "Yes, I want to explore, and I understand this all depends on me. But you must understand this would be the first time I would be leaving the confines of the moon palace," he added. "I would be as lost and frail as a sheep, no matter what my skills in moon magic and swordsmanship are," he added. "And what am I? A statue?," she said, holding out her small hand. "I'll be your guide," he looked at her, confused. "But you said we had to be careful, that we couldn't be seen together," he added.

"I know I did and I mean it," she added. "But you forget glamour and how it works. With one touch of my magic I can disguise you," she said as he looked at her more determined hope in his green eyes.

"You are right! I did forget about glamour magic, a concealment type of school, thank you sweetheart!, though I can't come to a decision yet, but this gives me hope," he said and reached out to hold her close. "And if I get to do this, we get to spend time together," he added, purring into her ear, making her sparkle brightly. "You are quite daring tonight, with all respect William," she said blushing "How can I not be, with such a brave, bold beauty in my sight," he said as without warning his lips grazed hers in wanton desire.

"William...I," she told mumbling as she pulled back, though her soul screamed at her to let him keep going. "Oh yes...I'm sorry I'd promise we'd take things slow" he said, as he held her gently.

"I'm so sorry, it's just," she said as he held her chin up gently. "Don't apologize for anything, love, I'll be more patient," he said leaning close, making her lose her breath for a second. "After all, we may be spending more nights together soon," he said, melting her in his green forest eyes.

CHAPTER 2: LAWS OF LONELINESS

"Absolutely not!" the elder advisor stated. "Going out there is putting yourself at risk, my Lord Sylvant!" he added in a stern voice. "But it is perhaps the only way to put an end to their bribes, their tyranny," William stated as he tried to convince the council of his plan. "And you think to make this journey alone! What of the dangers of ransom. They might show respect to you when you ride next to an armed guard, but on your own!" another council an older female stated.

"My lady, by being alone it will be easier to hide in plain sight, having a battalion or even a small troop of men would hinder my efforts," he stated. He was trying to make the council see reason. The council was composed of a jury of 40 men and women who aided the monarchs of the silver moon kingdom in decisions. They were more active recently as the king and queen were away. The only one who ever supported him was Amara, leader of his father's mage clan. However, often they were prone to overstepping their boundaries with William as he was young, and they saw him as easily influenced and naïve. "Please you must see reason," an older man stated, his silver robes rippling in the light of the moon court as he approached William. "If something were to happen to you while your parents return from negotiations in the south, the kingdom would fall into chaos," William groaned. If he did not take action now the kingdom would fall into chaos, either way, nay the world. "If he does nothing now, there will be nothing left to save. I think it's about time we let my dear brother make his decision elder Averon don't you?" a voice resounded through the temple.

William looked back in shock "Damian?" he said. He had not seen his brother in weeks. Unlike William, he had opted to not pursue the throne and preferred to serve as a spy and war commander for the moon kingdom troops. His parents had protested, but Damian had held himself firm in his convictions and had remained as of then their chief commander of military forces. "Damian, it's been," William stated, rushing to embrace his dear brother. "So long?" Damian finished for him. "And it seems I come at the right time,

you'll need someone to keep things here in balance whilst you travel," he added. A loud clearing of throats was heard from the members sitting in council. "We are beyond gladdened to see you Lord, but with all due respect, we need your expertise on the field, placing you here would be," they muttered.

Damian looked at them with eyes that could freeze a bear in his tracks. "Detrimental your interests?" he stated, at which the Salice the objecting council member fell back. "Oh goodness no my lord, of course not," Elena, a female council member stated, "But it would prove detrimental to our military deterrence," she added. "My men and right-hand Steffan know well how to keep the others in order and the sun troops at bay. If they should try something, staying here at the palace would not mean that I would lose connection with my men. Or do you forget my stealth skills?" Damian added.

At which point the council members had to forcefully bow down. "As you wish lord Damian, but if this is to occur," Averon stated. "Then a contract has to be signed, and a limit set, he cannot be gone forever" he added. William frowned. He was grateful for Damian's efforts and truly glad to see him, but it seemed conditions were unavoidable. "Very well, I know these are conditions placed on the behalf of our forefathers, but you must make them so as to not interfere with the mission," he added.

