

*He held her tight, spooning her from behind as they both lay naked in bed. He could feel her heartbeat, slow and steady as he inhaled her sweet scent.*

*"I love you," he spoke as he nuzzled her neck.*

*"I know you do," she giggled.*

*"Sometimes I wonder why you're still with me," he said quietly.*

*She smiled and turned around to face him. "Let's see... maybe it's because I'm really deathly afraid that you will kill me if I try to leave you."*

*He sighed and shook his head, "I know you don't think that... right?"*

*She laughed as she rolled on top of him, caressing his cheek. "Of course not! You mean the world to me..."*

*"Don't... ever leave me. Please?" he looked up at her, a hint of concern in his voice. "I don't want to be alone..."*

*"You wouldn't be alone. You have both friends and family!"*

*"That... that's different! Please...?"*

*"Never. I'll be with you always, until the end of time and beyond. It's a promise," she leaned down and kissed him.*

*He kissed her back, wrapping his strong arms around her he rolled her over so that he was on top of her. She tasted like strawberries, he thought as he wished that this moment would last forever.*

*As their kiss broke she giggled, "happy birthday, my love."*

*"Thank you. And thank you for your lovely present."*

*She rolled her eyes, "it was just shoes you know. Have you any idea how hard you are to shop for? I mean... it's like impossible."*

*"Anything you give me, I'll treasure."*

*"Oh you turned in to such a sap!" she laughed.*

*"Really now?" he smirked.*

*"Yeah, come on. Show me some fire!" she grinned as she bit her lower lip.*

-----

Wren woke up with a start. A loud rumbling sound echoed throughout the plains and shook the tree that he was sleeping in. It was still dark, close to dawn. He pushed himself up to a sitting position and sighed.

“And I who had a good dream too...” he yawned as he rubbed the sleepiness out of his eyes. “I guess I should get moving. Perhaps I’ll take a look at that volcano before it erupts.”

-----

Smoke was rising from the ground, blowing eastwards due to the harsh wind. Wren was standing on the edge of the sleeping volcano, looking down at its plugged up mouth.

“Idiot. She won’t be inside a volcano,” he grunted to himself as he started his descent in to the volcanic area.

The ground was warm to the touch. Wren could feel a low rumbling from deep down. Reaching in to his backpack he took out a piece of jerky, there were just two or three left. He was a little surprised at his own appetite. Usually he would just eat because he liked to, but since he had come to this island he had been feeling rather... hungry.

“God, these are awesome. This dried jerky is so addictive,” Wren mumbled to himself as he chewed.

The sun had started to rise. The smoke was thick and made visibility limited. It was also hot. Wren wiped the sweat of his brow. He snapped his finger a few times. A wobbly bubble appeared around him. However it did not have the desired effect, instead the air around him got even warmer.

“Oh for fuck’s sake!” Wren sighed as he stopped and waved his hand making the sphere disappear.

He shifted his weight a bit, noticing that something was sticking to his feet. He quickly looked down lifting up his right foot. The rubber on his shoes had melted a bit, a thin layer of them sticking to the ground.

“What the fuck?! Oh for crying out---“ Wren let off an annoyed grunt as he clenched his fists.

Wren raised his left hand above his head, taking a deep slow breath he closed his eyes and concentrated. The warm winds picked up in speed as the smoke started spiraling up towards the sky, the powerful winds slowly started lifting Wren up. He opened his raised hand and the winds around him cooled down immediately, reaching chilling temperatures within seconds. Wren’s lips parted. His chilled breath was only visible for a short second before the vapors were swept away by the wind.

The magic words Wren spoke were completely drenched in the howling wind. Rocks and debris was circling around him, faster and faster until it came to a sudden halt. The wind instantly stopped, leaving everything hanging in the air before a massive explosion erupted from his body, sending the rocks flying towards the distance and the smoke to clear out.

Wren dropped down again on the now cool ground, a small smirk on his lips. He quickly glanced around the smoke was still seeping from the ground but much less now. And so far the winds were still cool.

“Aaah, much better. I can’t believe that actually worked...” he said with a sigh of relief.

Something caught his eye though, it was a woman. All dressed in white with her long blonde hair seemingly unaffected by the wind, she stared right at him.

