

Lunar

The fine powder softens under my sole like feet wandering upon the soft beach sand. Sunlight casts from afar, but the sky purifies in its spacious black. The air stands cold, but not a single breeze produces in this exosphere. There's not much to do here on such a barren satellite, but that's what life's supposed to be. Not many understand the true feeling of peace, but freedom will never be satisfied unless one decides to take a leap.

A few more steps forward creates a deeper illusion of the crater that reveals itself in front of me. It's dark on one side and light on the other, almost like sliding off half the crème on an Oreo with the back of your upper teeth. The crater isn't too deep; about the depths of a twenty-foot pool. The slopes are smooth and make for an enjoyable sledding hill of dust.

A voice radiates inside my helmet. "One, are you coming?"

"I don't know," I say. "I think we should go back." Nova has always been a thrill-seeker, but I thought I'd be able to handle this mission. My emotions out here just like to float. But her eyes; they twinkle brighter than the sun. I can feel her warmth dissolving through my heart, even through my thick suit and the polar weather from outside.

"Come on, One," she says. "There's no going back now."

"But what if we get hurt?"

"We'll be fine. It's worst to be underground with them anyway." Nova grasps onto my space gloves and twists me towards her. "If you were given the chance to take a leap, would you take it?"

"Not if it takes our lives away."

“Our lives have already been taken, One. They lied to us. We aren’t here to start a new life, we’re here to act as living lab rats.” She looks down at our hands. “They don’t care about us, they only care about the science of it all.” I look out into the blackness of space. “One, you need to learn to take risks for once. Taking risks is the only way we’re gonna discover our true strengths. Besides, you can trust me.” Her eyes emit into mine. “Do you trust me?” I look down into the dark depths of the crater. It seems a lot taller than it was before. Nova pushes her gloved hand against my helmet where I find her twinkling eyes again. “Do you?”

“I trust you.”

Nova grows the brightest smile. We turn to the crater, holding hands as are blood rushes through our veins, making me sweat inside this spacesuit. The next thing I know, Nova runs and pulls me towards the crater. Dust kicks up from our boots, sending them into a slow-motion fly above the surface. I fly through Nova’s magical space dust, feeling like a rocket ship flying through asteroids. Her hair defies the gravity as she looks back at me; one eye covered by her hair but the other still twinkling. Her teeth glow whiter than an exploding dwarf star. As we reach the edge of the crater, she releases my hand and leaps off the edge, and with one more running step, I find myself jumping into an empty swimming pool. I sink deeper and deeper into the crater’s shadow.

I watch Nova’s suit darken as the sun fades away over the horizon. She hits the ground and rolls into a slow knee-bend. I bend my knees as my feet push upon the dust, but as I land, Nova jumps off the surface again, almost like we’re jumping around upon a trampoline. I jump off with my potential power and float up with her. We rise to a still point, and for that moment, as we float in the darkness, my heart beats a shining light of hope.

We sink back down to the surface and lay down on top of the dust. We look up to the blackness of space while in peace and tranquility.

“You know,” Nova says, “This is the first in a long time I’ve ever felt peace.”

“It’s nice to get outside once in a while,” I say.

“If only I could say the same. We’re so close to the outside, only a suit layer away.”

I turn my head in my helmet to look at her, and she spins her head towards me. “I love you.” She stares at me, frozen. “Did you know that?”

She searches for her words. But instead, she sits up and lays atop of me. Her head twists to the side as that smile of hers grows again. Her white teeth shine in these lunar shadows. Our helmet bubbles kiss each other as my lips pucker against the glass upon hers. We make out in the dust, and her weight ends up rolling off me. Our lips stay stuck together as she lands on the ground and I lay atop of her now.

Nova peels her lips away from mine. I look into those sparkling eyes. “I love you, One. I’ve always loved you.”

“From Mars and back,” I say.

“We’re so close, but yet so far.”

“We just need to fight back, Nova. That’s all we need.”

“I don’t like the idea of a lunar war, One.”

“War is the only answer. This is the only way we’re going to get what we deserve.”

“And what about the others? What are we going to do with the children?”

“We’ll keep em safe!”

“There’s only one base, One! We’re all confined in the same home.”

“Would you rather have them forced to commit themselves to science; stabbed with needles, unneeded surgeries, radiation implantations . . . I know you don’t want that. You’re nervous, and it’s okay to be nervous, but we need to take action, and I’ll always be there by your side.” I caress the side of her bubble helmet. “Always.” I stand up and hold out a hand for her. She grabs on, then I pull her off the lunar surface. “Plus, that Blackout Champagne looks flooded with flavor.”

“I could go for some champagne right now.”

“And we’ll get it, right after we go save the moon together!”

We start our climb on the sledding hill of the crater, the lunar climb of a lifetime.