The Artifact
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Summary

The worst part of agelessness was the world around you didn’t abide by the same rules.

More than a decade after Voldemort’s defeat,
Luna Lovegood finds something history forgot imprisoned in the Norwegian hillside.

TW: Mentions of prostitution, sexual themes, very odd couples.
Geralt of Rivia/Luna Lovegood Harry Potter The Witcher Crossover
The year is 2010. Summer is approaching. The air is floral. Insects flit about and tourism is booming just west of Geirangerfjord. Resorts overlook massive waterfalls and the mountains were breathtaking in every direction. Sharply dressed men and women chatter among one another on the suspended deck of a towering hotel, speaking of the news, the fashion, and the scandals that all seemed the epicenter of their own universes. Not a single one of the crowd is aware of the struggle going on below.

A slender blonde was narrowly avoiding being mauled by a chimera-like creature. One might think it some manner of grotesque lion, however the proud mane around the creature’s neck seemed made of steel spikes, and the flowers wilted under it’s breathe. Unbeknownst to those above, this was known as a Nundu. It’s very presence in Norway would have the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures all aflutter.

You see, a Nundu is native only to East Africa, and is not known to swim, fly, or apparate. The Nundu’s breath is fatal, and the Nundu itself is incredibly aggressive. Seasoned magizoologists across the world wouldn’t risk attempting to corral one with a specialized team, let alone solo.

Yet, this was no ordinary magizoologist.

“Now, I am terribly sorry to have disturbed you, I simply speculated you might perhaps be lonely or hungry or a fair bit lost, and I reckoned I’d help you center yourself.” Chirped the creature’s believed opponent as she readjusted the muddy bonnet upon her platinum locks.

As melodic as the woman’s voice was, it was hardly a comfort to the displaced legend. Without a sound, the creature began to readjust it’s footing, clearly preparing to pounce. The most profound
sign of intelligence in the lion-esque creature was its silence. Nundu’s lacked a war cry, proving fatal to those that relied on their ears to warn them of danger. Whilst facing off against a Nundu, a witch or wizard’s only chance at success was to read body language. Luckily, for the sake of our story anyways, our heroine’s insight was extraordinary.

The slim figure in question sighed sadly, as one might when a dear friend fails to respond via post once again. She pulled a slim stick of oak from behind her ear. With a few murmured words, the Nundu was restrained, a portkey fixed to it’s mane, and the creature sent spiraling through the ether to the Ministry’s secure holding.

Pale eyes fix on the ground, disheartened. She twirls the wand expertly between her fingers, a series of spells ridding her attire of the mud. And there stood Luna Lovegood, the strangest of the six that saved the world a decade before. The event was doubly a failure. Rumors of a strange beast stalking the Norwegian countryside has drawn her out of her seclusion in Ottery St. Catchpole. All the same, it had proven to be merely a common creature in an unexpected place. And Luna hadn’t even managed to make friends with the confused cub. Because, ultimately, that’s what it had been. The Nundu had been half the size it was meant to be.

As she contemplated her next move, the voices of the none-the-wiser muggles floated down to Luna’s ears. “Oh, it was quite the... rare specimen. Certainly worth the price of the experience. I can’t say I’d do it again, but I do think it was the perfect pre-wedding trip.”

There was a gasp and a giggle from, presumably, the tourist’s companion. It seemed a pair of women were recounting their experiences in Norway as of late. “Where are they keeping him?” The companion inquired.

“Ugh, Julia, don’t refer to it as ‘him’. It makes me feel dirty. But if you must know, it’s up in the hills two valleys over. The area is very secluded and I’m glad for it. I like a little privacy in my... zoo experiences.” The muggle woman choked on her own laugh, half embarrassed for whatever reason.

Luna was listening intently, recounting the landscape and paths. A specimen? Did they have some new species of creature imprisoned? That simply wouldn’t do. All beings deserved freedom. It half killed her spirit to send those she couldn’t tame back to the Ministry to be retrained.

The years had passed, but little had changed in Luna. She was still bright, empathetic, and incredibly odd. Above all, she was still very, very kind.