“Hey! Who are you?” Wren called out for her, but as a cloud of smoke blew past her, she disappeared.

Strange, Wren thought, but was soon interrupted as a raspy caw echoed throughout the wind swept volcano. He looked around and saw a big vulture sitting on one of the rocks just a few yards away.

Wren tilted his head a bit, examining the bird that was preening its feathers. “No, you’re not the same one...” he said after a little while.

“Th-they took my silver.”

The woman in white appeared in front of Wren, she looked up at him and her voice was almost trembling as she spoke. “I need my silver back.”

Wren blinked, he could see right through her! She was rather short though, and bobbing up and down ever so slightly. Looking down on the ground Wren saw that her naked feet were dangling in the air, her body levitating a few inches above the ground. He sighed a bit nodding to her, “what do you need the silver for?”

“So I can finally be at peace! Can’t you see that I am tormented by my very existence?” she sobbed.

Wren could have sworn he saw the vulture roll his eyes. “Riiight... And can you remind me why that is again? You know, first impression and all.”

“Can’t you see that I am dead?!” the woman screamed out as a shockwave of psychic energy knocked Wren back, causing him to fall over.

“You’re telling me that you’re a ghost? Really?!” he exclaimed as he quickly scurried to his feet.

“Is it not obvious?” she sniffled as her temper settled. “I am cursed, to wander for eternity if I cannot pay the ferryman.”

Wren’s eyes narrowed as he studied the girl, she wasn’t incorporeal anymore and the winds had taken a hold of her white dress, tugging it tight around her shapely body. The only color came from a pink ribbon tied around her body right under her rather well-formed breasts. She didn’t look bad, Wren thought, his eyes lingering a short while on her chest. Seeing this young lady made him miss Sunnie even more.

“Then how the hell did you get here?” he asked after a few seconds of silence.

“H-he... let me on anyway. So I can win my money back!” she shook her head, a few tears falling through her to the ground as she returned to her incorporeal state.

“I see...” Wren said, glancing over to the vulture that was just looking at the two of them. “So is Tweety there yours?”

“He has kept me company since I got the letter. I am sure he is just waiting for me to find my remains so that he can circle around them like his kin does.”

“Mmm, I see. And a ghost huh...?” he put his hand up, sweeping it through her body.

She followed his arm with her eyes, “do you... want something? That kind of, tickles.”

Wren frowned, pinching the bridge of his nose as he thought about what to do next. This was going to be tricky. It would be hard to punch someone in the face if his fist just passed right through them. He never really dealt with ghosts before either, and the only spirits he had encountered were feeling pretty solid when he tore them apart.

However, she had solidified for a moment there, maybe that was the key. Wren dropped his backpack on the ground and looked down at her.

“Right, ghost-lady. My name is Wren.”

“Isn’t that a girl’s name?”

He rolled his eyes, “do I look like a fucking girl to you?”

“No...” she said, feeling somewhat ashamed of herself.

“Then there you have it. ‘Nice’ to meet you, what might your name be?”

He held out his hand to her. Feeling a bit suspicious she looked up at Wren, she could clearly see that the tall man was studying her with his purple eyes. Then again, nothing he could do could hurt her since she already was dead. Gray nodded slightly and turned solid, reluctantly accepting Wren’s hand and shook it.

“I... I am Gray.”

Wren looked down at her small hand in his, it was rather cold, and looked extremely pale in contrast to his rather tanned skin.

“Really? No kidding, huh? I met a kid named Grey a while back, you are much prettier though.”

“O-oh, I see,” she blushed. Feeling surprised by her own reaction.

Wren smiled as he gripped her hand tighter, pulling her in. He grabbed her throat from behind, the sharp nails poking a small hole in her skin. Wren leaned down to smell her blood but found himself, holding on to nothing. He quickly looked up and saw Gray appear closer to the vulture, waving her hand at him.

A force grabbed a hold of his body and lifted him up, only to slam him down against the ground again. Wren chuckled a bit as he stood up again, dusting his pants off. It was as he had thought, the girl wasn’t dead. As his hand had closed on her throat he had clearly felt her pulse. Wren put his fingertip to his mouth licking off the few drops of blood that had lingered on his sharp nails. It was rather sweet to the taste.