"Two days ago I passed by the town of Elise and if you had laid eyes on its crops and people, you would know that the sun kingdom has been taking this too far," Damian stated. The council members non-committedly mumbled but seeing Damian's intimidating stare they all decided to go on a vote and work on the contract. "Very well my lord, against our best interest and the wishes of the council for the prince to be safe the contract will be set in two hours please allow us to reconvene," they stated. "Thanks out there," William said as he shared a wine bottle with his brother, hours later.

"It was nothing, those council members need to stop acting all high and mighty. You are in charge right now, and if this is what you believe is best. I will support you. In fact, it was my plan that is why I was back so early," Damian added, placing the silver glass down.

"You did not come up with this on your own, did you?" he said grinning at William. "I know you have been wanting to, but you have been hesitant, considering you have never left the walls of our home" he added, munching on some grapes. "I...well.." he looked around, sensed any eavesdroppers around the area and upon finding none he whispered. "What I will tell you has to stay between us, please?" he stated, making Damian look curiously at him. "Of course dear brother, what is troubling you?" he added looking around to make sure they were not being heard. "Tis' was a lady that gave me the courage I lacked," he said, "A sun nymph Sai is her name," he sighed, recalling the last time he had seen her.

"Aha! I knew it our William is in love" Damian said winking playfully "Ah it seems, you are finally being taken away" he said jokingly. William pouted blushing, dimples forming in a smile he could not hide. "She...she is more than that Damian," he stated sipping on his wine. "A muse?, A lover," Damian stated "A wildflower came to bring you courage as she ravaged you on your bed," he added laughing, making William grumpily lunge at him. "It's! It's not that! she's...my friend is all," he stated blushing and hiding his face behind his angelic curls. "Ok ok you can deny it William but I guess she must be pretty special if she convinced you to do anything," he said as his curiosity about the girl grew. "Would love to meet her. Would love to see what woman has enchanted the untamable William," he said, chuckling as William threw a silver jar at him, making him roll back in hysterical laughter.

"Damian! she...she has given me courage, but she is placing herself at risk," he said seriously. "Then as a man you have to take care of her...as she takes care of you," Damian stated. "However, even though I do not believe in that prophecy...all joking aside, be careful you know the punishment for.." he said seriously. "I...I know...I will try my best to keep her safe from myself, although I can't deny an attraction," he said recalling how her eyes glimmered in the night sky. "Then you will have to quell them, William," Damian replied sternly.

"This girl is from the sun kingdom. If the legends are true if you two were to lay together, well..." Damian stated in a warning tone. "The cosmos will collapse," William stated, and against his heart, he promised to begin distancing himself. It was all a fantasy, as much as he had a warmth for her, her friendship is all he could hope for, for both their sakes.

William stood at his balcony, it was the day of departure the council had given him 12 months, a year, and no more, to find out what the sun kingdom's plan was, and how to stop them. After that he would return and leave it in the hands of the militia. He parted ways sorrowfully with Damian. He sent the letter signed by the council to his parents, and awaited her arrival. Sai had promised to return soon as she got his message. His raven returned with a sunflower petal, she was close. "Sorry to be so late!" she said, "I was caught up trying to get away from my foster parents, they are good to me but very overprotective," she added a smile on her face that faded when she saw his expression. It was kind but it lacked a sense of passion that had been there the other times they had met.

"I am glad you are here, the council has agreed for us to part. However, I only have a year to solve this convoluted plot, then I must return," he said, his eyes shadowed by the moon's dark side. "I...I understand, but is something wrong?" she asked. She had been awaiting their reunion for so long it had been weeks of preparation for both of them, and this is what kept her alive.

After all, her abusive life with her foster parents at home was hell. William was her only escape. She shook her head ridding herself of dark thoughts. "Do you want to?" He cut her off with a wicked smile. "It is nothing Sai, but we should be off before dawn reaches us here," he said. As sweet as his smile was, she could sense the change in his demeanor. He was not rushing to embrace her or kiss her cheeks, something had happened.