If there was a mystery being poked fun of in those hills, she would find it.
And she would free it.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Luna meets Geralt. She's disappointed.
Time had left Geralt much the same, literally. Absolutely, completely, literally. Age had not touched his face. His golden eyes still glowed in a way many found eerie. His hair was longer now, and the shadow he wore upon his skin thicker. The only real difference was the condition of his spirit.

They had made a mockery of him. Time and time again. Though,. that wasn’t much different from the life he’d lived centuries before. That damned sorceress had made him a mutant and he’d never lived it down. Now fate had made him no better than a cheap whore. Cheap, in a sense, as he was not compensated for his services. Not all that visited those caves were seeking to satisfy their primal urges, but enough were. Too many sought to use him as a party favor. This system was worse than the brothels he’d visited in his prime, where the women worked willingly. They had been riveted by his tales. Those brothels kept the world out, not the whores in. They yearned for the world outside, the world they had no place in. Geralt romanticized his adventures to please them. He removed the tragedy and keyed up the excitement. Let them have their silly stories. It was all they could call their own.

As the years had passed, the others with magic had been killed off, or simply vanished. Geralt had reaped the consequences of his self-isolation. It was a feeling he couldn’t shake. The mages were still out there, simply beyond his reach. There was a time years before when those with magic and those without had waged war on one another. The witcher had chosen no side. He killed monsters, simple as that. Petty squabbles did not concern him. That mentality was something he came to regret.

Never would the witcher admit he felt along, but t’was no light burden being the last of his kind.

Work had become harder and harder to come by. His services were needed more and more rarely.
Then, all at once, the creatures, the sorcerers, and the mutants, they were gone. The White Wolf hadn’t a pack to return to even if he wished it so. He had wandered from place to place for decades, until he had been dead asleep in a drunken stupor. A masked figure had clamped some blasted collar around his neck. The world went black.

The qualities of the device were entirely unknown to him, save one. Whilst worn, the accessory negated any power he had, save brute strength. He was confined to the caverns, a proximity charm associated with collar. Powerful magic kept him in place, and he had no friends left in the world. Not that he had many to begin with. There were no monsters left to slay, no tales left to tell, only a tired man with no purpose. Some time had passed since he’d had visitors, perhaps a day or so. Geralt was stewing in his own pity. With no tourists to entertain, his gruff facade was beginning to fade. By the Gods he was tired.

As far as accommodation went, he’d had worse. A swirling labyrinth of pathways led into the mountain. Vaguely, barely conscious when he was dragged there, he recalled a series of tunnels connecting with his own. Without a guide, the witcher’s quarters were near impossible to locate. He knew there were others here. Others that were being used for their bodies, their talents. The entirety of the hillside was a rich man’s play toy. He was one small part of an extensive freak show.

Geralt had a sense for magic, dulled as it was. None other within the carnival of creatures was by design. He heard their voices in the evenings, calling out for their homes. They cursed themselves for their disfigurements. These were mundanes, unused to such trifles. The quarter’s the White Wolf was confined in was not unlike a room in an inn. His captors had clearly attempted to establish some manner of theme to appeal to the clientele. There was a small kitchen, a privy, a closet of elaborate warrior costumes, and a lavish sleeping quarter. The latter was lined with white pelts of all manner of creatures. A makeshift wolf’s den.

Perhaps he should attempt to sleep? There was room enough for him to train. He did so on the daily. All the same, the lack of constant exertion felt strange. He kept active enough to remain formidable. Yet, it seemed hollow and pointless. The only enemy here was the invisible bonds that kept him from venturing past the entryway. Gods knows he’d tried. The witcher sunk down on the bed of furs, resigning himself for the evening. He would gather his thoughts again in the morning.

Or so he thought.

A loud crack abruptly sounded through the caverns. The smell of smoke bombarded the witcher’s senses. The sun had begun to dip below the horizon, taking the light with it.