Gray quickly put her hand on her neck where she had felt the sting, a look of dread upon her face as she saw the red color on her pale fingers.

“B-blood?! Why would you bleed on me?!”

“Wait? What? Bleed on you? It’s your own blood you crazy bitch!”

Her eyes darted to the sides, trying to find a way to counter Wren's preposterous statement. "You... you like blood? Wait... you were leaning down... A-are you a vampire?!"

"Am I a what?"

"W-were you crying blood on me? Oh you must be so hungry, but I have no blood to give to you..." she looked honestly sad when she said that.

Wren stared at her for a few seconds, not quite sure what to think.

"Your eyes... they just changed color," she noted as she saw that they now looked ice blue.

"Yes, they do that," Wren replied. "And a vampire? Really? Do I look like one?"

Gray circled around Wren examining him from head to toe, "you do look unusually healthy for one, I guess. And it's already dawn, a vampire would probably be sleeping by now. Aren't you afraid of the sun?"

"I'm not a vampire!" he snarled.

"I saw that!" Gray gasped as she pointed at his mouth. "You have vampire fangs! You must be one of those vampires that can walk in daylight! Oh you poor, poor creature. Living in denial of reality..." Gray said as she reached out a hand to touch his face.

"I'm not a vampire!" he said again, shying back to avoid her touch. "Just because I don't mind the taste of---" stopping himself Wren just sighed, shaking his head. "Eeh, fuck it. I probably am I vampire by normal human standards."

"Why did you try to feed from me? Surely you must know that a ghost---"

"Well one could hope you were just some crazy chick pretending to be dead," Wren replied quickly.

"If only. I wish I could have such peace," Gray said with a somber look on her face. "But I can never rest..."

"So you want to die?"

"I am already dead, I cannot die... But I can be at peace, once I find my body."

"And... after that you need the two silvers to give to the ferryman, right?"

Gray nodded, "I have searched for so long, I don't think I will ever find it!"

"You know I could just kill you and then you'd have your peace," Wren shrugged.

"I. CANNOT. DIE!" Gray screamed out as she pushed Wren away with an unseen force. "Why aren't you listening to me?! Am I that insignificant? Am I so feeble that I am not worthy of your attention?"

She gripped the air in front of her then threw her arms to the left. Wren felt a tug on his body as he was thrown straight towards a big rock. Wren cocked his fist back and slammed it right in to the stone upon impact. The rock shattered and besides a few drops of blood coming from his knuckles, he was unharmed.

“Hey! What the fuck do you think you’re doing?!” Wren called out to her as he suddenly was jerked in the opposite direction towards another rock.

Wren crashed right in to it, but the hold around him was gone. He quickly got up on his feet and grabbed the rock he was just thrown in to with his right hand. He grit his teeth as his arm flexed, pulling the massive boulder off the ground.

“Catch!” he grunted as he hurled the rock at Gray.

She looked up, seeing the boulder coming towards her. But she didn’t move. As it was about to impact on her, she turned translucent. The massive rock sailed harmlessly through her and she turned her head, watching it bounce off the ground and roll away in to the smoke.

“So lost in your delusions that you don’t realize nothing can hurt me. I cry for you, my friend,” she sighed as she put her hand up to her chest.

“You are a whole new bucket of crazy. You’re not even dead you stupid cunt!” Wren snapped at her.

“It is too late to comfort me, I already know the truth. And you are right, I am stupid! I wish I could just let this go but I am too weak to do so,” Gray hid her face in her hands as she sobbed.

“My god...” Wren just shook his head in disbelief. “I doubt that there are any normal people in this competition,” he mumbled to himself.

Wren walked over to Grey who still was covering her face with her hands. “So tell me. What is most important for you? Find your silvers? Or find peace?”

“I... I... I have to have the silvers to pay the ferryman...”

“But, what if you never find your body? You wouldn’t have any need for those silver coins, now would you?”

“You are so cruel!!” she screamed out, another forceful shove pushed Wren back a few feet, but he kept his balance.

“Well maybe I am! And what the hell are you gonna do about it you fucking bed spread?”

“Y-you! How dare you?!” Gray uttered.

With her telekinetic powers she lifted up two large rocks and tossed them at Wren who caught them both mid-air and flung them back at Gray. Once again, she turned translucent and the rocks passed harmlessly through her body.

