

Chapter 19 - Luke

Luke takes a deep breath, his body clearly thrumming with the excitement of having complete control of his powers again. I still haven't been able to calm my heart beat. What does the bonding actually consist of?

Luke gets so close his chest is a hair width away from touching my own. "Everything will be ok, I promise." He whispers. He clears his throat and shuffles on his feet, as if he is nervous. "Bear with me; I've never done this before." He smiles sheepishly.

"That's a good thing right..." I peer up at him and he grins, nodding his head which makes some of his hair fall over his eyes. My hands twitch with the urge to brush it back, to feel the softness of it again. My thoughts drift to our first kiss in the woods and my cheeks flush. Luke's grin somehow widens, lighting up his eyes, like he knows exactly what I am thinking about.

"Ok, you will feel a little fuzzy, and I should probably mention that you will get a symbol on the back of your left shoulder, probably the shoulder blade. Don't panic, that is perfectly normal, it just tells others that you are bonded to me." He stares into my eyes.

"Will it be a pretty mark? Because if it will be ugly, I'll have second thoughts, it won't be a skeleton or some sort of scythe right..." I ask. Chuckles echo throughout the hall, Luke's the loudest.

"Don't worry baby, it will be beautiful, just like you." Ugh, that nickname! It does things to me. I look up into his handsome face. It's true, he is truly, irrevocably handsome.

"That was so cheesy." I smile, which he returns with enthusiasm. But it gradually turns serious. This is it; he's going to do it. And I still don't freaking know what he will do!

"I, Luke, Archangel of Death and ruler of the South Territory, claim thee, Emma Stangel, as my bond, now and forever more." As soon as he finished, my body jolted. Searing heat engulfs me causing me to drop to my knees with an agonised groan. My vision blurs, but I can make out three figures rushing towards me. I turn my head to look at Luke, which takes a huge effort because my head is pounding, making it harder to keep my eyes open. He was also on the ground holding his head. The heat pulsed again but mostly on my shoulder blade. The pain was unbearable, like getting stabbed by thousands of hot needles at once.

A warm hand takes mine and squeezes, and it immediately causes me to pass out for the second time today.

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The first thing I feel is a pulsing in my left shoulder blade, which must be my newly acquired mark. Secondly, my head still throbbed, not with pain, but with a strange awareness. Thirdly, I was on a scratchy bed that was awfully uncomfortable. I guess no silk this time around.

I attempted to open my eyes, but my eyelids felt like lead and no matter how hard I tried, they wouldn't budge. I could feel the peacefulness of sleep trying to suck me in, and I let it.

When I awoke again, it was due to the arguing going on around me. My eyes still would open and I couldn't move my any part of my body. "We should have known this would happen!" The voice belongs to Raziel, but it seems scratchy, like he has a sore throat. "I mean, it should have been blatantly obvious!"

"Calm down. You might wake her up!" Sam scolds, typical Sam, still the protector.

"That's the thing! She isn't waking up because she is in a COMA!" He yells. A coma?

"Will you shut the hell up and stop pacing before I shove your wings so far up your arse you'll be shitting feathers for the rest of your life!" Luke seethes. I would have laughed if I could at the silence that followed his statement.

"No, it's your fault she is like this! How can you be so calm? She might not ever wake up because of you!" I expected to hear the sound of a punch or something, but instead I heard the simple sound of a deep inhale.

"I know." He says it so softly I could only just hear it. "The only thing stopping me from pounding you into the ground is her, because she wouldn't want you hurt. So please do us all a favour, and be quiet." I didn't get to hear Raziel's reply because I fell into darkness again.

I roused the third time to a soft caress through my hair. The hand was big and rough, but surprisingly gentle and incredibly comforting. The pain in my shoulder was gone, but my head still pulsed with a strange hum. The hand continued to brush my hair, and the other was holding my own. "Please wake up baby." His voice causes my heart to skip a beat. "Show me your beautiful green eyes, or your sparkly smile, hey, I'll even take your temper. Just give me something, a twitch, anything." I feel his face snuggle into the space where my neck joins my shoulder. His breathing is slow and deep and tickles my skin. "Even Marco misses you." He adds.

I try to speak, and surprisingly my lips obey, "You've been real corny lately." I rasp. Damn, my throat hurts. My eyes finally open in time to see Luke's head spring up so fast it was a blur, which did not help my sensitive eyes. I take long blinks to adjust to the bright lights in the room then give Luke all my attention.

"You're awake." He says.

"Really? I didn't realise." I retort, wincing at the pain in my throat. Something cool meets my lips and I swallow eagerly, revelling in the feeling of cool, crisp water running down my parched throat.

"Thanks." I relax.

"You're welcome. How are you feeling?" He sets the glass beside my bed, yet still never releases his hold on my hand.

"Stiff and my head feels funny." I reply. Luke nods but a frown shadows his face. "Are you ok?"

A small smile replaces his frown, giving me butterflies. "You're the one in the hospital bed, just emerging from a coma, and you're asking if I'm ok?" Oh yeah, I was in a coma. How could I forget?

"How long was I out?"

"Six days. Longest six days of my eternal life." He tiredly sighs. Six days? What the hell happened? Following my instincts I run my fingers through his black hair, similar to what he was doing to me just moments ago. His shoulders relax and he leans into my touch. "Mhm, that feels nice" He murmurs, closing his eyes.

"What happened, I was in so much pain." I tighten the hand in his hair, giving him a hard tug to gain his attention, earning me a scowl.

"Oh, right. Lazriel explained it." He adjusts his position so he is sat on the bed next to me. "I naturally carry the taint within me, I cannot get infected by it, maybe influenced, but I mainly pass it on. You carry angel fire, so when we bonded, we kind of clashed. Angel fire is the only thing that can stop and extinguish a taint. In short, we clashed. Rather Painfully. I don't know about you but it felt like I was on fire." He squeezes my hand.

"Yeah, it felt like I was going to explode in a ball of flames." Then I remembered. "Have you looked at the mark yet?" I exclaim. He shakes his head, making me all the more eager to see it. I climb out of bed, which was much harder than I thought I would be since my body was like jelly. He leads me to an adjoining bathroom but I stop him before he can come in, making him pout. "No, I need to pee." I slam the door, hearing him laugh on the other side. I do my business and wash my hands. I look up in the mirror biting back a screech. My hair looks like a bird's nest! My breath probably smells too! Don't sniff your armpits Emma, you won't like what you smell.

I was in a hospital gown, but luckily someone kindly left my underwear on. I can only imagine my horror if Luke got a look at my bare butt playing peek-a-boo out of a hospital gown. Turning around so I'm looking over my shoulder I pull down my gown and gasp.

"LUKE!" I scream.

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