“Lumos.”, came an airy female voice. Light filled the space from one central source, then parted. The torches on the wall sprung alight.
The energy of the space lifted, the warmth of the caster’s magic apparent even to Geralt’s weary senses. Magic had a signature. His own was imposing. His own was cold. This was the opposite. Joyous, restless power surged through him. The spell brushed by his ears like a summer breeze. Spells shone a particular color in abidance with their signature. Most magicians were filled with rage. Some were filled with hate. And a small few were impartial. Crimson, ebony, ivory. This power was vibrant. It danced within the space, warming it. Geralt was so enamored with the sensation for a moment that he forgot himself entirely. He should have been on his guard. He should have been regaining control of the situation. Instead, the legendary warrior sat there gawking like a fool.

“Oh, hello,” came the voice again. Golden eyes pinpointed the speaker. It was a young woman. She removed her honeysuckle yellow bonnet, revealing her face. The stranger’s hair was even paler than his; her outfit was polar opposite of his all black attire. The sorceress wore pastel work boots, a pink knit jumpsuit, and thick pink gloves.

‘The embodiment of the moon, perhaps?’ Geralt mused silently. The new arrival’s eyes were silver to his gold. He watched her slowly tilt her head at him. It was comedic, how she showed no apparent emotion. Most women, when met with the sight of him, giggled self consciously or simply sneered in disgust. The new arrival was difficult to read. She tilted her head once again, in the opposite direction. This gesture was reminiscence of a hound attempting to identify a distant sound. Silver eyes observed him, dropping to his feet and making their way back to his face. Oddly, the witcher felt more exposed than he did midst his… services. Then the sorceress frowned, clearly disappointed.

“Why, you’re not a creature at all. You’re just a man.” A little crease appeared between her eyebrows. She crossed her arms, pouting slightly. There was something nonchalant about her. Her actions existed apart from the skeezy environment they took place in. She was part angelic, part eccentric. The newcomer tapped a finger to her lips contemplatively, then seemed to remember herself. “Oh! How entirely rude of me. I’m Luna, Luna Lovegood. Pleasure to make your acquaintance, Mister… Specimen.”

“…specimen?” Geralt couldn’t remember last he’d spoken, and the words came out in a croak. Was she insulting him? There was no ire or disgust in her gaze. Simple confusion wrote itself across her features. The lady was clearly intensely intelligent, quickly analyzing the details before her. Hers was unlike any visitor the caves had hosted. There was a purity about it, not to be mistaken for an innocence. Her positivity was chosen, not gifted.

“Oh, yes. Do forgive the intrusion. There was a misunderstanding of sorts, I reckon. I was following a bit of a lead on a new species and I happened to overhear word of you.” Luna spoke quickly, with too much enthusiasm. “I see now that I’ve jumped to a conclusion and that you’re not a specimen at all, and so I reckon it must be your name I heard instead. It’s an unusual one, I quite like it.”
“...you’re a sorceress.” It wasn’t a question.

“A witch, yes.” Her confusion intensified, remaining void of fear. “And you’re a sort of wizard, I could tell from the valley below. I wouldn’t have popped in like that if you weren’t.”

“...they once called me witcher.” Geralt responded simply, perplexed.

“And what do they call you now?” Social graces clearly weren’t her strong suit.

“...nothing of note.” He breathed, fighting the makings of a grin. Nothing had amusement him in decades. What manner of creature was this? Had she not been so ignorant to his circumstances, Geralt might of thought he had finally fell to hallucinations. Alas, his nightmares had always been far crueler.

The witch was light on her feet, buzzing with curiosity. She took a number of steps towards him, approaching the bed. He had not so much as rose to meet her. Those stunning silver eyes ghosted across the living quarters. They took note of his collar, the heavily bolted door, and the themed decor. Cogs whirled behind her eyes. Her demeanor lost a portion of it’s cheer. Her aura became more empathetic, as though she had survived something similar. His suspicions that she was there to end his miserable life breathed their last. He was at a loss. The witcher had always been a ball of destructive fire. His kindness extended only to those that embodied the land. He was the forest fires that robbed entire cities of life, time and time again. The hands by which he bore his sword were coated with blood. Those that hurtled towards him found themselves burned alive. The sun, perhaps, who was never met to see the stars.

So, what could he do, when the moon came to call?