"I am not leaving anywhere," she said, dropping her leather backpack and sleeping roll. "Not until I know what is wrong!" she added a hurt tone in her voice. "Have I done something to offend

you? Are you doubting our plan?" she said anxiously. "It is...it's just," he said as she patiently waited. "We will travel together, but nothing more than an alliance can come of this. I am sorry I approached you as such," he said, noticing the cloud of heartbreak in her eyes. "It's fine," she said a bit coldly. "I knew that was going to happen. "Don't Worry traveling companions it is," she said smiling, picking up her stuff ready to summon their mount. "Kulta wait... I," he said, trying to embrace her as she pushed him gently back. "No...don't, please just, don't say that from now on, you're right it's safer for both of us," she added even as her heart broke and their mount arrived, a golden sky dragon. "Thank you Meara dear, we are going to have a long trip tonight," she said petting her dragon, a pet she had owned since childhood. The only present that she had kept a secret given to her by her now-deceased grandfather. He tried to swallow his pain at her nonchalant and cold response but accepted that she could not have reacted another way. After all, he had come to her with romantic intentions. So, trying to quell the tension he said "She's beautiful, is she yours?" he said, approaching the golden dragon. "She is," Sai said, feeling still hurt but relaxed. "She'll be our steed," she said "I think she'll like you, she usually snaps at those she does not," she added. "Go on...pet her," she added. He gulped as beautiful as the dragon was, he was afraid it would chomp his head off as he approached it. The dragon looked at him quizzically as she sniffed him, before bowing back and allowing him to pet her. Her skin was velvet and steel with lovely golden scales that glittered in the moonlight. "She is so bright will she not be seen? " he asked genuinely worried. "She has skills in camouflage, don't worry about us being spotted," Sai stated grinning much more relaxed, though in her heart she still hurt. "That is good to hear. I don't want anyone getting hurt on my account," he added as they got ready to mount and nodded. "I'll show you how to hold on. Oh and I'll take the lead on this journey, she won't let anyone else do it," he nodded. He was truly grateful for that, he was accustomed to horses, not flying creatures, more so if they had sharp fangs.

CHAPTER 3: DEPARTURE INTO THE NOTHING

"Faster Meara Dear!" Sai stated as they flew over the hedge of the palace walls. The stars shone overhead. The cosmos glistened in their surroundings as they flew over the raven sky. "My plan is for us to have reached the starless plains before dawn reaches the moon kingdom," Sai said with a focused look in her eyes. "I have a safe spot to camp there for the night, so we may plan our journey," she added. Forlorn at what he had said to her, William tried to shake him off the gloom that filled his heart, for he was fascinated. This was the first time outside the walls of his castle. Thankful for Meara's invisible camouflage, William held on gently to Sai's waist as she guided them over the town surrounding the palace.

Small lights could be seen coming from the windows as they flew. People went about their nightly affairs without realizing their prince flew over them on a golden sky dragon. "It's so..." he said. "Lively?" she added. "People in the kingdom never truly stop working, there is always something to do," she added as they continued.

The moon was high in the cosmos as they passed the Night Forest which lay as a barrier to the capital. William started at it in awe. He had heard the horror stories of those that had dared to travel through it, and of the shapeless figures that dwelt within. They said the smell of the flowers and fauna was poison, and the water acid, the only reason it still stood was that no one had managed to tear it down yet. It was capable of fighting back and felt almost alive. Some folks swore that the forest would move at times.

Though not so far off and that such was the reason for tremors in the winter. Thus, the moon kingdom had decided to use it as a deterrent. "It's more terrifying in person," he said, staring at it as it stretched over some leagues to the south, long, dark, and eerie. Sai shivered as they flew higher up, afraid the forest would reach out with serpent tentacles and pull them out of the sky.

"I was there once, well, my parents," she sighed. Why should she be sharing her personal life, that was not important. "Anyways, we should be there in nine hours, time, the dawn will have reached the silver moon but it will be dark, as it always is in those plains," she

said as a matter of fact. William sensed that she had held something back but didn't want to push. "Alas, once they were the golden forest near the center of the kingdom," he said, recalling the lore from his library and trying to make her feel comfortable. "Until the kingdom split the sky star into sun and moon," she added reminiscing. She rubbed at her eyes, she couldn't afford to sleep. The forest sky was no place to rest. She had to last at least for eight hours until the starless plains were before them. Time passed and William noticed sleep defeating her. He had no idea how to fly a dragon but for god's sake, he had to try to keep him and Sai from flying off the sky. She tried to complain as he let her lay back into his chest and he slipped his arms around her. His large hands covered her small ones, allowing him to take control of the saddle.