She took a hold of the rocks again, smashing them against each other. The big rocks shattered in to small sharp pebbles that remained hovering in the air. As Gray moved her hand forward, the pebbles shot out like a hail of bullets raining down on Wren.

Covering his face with his arms to protect himself, Wren felt the sharp rocks nick and tear at his clothes and skin.

“Fuck this!” he growled as he tossed his arms out to the sides, a shimmering shield forming in front of him, the rocks ricocheting off in random directions. One hit Grey right in the forehead.

She quickly touched her forehead feeling the sudden pain. “Ow!!” she looked at her hand, there was no blood. Obviously, she thought. She was a ghost after all.

But it did hurt.

“Y-your shield, is that a protective spell? I didn’t know necromancy could be used like that!” she rubbed her forehead a little with her fingers. She could feel the small bump with her fingertips.

“What? It was just a shield,” Wren replied. “You do not want to see me using real necromancy. That stuff is not to play around with.”

“You’re bleeding...” she said, looking at Wren’s body. His clothes had been a little torn and had a few cuts on his arms as well.

He looked at his arms and nodded. “Yeah, let me pencil that in to my diary. It’s just a scratch! If you’re that concerned about my welfare then you shouldn’t have started throwing rocks at me in the first place you stupid twat.”

Gray frowned. “Why do you keep insulting me?”

“Because you are dumb! My God, if you weren't incorporeal I would slap you silly.”

Almost as if on command, Grey turned translucent. “W-well you are dumb too! Apparently you got turned last month because you have no grasp of the horror of eternity!”

“Oh don't even go there. I've existed for probably eight hundred years by now.”

“Wh-what? But... you seem so immature,” she mumbled, biting her lip a little. “It must be lonely...”

“I am not lonely!!” Wren yelled, his voice echoing throughout the volcano. But he quickly turned silent as he realized that Gray definitely had hit a very sensitive nerve.

But the blonde woman had already noticed.

She gasped, “you're just like me! Afraid to walk this earth alone. Oh, I know how you feel...”

“Shut the fuck up! I'm not like you at all, you spectral slut!” he growled.

“But it's true! Just the feeling of knowing that everything around you will eventually wither away while you remain the same. It's so terrible, I know!”

“I said; shut the FUCK UP!!” Wren screamed out as he attacked Gray his fist passing right through her body.

Swinging his arms he tried to grab a hold of her, but she was literally like air. “You turn solid now you little bitch or I swear I'll inflict more pain and suffering on you than you ever thought possible!!” he snarled.

She disappeared from sight only to appear a few yards away from him. "You are evil! You keep taunting me and mocking me and threatening me! Well I won't have it anymore!!"

With a determined look on her face, the air around her started vibrating with power as she clenched her fists. Wren felt something grab a tight hold around his throat as another force pulled him down to the ground. Falling down on all fours Wren gasped for air as he reached up, finding nothing to grab as the hold around his neck got tighter and tighter.

She glanced over to a huge rock nearby and it started floating towards Wren. Holding up her hands, she slammed her fist in to the open palm of her hand repeatedly, the rock simulating her movement on Wren's back. Like a jackhammer the rock pounded on his back, pressing his body down in to the cracking ground.

----

*"Really? You're gonna get beaten by a girl? I'm so gonna laugh at you when I get out of here."*

----

Slowly, Wren started to push away from the ground little by little. The grip around his throat was as tight as ever and he could feel he wouldn't have long until he would pass out. The pounding of the rock had slowed down though. Looking up at Gray he could see her strain, struggling to keep him down.

The two of them stared each other down, the rock hanging in the air above him as Gray was gathering her strength for the final push. But that was all the time Wren needed. Like a wild animal he dashed forward, tearing free from his invisible restraints. The first few steps he stumbled a little but soon focused on the woman in white before him.

Gray dropped the stone, focusing all her strength on squeezing the last huff of air out of him. But she was too late. Wren had closed the distance between them and his fist tore right through her incorporeal body. The hold around his throat disappeared and he gasped for air as he tumbled right through her.

He sat on the ground, panting heavily as he kept his eyes on Gray. She was bending over, trying to catch her breath as well.