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Luna kidnaps a grown man. He doesn't mind.
Well, this had all started off rather boring, hadn’t it? The sole heir to the Lovegood estate (eh-hem, the Quibbler) had been let down time and time again that day. First, she’d been dispatched to tend to a report that was hardly extraordinary. Then, secondly, she had failed to gain a new creature companion. And third, she was being led on yet another wild Niffler chase. It was all quite disheartening. Who raved about some lad who lived in a wolf’s den? How was coming to see him an activity? Was he a riveting speaker? She just didn’t see the appeal.

That was, until, something in her vision started to skew. It was… wrong. Everything was wrong. This was not a den of dreams. This was not a festival stage. The caverns were without life, chilling despite being heavily insulated. The scene it painted was certainly one of a resolute rogue. But… if the man fancied himself a wolf, why would he wear a collar? Wolves were inherently social creatures, running in packs and frolicking through the woods. Luna quite fancied them herself. She wondered what manner of wizard the handsome (yes, handsome, she was generally disinterested, not blind) stranger was. What would his patronus be?

Would it be a wolf, such as the interior of the caverns implied? In her lifetime, Luna had only met two wolf patronuses, both of which had met an untimely demise in the war. Nymphadora Tonks and Remus Lupin had shared a strong sense of justice by their own definition, and loyalty beyond anyone’s reckoning. They were brash and passionate, easily misunderstood. Fate did not favor the wolf.

She’d been staring for a long time.

The enigma before her was humoring her for the time being, but as the witch became self aware once more, he raised an elegant brow at her. ‘Well?’ it seemed to ask, ‘what now?’
Luna didn’t know. She didn’t know what happened next, she barely knew what had happened before. This was all rather confusing and she was in too deep. Then again, she always was.

Empathy abounded in the journalist protege. Time and time again, she threw herself headlong into battles too large for her own taking. Mind you, she never charged in. Charging in was a very Gryffindor thing to do. Instead, the Ravenclaw alum all too often tumbled head over heels into harms way. She’d stare longingly into danger and drama if only for the thrill of being included. All she wanted was a beautiful world. Perhaps that was why she was drawn to the darkest, most desolate places. She wished to bring them light.

That was much the matter at hand. This was a product of muggle trafficking, clearly enough. The magical aspect was what was puzzling the clever blonde. The man before her was clearly battle worn and intensely formidable. How had he been detained here? The International Statue of Wizarding Secrecy had went into effect in 1692; this manner of detainment and show was incredibly rare after that. This was very much against regulation; this was entirely unacceptable.

A theory was brewing in Luna’s mind, a theory of a muggle mad with power obtaining a cursed object and using it to bend a magical being to their will. The thought was grotesque, but even as a child the magizoologist had never shied away from terrible truths. She saw the world as it was, gore and beauty alike. And for the most part, life was very beautiful.

“...Geralt.” The silver haired man rumbled.

The words brought Luna back to life, blinking like a deer before a carriage. “Pardon?”

He swiped a hand over his face, either clearing sweat or hiding his eyes from her. Perhaps both. “Geralt. My name.”

Something about his need for introduction drew that faintest smile to her lips. He didn’t seem a man prone to social niceties. “A pleasure, Mister Geralt. Forgive me, I was… lost in a dream, perhaps.”

A mixture of bitterness and humor shifted behind his eyes. “What manner of sick mind would conjure me in the night?” That was a joke, right? His voice was so deep the witch could scarcely tell.
“You’re awfully dramatic, Mister Geralt.” Luna half giggled, half sighed. “You remind me of a friend of mine’s past self. He was never quite afraid. Simply a bit resigned to the fact everyone was gunning for him. You ought not fall prey to it. Bullets aren’t my medium, I hardly know anything of them myself.”

Her legacy as a cryptic chatterbox was not to be forgotten. The woman took two long steps forward, coming to stand right before the curve of his knees. His only response was to lean back, his hands planted in the soft furs behind him. Long silver lashes shaded golden eyes as he looked down his nose at her. It was not a degrading glance. Instead, his stoic expression gave way to one of calculation.

Before she could stop herself, Luna brought a gentle hand to his jaw, inspecting for injury. Geralt made a near imperceptible gesture, as though to flinch away, but readjusted within the moment to allow the examination. “You owe me no kindness, girl.”