He sighed at how the light touched over her gentle features and focused despite his fear. Kuu, please don't let me send us to the abyss, He said to himself. He hoped the small flying lessons she had taught him some hours before were enough to not get them killed before their journey barely began. They still had some leagues to go and William needed to find somewhere safe to land. Sleep was tugging at his jade eyes. He looked around hoping for a small spot to come across the expanse of forest. He struggled with the sudden blasts of wind that had begun to stem from the forest.

It was almost as if it was trying to toss them off into its depths. He grunted as he tried to keep the now fearful Meara on course.

"We just need to find a safe spot, please," he said, trying to comfort her as the wind threatened once more to knock them out. He was scared, not for him but for his friend and what fate would befall them if they plunged into the forest. It seemed eternity was playing a cruel joke as he searched aimlessly for a sign of somewhere to rest. The wind was more tempestuous as he almost slipped off, forcing him to grip Meara tighter. She emitted a growl and snapped from her claws. He flinched in pain as it left a scar on his hand. *Please lady Aura, let us find a place* he prayed. It was then that he spotted a jutting mountain protruding from the forest from afar. Though it looked ominous by its surroundings it was a spot. His heart rested

when he spotted a small mountainside cave on the cliffside. "It might be within the confines of the forest but, at least it is something," he thought. He steered Meara gently on towards the cave, hoping it was empty.

He landed with a small thud, and Meara puffed in tired droopiness. He went forward to try and sense if they were safe for the night. Aside from his sword and bow William carried a mirror that allowed him to scry and perform small feats of magic. The cave was old, he could tell, with glyphs depicting ancient fights and old words. It had been abandoned for a while now, and it was thankfully protecting them from the foul wind that came from the forest below which was starting to pick up. He took their saddles and bags off, then carried Sai gently to her bedroll.

He tried starting a small bonfire to keep them warm. He was glad to see that Meara cuddled close to Sai, keeping her safe. He laid across them, keeping guard. Sai woke to the smell of food, it smelled like roasted fish, her mouth watered. She panicked with a start and sat up, How long have I slept? She thought, hoping she had not lost them in the forest.

She spotted William cooking over the fire. The gleam of the flames illuminating his angelic features. It seems he had found them in a cave. She smiled, even though he must have been scared to death he had gotten them to a safe spot. It seemed Meara liked him. Usually she did not like someone else steering her course. She flinched in pain as he saw the scar. He had already healed it upon his lovely hand. Meara had been afraid, and yet despite his pain he had flown them here. Her heart ached for him. "William! Oh, gods, I am so sorry, she must have hurt you badly, and I fell asleep!" she said, truly embarrassed, approaching him to help check his scar. 'Nice guide she was making', she thought. "It is no trouble Sai," he said smiling, holding her hand, making her blush.

"You were tired so I took over. But then a foul wind began to blow us off course so I had to pray to find this infernal cave. It is not much

but it is our only hope while the storm passes," he added, and it was a fierce storm indeed. The rain had begun to pour after William had begun fixing food they had brought as rations from the castle in their bags. "I am so grateful, and amazed if we had not found this cave," she said. "We would be down there," William added, looking over to the cliffside, shivering as he thought of the forest. "Aside from that, please come, we must eat and rest so we can start early," he said, offering her a leaf plate. "Thank you," she said ravenously as she bit into the fish. It was salty and fresh and made her stomach feel so much better. "So our plan is to reach the starless plains," William asked as they finished eating quietly, Meara enjoyed some fish they shared with her.

"Yes, I have a place to go to, and we must find the oracle. They say she can help us find the rebels, an alliance you heard of I'm sure, the Gray Scour," she said, hoping he did. "I have heard of them, a group of rebels hoping to change things, but Sai, even if we met them as soon as they know who I am," he said as she cut him off gently. "You forget glamour, my idea is for you to become one of them, undercover. That way we may learn the plans of the sun kingdom, and try to find a way to bring peace once more or find out a way to stop the corruption" she added winking. "Don't worry I used to run with them, my reputation precedes me, they are like old friends, I'll have to lie to them by hiding you, but only a little," she said grinning. William looked at her amazed "But.."he said. "If they are old friends, shouldn't you know where they are?" he asked, puzzled.