"Oh you little bitch, that was so cheating," he said as he swallowed between breaths.

"Y-you're the one cheating! I.. I feel so tired... this isn't natural. What did you do?!"

"What the fuck are you talking about?" Wren huffed as he stood up rubbing his throat a little.

"The air! It's... cool here. I-I saw it! You did something with the winds here, did you poison me?!"

"No I didn't poison you. You're crazy, you're probably just tired after straining," he grunted as he tugged a little on his shirt while looking over his shoulder, trying to see what damage had been done to his clothes.

"P-preposterous! I can feel the chill!"

"Well yes, I cooled the air because it was fucking hot here!"

“So you did do something!!” Gray lashed out giving Wren another hard shove backwards, tripping him over.

“Dammit! Stop shoving me!!”

As Wren looked up he got hit right in the face with a white sphere, the force enough to slam his head backwards in to the ground again the lava rock beneath him cracking slightly.

“Fucking ow...” Wren groaned as he touched his nose, it was definitely broken and his hand was completely red with blood as well.

He sat up again, holding his arm up for defense in case something else came flying. He saw Gray leaning at a rock still panting a bit but she quickly stood up straight when he sat up. Wiping some of the blood off his face he looked at her.

“Thank you for that!” he sighed. “And people tell me that I’m the one needing anger management,” Wren felt his nose crunch as he pulled it back straight. “What’s wrong with you anyway?” he asked as he walked up to Gray.

“Only the things you did to me, necromancer!” she spat as she disappeared from sight.

Wren just sighed, wiping the blood off his nose a second time.

Gray appeared behind Wren and was about to send him flying as he quickly turned around and slapped her hard across her face.

“Never attack someone from behind!” he glared at her as she once again became immaterial. “Look, I cooled the air down because it was melting my shoes. These mean a lot to me, you know. And if you have a problem with that, tough noogies!”

Gray glanced down at the black and yellow sneakers on Wren's feet. “If you truly are as old as you claim, why do you care about such...baubles? They are pointless trinkets that fill no meaning.”

“How dare you talk down to my shoes? And if you had any sense at all you'd see that there is nothing in the world that is pointless. That applies to everything, no matter how seemingly small or insignificant.” he snorted.

“You truly believe that?” she quirked a brow, finding his statement ridiculous.

“Of course I do,” he said in full honesty.

“They are just items, easily forgotten. It doesn't compare to an existence in eternal suffering!” Gray argued as she slowly backed away from him.

“The only reason you suffer is because you want to!” Wren exclaimed. “You wallow in your own despair because you are simply too weak and too pathetic to do something about it. Get your fucking head out of your own ass and wake up!”

“You think I want this?! You think I would rather walk the earth for eternity alone than to finally be put to rest?!” Gray screamed as she turned solid, raising her hand up towards Wren.

This time however, Wren grabbed her hand and twisted it around as he pulled her in closer. Gray let out a yelp as she turned translucent, grabbing her hand as she just stepped out of Wren's grasp.

"That hurt!" she exclaimed as she rubbed her wrist, walking away from Wren. "Stay away from me, necromancer!"

"Not a chance," he smirked as he followed her. "I haven't been letting you pummel me silly for no reason. I've been watching you and the things you do. I might not be able to grab you when you're incorporeal, but whenever you do your little magic tricks you turn solid. And solid things break!"

"S-so what? I'm still dead, you can't hurt me!" she objected as she looked at her wrist. Wren had grabbed her really hard, and she could see that she had bruised some where he had held her.

"So you're saying that the pain in your wrist is just imaginary?"

"It's just in my head! My mind just hasn't come to terms yet with the fact that I have no real body," she huffed as she disappeared from sight completely.

Wren stopped and looked around. "Cheater," he scoffed as he scanned the area around him.

Gray appeared quite a few yards away in solid form. Holding her hands out in front of her she fired off a ball of energy at Wren. He quickly threw himself to the side, dodging the projectile that flew right in to a rock shattering it completely.

Wren dashed forward as she fired off another ball of energy. This time he put up his right arm in defense swatting it away from its trajectory, and ripping off a huge chunk of his arm as well. He grit his teeth in pain but stayed on track.