“I’m 29.” They might as well have been having entirely separate conversations.

“Hmm.” Why did one syllable sound so much like a trademark?

The dialogue ground to a halt once more. Geralt wasn’t much of a talker, and Luna was lost in her analysis. Was she looking for injuries or clues? She didn’t rightly know. There were too many aspects of the scenario that simply didn’t mesh. It wasn’t so unusual for a wizard to have gold eyes and silver hair. Magical mutations were often much more colorful than muggle ones, yet he was missing many of the markings of a modern wizard.

Since Voldemort’s demise, the Ministry had cracked down on rounding up the muggleborns whose records had been erased. Years of Hogwarts letters had been sent too late, and theory had it that many had never received them at all. During the investigation, many adults had been discovered to have abilities that had slipped under the radar. In particular, Luna remembered interviewing one muggleborn wizard in his eighties who had been informed why he never seemed to run out of milk.

Harry and Ron had revolutionized the Auror Department within the Ministry to an extent that near all with magic had been tracked down and were receiving formal training. Hermione was heading the Department of Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures currently, which was the only reason Luna felt comfortable working with them. How had they missed this? Even if his captors were advertising him as a exotic beast, there was no reason Geralt should have dodged the Ministry’s radar.

Unless… unless he was never on it to begin with. There was hardly a single fine line upon the witcher’s face, yet he bore a countenance similar to that of the vampires Luna had been acquainted with through her work. There was a rare sort of agelessness to his features. Geralt seemed a figure
who would stand whilst civilizations rose and fell around him.

The petite witch was jolted gently from her contemplation as a calloused hand came to gentle rest against her wrist. It was then Luna realized he’d been just as lost in thought as her. The uniqueness of the man’s expression puzzled her, and she met his eyes. This seemed momentous, somehow. The interaction equated to how an adventurer might feel befriending a near extinct lion. Tremendous.

Pale fingers shifted down to his collar, tracing over the minute engravings in the leather. Power trickled through the device, but compared to the witch’s skill level it was a rudimentary contraption. Something in her wished to dismantle the device. She wanted to pry open the collar, decode the spells within, and discover the crafter’s motivations.

And in any other setting, she might have. However, just then, whispers started to float down to the door at the entrance of the cavern. The entryway was not soundproof by any means, and thuds overlaying muffled laughter from above suggested a group making their way down the winding paths inside the hillside. The time for contemplation was up.

“Knox.” All at once it went dark. “Surgito. Finite Incantatem.”

A surge of power fought with the warding then fizzled out; the strange sensation of invisible walls collapsing around them washed over the duo. In no more than a series of seconds, the complex shielding charms attached to the device and the collar itself were negated. The leather crumbled around the woman’s fingers, turning to ash without the enchantment binding it together. The voices grew ever closer and Luna made an estimate in the dark, clasping one of Geralt’s hands between both of hers and apparating them both away.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Luna tells her favorite story. She leaves out the bad parts.
The surge of power set fire to an age old instinct in the White Wolf. His stomach felt as if it had dropped out of him. He struggled to find his breath. This was nothing like the portals of his youth. The world was spinning. He could not remember who it was that held his hand in theirs. The witcher felt control slipping from his grasp. He flung his hands violently, colliding with something in the spinning room. The sickly feeling intensified as he heard a soft ‘oof’.

“Petrificus Totalus.” A Latin phrase, spoken with complete confidence.

Geralt cursed himself for initiating conflict as his limbs locked. He hit the floor hard. What manner of creature was this? The collar had negated his own power, hence why his own abilities had not overwhelmed it. His magical resistance must have been weakened by extended wear. Under ordinary circumstances, the angelic figure could have never bested him so easily.

“Don’t feel lesser, please.” The blonde spoke gently, crouching at his side. His vision locked onto her face for focus as his ears rang. It was as though her voice was underwater. “Sometimes side-along apparation triggers a fight or flight response. You’re quite alright.”