"They don't stay in the same spot as you must know by now. They are the creators of glamour, so yeah they can hide even from friends," she added, as William stared at her in wonder.

"Thank you for this Sai," he said, getting close to her, making her blush as he held her chin gently. "You....help me without expecting anything in return," he said, his divine face inches away from hers. "Its..." she blushed as Meara opened a lazy eye as if on guard. "It's not—" she added as William placed his lips on hers but for a moment. A shadow passed over his face and he pulled back, guilt and anger filling him, this was so unfair.

"We better get to sleep," she said smiling as if nothing had happened to hide her awakening pain, why was he making her feel so unbalanced. Had he not said that he would stop pursuing this impossible dream? Oh, how she ached for those lips like heaven! They had touched hers for only a second but, "You...you are right, let's put the fire out we don't want to be seen," she said. They both went to their bedrolls and tried to drift off into a dreamless sleep. Meara now fully rested, stood guard and stared curiously at them. Their hearts ached at being so close yet so far.

Sai opened her eyes as the light of the moon arose. They still were lying within the confines of the moon kingdom, so when dawn would arise, there was no sun to be seen. Only complete darkness would reign over the heavens. She yawned and emerged to find William asleep near the bonfire.

She smiled sheepishly, 'he must have kept guard all night', she thought as she went to prepare food and let him rest a bit more, a long journey awaited them. "If you wish to eat before we depart, I suggest you rise, your majesty!" she said as she handed a waking William a small leaf with cooked fish. "By the gods, how long did I sleep?" he asked, a bit embarrassed.

"As long as you needed it," she said, smiling. She blushed, adding, "I... I apologize I was supposed to get us across the forest. I fell short of my part of the bargain," he looked at her, his eyes roaming her kind face. He stood up and against her protest caressed her face, pushing her gently against the wall of the cave and lifting her chin gently. "We are in this together Sai," he said with a soft look in his forest eyes. "Th-thank you," she said, pulling aside his fingers on her skin, they felt like firelight. She could not let him touch her for long, lest she fell under his spell.

William sensed her hesitance, he felt terrible for having to distance himself from her, it was hard to deny the attraction, but he didn't want to push it. "Once we eat, we should depart," she said, shivering as she stepped aside to feed Meara and pack her bags. He looked at

her forlorn and began to pack his pockets as he finished his meal. "If we take the proper wind gusts, we can help Meara get there faster," Sai said determinedly. He nodded quietly as they killed the bonfire and mounted Meara, ready to set out, his heart feeling cold. It seemed miles lay ahead as they began to make it through the forest. Sai made sure to keep them on track this time and used the proper gusts to find a fast trail over the haunted woods. William looked around at the majestic and haunting scenery with curious and hungry eyes, he had never been this far, soon enough they had to rest. The only place was a small upturned hill laying within an opening within the forest. Sai hesitated. Laying anywhere, even if the trees were not present, was not a good idea, but they were almost out, and William, Meara, and she were dead tired. "I hate to say it, but..." she said "It's alright, there is no choice, we'll take turns keeping guard," William said, understanding that this was dangerous but unavoidable.

Their hearts in fear they landed into the hill. They fell swiftly, trying not to make too much noise. William scryed for intruders or spies while Sai set up protective wards. She blamed herself for not using them earlier in the cave. Then again, she had been fast asleep. They settled down as Meara encircled them to keep them warm. "We are almost out, by the gods I hope we make it through the night," she said, looking around and already feeling dread in her heart. William felt the same, a feeling of ominous brooding spirits was thick in the air. He hoped he and her wards were enough to keep whatever was out there away. Hours passed, and it was the loud "CAW!" Of a bird that woke Sai up, her heart froze. It sounded alien and not like any bird she had ever heard. She prayed as she prepared to fight. She had to get William and Meara to get up and make a quick escape, when she felt two strong hands hold her waist. She almost screamed but recognized William's sweet voice as he whispered in her ear. "Shh, I think I saw something creep by, we have to stay quiet," he said, holding her tight. Her heart was pounding like war drums, what could it be? She could feel him shiver as well, just like her he was