Gray was shocked to see him continue even after sustaining such injury and it made her hesitate. And the hesitation was enough for Wren to reach out and grab her right arm, squeezing it tight.

She screamed out as the bone within shattered, his hand clenched to a fist as she returned to her incorporeal state, staggering back as she looked down at her broken arm. "Y-you..." she gasped as tears of anger and pain welled up in her eyes.

She tried to move away from him, but he followed her every move, looking at her like a lion eyeing its prey. She blinked in and out of existence a few times, trying to hide from view, but the pulsating pain in her arm screamed throughout her entire body and Gray found it hard to try and concentrate on anything.

"I-I'm gonna get you for that!!" she hissed as she glared back at Wren.

"Oh are you now?" he asked, rubbing his fingers over the gash in his right arm, the bone was visible through the dripping blood, but he still had some mobility left in his hand. "You think this feels like roses and cookies?"

Gray took a few deep breaths and concentrated hard. A warm upwind caught hold of her hair as a huge wave of energy shot out from her body. The thin smoke cleared out completely and everything within thirty yards was sent flying. This included Wren, the vulture and his backpack.

As Wren landed he put up his left hand, stopping one of the huge boulders that came tumbling his way. He lifted it up and threw it as hard as he could at Gray, but the closer the rock got the more momentum it lost, only to eventually roll back towards Wren.

A disturbing loud rumble was heard from underneath their feet but both the combatants chose to ignore it. The winds around her changed and started to circle around her body. Bits and pieces from the rocky ground below broke off and was whizzing through the air like small sharp knives. Gray sent them all flying towards Wren.

He quickly raised a barrier up to protect himself from the sharp projectiles but they came with such force that they simply tore right through it as if it hadn't been there at all. Throwing himself to the side, he managed to dodge most of them, but a few burrowed themselves right in to his leg.

Wren grit his teeth in pain as he stumbled down on the ground but quickly got back up on his feet. Blood was gushing out from the open wounds on his legs and he could barely stand straight, but quickly bolted off to the side.

Gray looked around, she could see him moving but he was hard to follow even though she had crippled him. She was amazed that he still was able to move around so easily even due to his severe injuries. No, she couldn't be distracted! She had to keep him away, it would be best to call her projectiles back to protect her.

Or at least that's what she thought just before Wren appeared right in front of her, cocking his fist back to punch her. Gray stumbled backwards and made an attempt to turn translucent before the blow hit.

It worked, almost.

Like a bad projection, Gray blinked and suddenly turned solid with Wren's left hand buried in her midsection. She screamed out in pain and shock, her entire body twitching and jerking about as Wren moved his fingers inside her.

"What the fuck?!" Wren exclaimed as he looked at his arm just disappearing in to her body.

For a second she turned translucent again, and it was enough time for her to pull away from Wren. Gray fell down on the ground, coughing hard as her body was still shaking and convulsing. The ground rumbled again and Wren looked down at her.

"We need to get out of here."

She quickly scurried away from him, crawling on her knees to the edge of the small ledge. "Stay away, hexmaster! You poison my mind, my body! I refuse to be your puppet!"

"Get back here!" Wren grabbed her, squeezing her shoulder almost to a breaking point.

She screamed out as he quickly scooped her up. A cascade of lava broke through and shot straight up in to the air. Wren ran as fast as he could to the edge of the volcanic rim. Looking up at the descent he gently shook Gray. "You have to hold on. I can't climb with only one hand."

Gray wrapped her one healthy arm around Wren's neck as she looked over his back down at the lava that was slowly starting to fill their battleground. Her head was pounding due to the strain she

had gone through earlier and her entire body was aching. She was also surprised of the 'concern' her opponent had of her, at least enough not to leave her in a most uncomfortable spot like the volcano.

It had been as she thought though, he was a necromancer. The way he had controlled her while his hand was inside her just proved her point and he was probably going to use her like a puppet to do his bidding. Why was she even letting him 'save' her? She was stronger than this! And more importantly, she was dead, and it was just lava. Concentrating, she fell right through Wren's body but he quickly snagged after her as she involuntarily turned solid. He caught her in the hair and she cried out.

"You stupid cunt! I'm trying to fucking save you, now get up there!" he flung her upwards and saw her flying over the edge as he started climbing faster.