Unlike in the caverns, their new environment was well lit. They had portaled directly into the center of a cylindrical living room that led into a much bigger dwelling. A staircase spiraled up into unseen levels, and to their left was an offshoot into a kitchen. Part of the tower had been carved away to the right where the smell of paint lingered. A full sized workshop, a library, and a long hall was visible from where Geralt lay, and for a moment he was grateful he landed in such a way the patchwork couch didn’t block his view. None of this was his focus. Each wall contained a detailed mural. No easels lined the room, and yet there was a station next to the hall stacked with paint and brushes. It was apparent his eccentric new host had painted the walls herself.

Less panicked than he should be (the woman seemed off kilter, not sadistic), the White Wolf took a moment to decipher the images. They were neither a comedy nor a tragedy. The swirl of color
painted a timeline: loneliness, death, children’s faces, a castle, dragons, war, fire, triumph, and wide open plains. Most women choose to paint romance over freedom, yet there was no trace of a suitor in those images. Whose story was she telling? The optimism in the images was astounding. For a moment, Geralt felt ashamed. All that pain, all that misfortune, and it was displayed in the most vibrant colors he had ever seen.

It had been silent some time.

“Are you quite calm? They’re nearly extinct, but if you empty your mind to instinct, the Wrackspurts will flutter right in your ears.” Seeing he had no way of responding, the witch seemed to decide on her own. With a mutter to release the incantation, Geralt regained control of his limbs. The witcher sat up slowly, his body far more tired than his mind. Resting an elbow on one bent knee, he stretched out his other leg and fixed his gaze on her.

Geralt’s rescuer was completely dwarfed by the witcher’s broad frame, yet there was nothing fragile about her. Very few women ever met his gaze the way she did in that moment: unwavering, solid, and without expectation. In fact, now that he mused on it, no woman ever had. In general, they wanted to manipulate, use, or understand him. And while he did not feel as though the sorceress was opposed to knowing him, she didn’t seem overly invested either.

The ivory haired stranger was a beauty; there was no doubt of that. Geralt hardly remembered a sorceress who wasn’t, to be clear. Those born with special abilities when he was younger were more deformed the stronger they were. When a sorceress completed her training, she was given the gift of beauty. Any flaw that a king might find undesirable was taken away. That is what vexed the witcher’s notions. This… creature was alarmingly strong. Her magic was a battering ram compared to what Geralt had witnessed in his lifetime. Her skills were precise and there was no wasted effort. By all accounts, she should have begun horribly disfigured.

There were certain traits about her that the artist would not have left behind. His host’s eyes were alarmingly wide, and an odd color at that, silver to his gold. Luna, hadn’t she said? Her parents must have named her for those eyes. Her hair did not lay smoothly; she was somewhat pigeon-toed. When she spoke, there was a madness to her tone. No king he had ever known would have chosen her out of a flock to be in his court. Was she this way by nature? Wild? Kind? Cryptic?

Another moment of silence passed until Geralt remembered the question left hanging in the air.
“I’m –…hmm.”

“You’re hmm-mm?” Luna shifted to sit at his side, just close enough to be distracting.
Geralt could not recall the last time someone had taken a sincere interest in his emotional state. His chapped lips part slightly, drawing in a breath. He intended to soothe her; he intended to reassure her she was perfectly safe. His feeble charm failed him. What he said instead was: “whose story are these walls?”

She followed his gaze to the paintings, then let out a reminiscent sigh. She settled herself beside him, abandoning her crouch. “A bit of everyone’s, I guess. You really seem you’ve been through something terrible, but perhaps in a way less terrible than the terrible things that came before that?”

Never in his life had the witcher met someone so unintentionally confounding.

“I suppose I’m a bit of an expert on terrible things.” The blonde continued. “You see, when I was a girl, everything was beautiful. Everything was perfect. For us, anyways. For my mother, my father, and myself. Horrific happenings were going on outside, but we were safe here. There was a war waging out there, and we were warm and safe, because our blood was no issue and our minds were too open. I scarcely remember it myself, I was only a small babe then.”