scared to death. Only the sleeping spell he had cast on Meara, kept her from growling and giving away their precarious position. Sai's heart felt as if it was diving into an endless void, one that held no light, and sharp icicles stuck out to pierce her skin as she fell. William was frozen as well, his mind was discombobulated, and he felt as if madness was awakening within. Spell or not Meara was now awake, growling and baring her teeth snapping at the night air, the night was awake, and it was ready to take them with her. Sai gritted her teeth. Whatever this witchcraft was, she had to resist as she looked at William. She saw him with his head in his hands shaking and crying scared and trying not to hyperventilate. She wanted to approach him and also calm Meara, she was getting quite aggressive, and she was scared that there was something out there. It would find them if she did not get them out of there, she should have known better than to make them camp here of all places. She crawled to him, trying to reach him before her heart gave in, and all went black.

William shook with a dread that entombed his soul with fears of shadow demons more terrible than he had ever seen in his dreams before. He was trying to suppress his screams when he felt a light approaching him. It was faint but warm, and its voice was music. He was locked in a cage of roses and thorns, and there was no escape. He would never reach that light. Yet, something pulled at his soul and urged him to try. So holding the last breath, he reached out, and it was then that he awoke to find Sai above him, looking at him with a pale face, scared and hoping to the gods he would awaken. "Wh-What happened?" he said, shaking and feeling foolish, he should have been the one protecting her, how could he have fallen into a nightmare so quickly. Yet his heart was still beating in a war tune. "It was all my fault, William," she said, handing him water, which he gulped down. He had not realized how parched he felt. "I should have known as soon as I sensed them, they were madness demons, I should have known, I and others from the resistance once ran into them, they...well you see what they do," she said, holding him gently hoping he would recover.

"What manner of sorcery creates such beasts!" he said, looking around as if expecting them to return. She frowned, shaking as she held her arms around her knees looking into Meara's eyes. It had taken a while to calm her down. "They say they are the spawn of the demons that roam this forest. Others say they are lost and vengeful souls of those that got lost here," she added. "But to me, they must be creations of Lucielle herself, the goddess of twilight," she said shaking. With a shock, William realized that if he had blacked out, she must have been forced to chase them away on her own.

"I...I am so sorry, Sai, you saved us, and I," he said as she shook her head, smiling. "It was the wards of you William, I guess they offered some protection, but honestly, we both passed out. It's only that I am used to facing things like this, especially since I was with the resistance," she added sheepishly. "So! No problem, you're in good hands. I did a good job of guarding your dreams, your majesty," she said, "But next time it's your turn," she said jokingly. Something came over him. It was the glow in her eyes, the fact that she had cared for him, or her fierce prowess, but at that moment, nothing would stop him, and no eyes could see them. Against her whimpers and protests, he kissed her thoroughly on the lips, holding her to give her some warmth. "Thank you," he said, caressing her face gently "I...I" she shook her head smiling as she tried to push him away, but he gently pinned her down, love in his eyes. "Little warrior princess..." he said whispering, "Let me...I know the laws, but...I can't," he said, leaning down, kissing her once more under the moonlight.

"William...I, the laws you said," she said as he held a finger against her lips. "I know what I said, darling. Still, I won't deny my heart the pleasure of holding you, of trying to find a way for us," he said so softly that her heart melted. "Before, we part let me hold you at least for a moment," he said, and for that moment she could not deny him. Yet her heart yearned more, so much more.

**** Book excerpt ****

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A blue-toned image of a person's face, possibly a woman, with a crescent moon on their forehead. The image is blurry and has a soft, ethereal quality. The person's eyes are closed, and their expression is serene. The background is dark, making the blue tones of the face stand out.

The sun nymph Sai is in love with the breathtakingly beautiful moon prince William. A love that seems hopeless, because the two kingdoms of the moon and the sun can never be reunited.

In search of hope for themselves, they endure adventures that demand courage and perseverance.

Will the two still find happiness together?

Fantasy- Romance Story