

Shallow Sleep



VI. A Little Closer



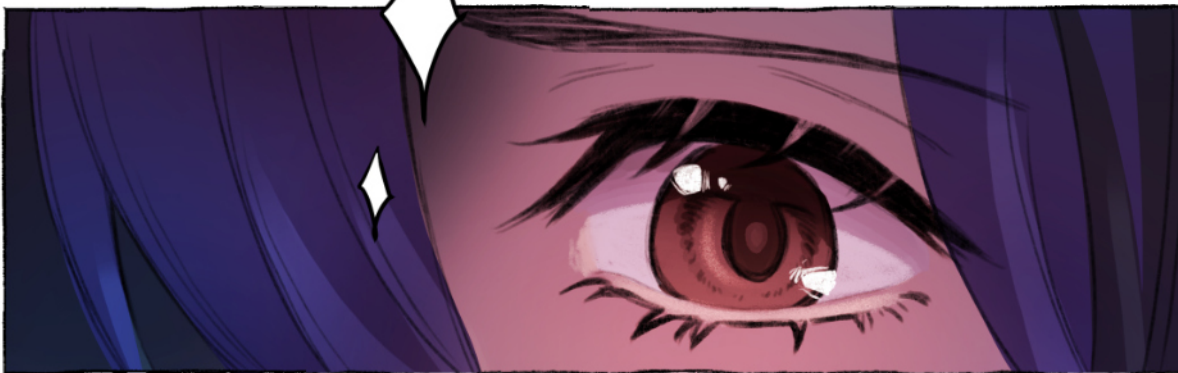
That's not
how it
works.

We don't
just take
lives at will.

We only
help you
on your
way after
you've
already
passed.

I don't
choose
how or
when you—

Then **why**
are you
here?





.....

Sorry
...

My last words
were hanging
heavy in the
air between us.

After some
time Charon
quietly began
to talk again.

No one
spoke for
a while.

He told
me of his
assignment.



Of the
places and
people he'd
visited.

The first
time he
had seen
me...



He didn't
mention
my earlier
words again.



I was
grateful
for that.





Joining the
souls we
carried over
is our final
reward for
watching over
them.



.....

What does
that mean
for you then?



Will you
be all
alone?



.....

I would
like to learn
more about
you, Leo.





Why do you spend so many nights out here alone?



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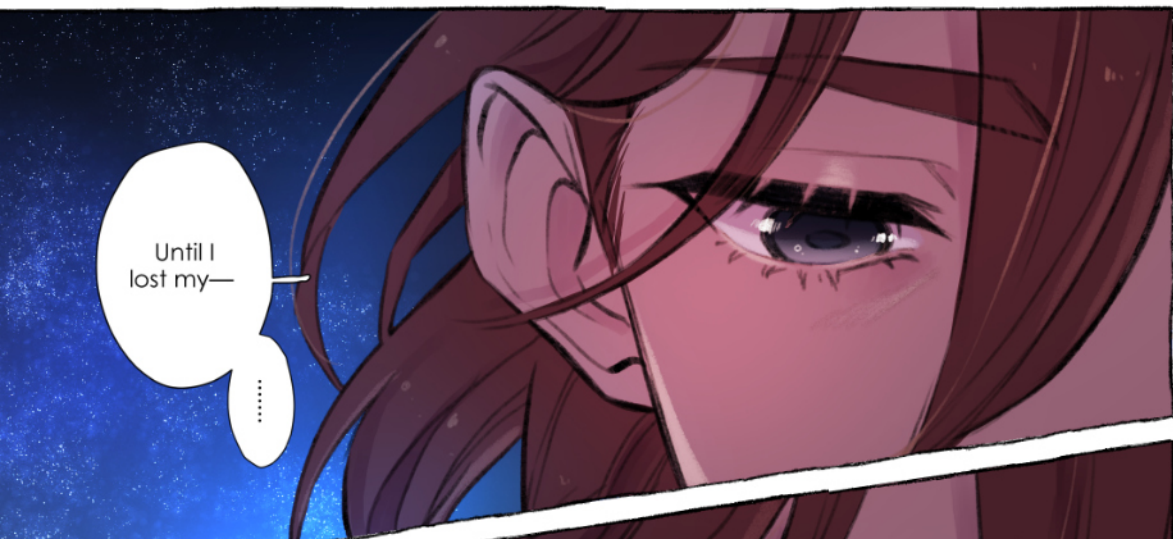


I



My family and I used to live here,

in this small community of barely 400 people where everyone knows one another.



Until I
lost my—

.....



Until we
didn't
belong
anymore.



Became
outsiders that
everyone
would look
at with pity
in their eyes.



Would whisper
about us
behind our
backs.

WHISPER

WHISPER

WHISPER



It's easier
in the city.

The masses
of strangers
fill in the
empty spots.



No one
looks
at me.

No one
cares.



No one
knows.



But at
night...

Here in
the dark
...



The silence
feels less
lonely than
the noise and
lights of the
city.



What I
lost is
still here.



It's
home.



Even if
I don't
belong.

Even if
it shouldn't
be me—







Something I
had never
experienced,

and
couldn't fully
understand.



All I could
do was be
there with
him.



Until
sunrise.



Until we
both had
to go.



The
familiar
feeling
he had
spoken of,



*I felt
it, too.*



*Yet we
both knew,
deep down,*

A black cat is shown from behind, sitting on a dark brick wall. The cat is looking out over a sunset sky that transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a dark purple at the top. Soft, wispy clouds are visible in the orange part of the sky. Numerous pink and white petals are falling through the air, some appearing as small specks and others as larger, more detailed shapes. A thought bubble originates from the cat's head, containing two lines of text.

*that giving
in to these
feelings*

*would
be our
downfall.*