Gray landed topside of the volcano, rolling downhill a little before she stopped. She could feel the heat rising and saw Wren pull himself up over the ledge. Soon after, lava started to trickle down the mountainside towards them. Stumbling over his steps Wren ran towards Gray, grabbing a hold of her as he moved past her, escaping the flowing lava that came behind him. Looking over her shoulder Gray used her powers to move a few of the rocks in Wren's path, snaring them in with his legs and tripping him over.

Perhaps that was a bad idea. She was launched forward, rolling down the mountainside as Wren dropped her. Failing to brace for the impact he scraped his face down in to the hard ground as he soon followed Gray, rolling downwards. Wren got a rough stop against a rock though, and a burning embrace as a stream of lava started to pool up against his back.

He screamed out in pain as his shirt caught fire, the burning hot liquid tearing in to his flesh. He pushed himself up and looked down at Gray that had stopped further down the mountain where there was still grass.

"You motherfucking, ungrateful little bitch!" scooping up a handful of lava in his right hand Wren ignored the searing pain and launched it in to the air. The molten rock rained down on Gray causing her to scream as she tried to escape the pain. He stumbled forward a bit, running towards her as he grabbed some more lava, throwing it at her.

It was quite effective, making her stay in one spot and making her distracted enough to keep her corporeal. The lava had burned him badly. His right hand had more or less turned in to a lump of burnt and bleeding flesh, though he could still move his fingers ever so slightly. The left side of his face had scratches and dirt all over it. Although the bleeding of his leg had stopped by now, he was walking with a limp.

Gray's condition wasn't much better. Her arm was more or less dangling, only skin holding it together. Her hair was tangled mess and slightly burned now as well due to the hot rain that had been falling down. Her once white dress had burned holes in it, and was torn and sullied with dirt.

"You... you're coming with me you trip-crazy bitch," Wren grunted as he finally reached her, grabbing a fist full of her hair and dragging her down along with him.

----

Wren took her down to the grassy fields below where he finally stopped. Gray was barely conscious, completely overcome by the pain that was screaming throughout her entire body. He sat down in the soft grass and pulled Gray's limp body up close to him, embracing her from behind.

"Shh... It will all be over soon..." Wren whispered in a comforting tone, holding her body tightly against his. "How do you feel Gray?" he turned away his head as he coughed, the hot air had taken a toll on his lungs and vocal cords.

"...I-it... h-hurts..." she uttered with a great deal of effort.

He caressed her cheek softly with his left hand, wiping away her tears. "Immortality is a bitch like that, isn't it?" he whispered in to her ear. "Tell me Gray, do you want eternal peace?"

"Y-yes... b-but..."

"I can give you peace if you want. Or, I could leave you here in all your pain and misery knowing that you lost your window of opportunity."

Gray closed her eyes, her breathing was uneven and she felt like she was about to pass out. She leaned her head back to rest against Wren's shoulder. His body was warm and his touch soothing. She could hear his strong heartbeat. Perhaps... he was telling the truth? Perhaps he could grant her the peace she so longed for. Or was it just a lie? Maybe she would become nothing but a puppet to him.

She gasped as her broken arm sent another shockwave through her body. Anything would be better than this.

"P-please..."

A smirk spread across his lips as his hand moved down to her neck, giving it a quick twist. It snapped like a twig and Wren could feel her body finally go limp, a very faint smile on her lips.

As the last breath left Gray's body, Wren's backpack dropped down from the sky. He looked up and saw the vulture that had accompanied the young woman. The large carrion bird landed down on the ground and looked at Wren who still was cradling Gray in his arms.

"I decide who lives and die. Not by chance, not by interference from others but by my own hands. Gray suffered and deserved death," Wren said as he looked up at the bird narrowing his eyes. "You, on the other hand, don't 'deserve' death. You're just cannon fodder."

As the last of those words left Wren's lips he shoved Gray's dead body to the side and pounced at the bird. He grabbed a hold of its neck and wing with each of his hands before sinking his teeth in to the creature's neck, ripping out a huge chunk before swallowing it feathers and all. The desperate cries of the animal was soon replaced with the sound of crunching bones as Wren engrossed himself fully in his meal.

He needed the energy and he needed rest before his next battle.

He knew it would come soon.