Usually when women spoke, a product of his time, Geralt paid little attention. Now, something in him sought to understand. This was a dangerous game he was playing. This creature was a stranger, a stranger who owed him nothing. A stranger who was far too good and too kind for him to be important to. Not only that, he felt as though any man who heard her speak must be immediately enamored with her. Surely the witch before he had many a suitor, perhaps a husband. Wait...why was the thought even occurring to him? That was no business of his.

Luna was still speaking, lost in memory. “My mother was so kind, but moreso she was clever. She was so clever that daddy could do as he wished with no risk about it. You see, my mother was an inventor. I remember spending long hours with her in her workshop. The things her hands could craft were beyond imagining. But she was a bit too ambitious, I suppose…”

He looked at her then. Geralt expected to see sadness, yet her expression was entirely blank. Again, instinct prompted him to speak comfort. That had never been a specialty of his. His anger was tremendous, yet his empathy was hardly something to marvel at. When he finally had mustered up something decent to say, the witch was already continuing her story.

“One moment we were fiddling around with some new ingredients for a potion she was working on, and the next she was ash coating my skin.” Luna spoke of this as one might the weather: Detached.

Wait… had she said her mother exploded on her?
He truly had no way with women at all.

“I was horrified, of course. I was nine. I just sat there until Daddy came back from his adventures. That’s why you see only a bit of yellow, near the beginning there and then gets quite dark for a while. I painted this once the war had passed, but I’ll get to that part of the story later. I was quite sad for a long time, but I never really showed it, you know? Momma was his sun, and I, his moon. But I had to be both for a bit.” The nonchalant way she spoke of the events reinforced her last sentiment. She, at nine years old, had single-handedly held her household together. That explained why she both seemed a child in some ways and ancient in others.

The witcher dug his fingernails into the fabric of his black trousers. He was angry, for some reason. Angry at the universe for the woes it continued to inflict upon the innocent. All the same, he was too enthralled by the story to do anything but listen.

“Anyways, I won’t draw the story out too long. It was just Daddy and I until I went off to school. They’d been saying things, in the papers, about something awful coming back around. It was quite the fantastic adventure really. When people tell the story, I think they tell it with Harry Potter as the main character, but we all played a part.” Here she paused and looked over at the silver haired man, as though that name was supposed to mean something to him.

Geralt only returned her gaze. A potter? It was hardly a fitting title for adventurer. Then again, he’d never heard of a town named Lovegood either.

“It’s odd, to be telling this to a wizard who doesn’t the story. Parents tell it to their children before they go to sleep. A cautionary tale of adventure and triumph. They always leave the Nargles out too. But they played a very important role. Harry Potter always seemed too tedious a target for the Nargles, but I digress.” The smile returned to her lips.

As far as digressing, Geralt had a feeling she did that a lot.

“Harry Potter was, well, is, a hero for the ages, by all accounts. There was a very very very sad man named Voldemort. He was born capable of nothing but rage, and loneliness, and hate. That was all he knew how to do. And that made him feel very unimportant, I reckon. And so he wanted to be the most important. The only way he could image to do that is by ruling over everything, and eliminating all those he’d imagined had wronged him.” There was so much empathy in the way she recounted the tale. Luna’s smile widened, as though she was just coming to her favorite part.
“I met Harry when he needed a friend. Well, I suppose he had friends already, but he needed a different friend. One that saw things from a different perspective. Have you ever met a thestral, Mister Geralt?” She asked, peering too intensely into his eyes once again.

He gathered his words, unsure when he’d lost them. “Geralt is fine. I can’t say that I have.”

“Well, they’re quite lovely, really. But you can only see them when you’ve seen beyond the veil. When you’ve seen someone die. Harry’s friends at the time hadn’t. I had. And so had he. They gave him a bit of a rude awakening, but they always pulled the carriages at Hogwarts… it’s a school.” Luna predicted his questions before he had a chance to ask them.

He was beginning to piece together the story. In the modern age, sorcerers had continued their trend of teaching new recruits behind closed doors. They had streamlined it. They had never vanished. They had only created a divide between themselves and the mundane. They took their monsters with them.

“Anyways, everyone thought I was a bit odd back then. I’m sure they still do, but they don’t say it as often. Harry and I became good friends and then all of us became friends and everything was lovely again. But it was lovely in a different way. For years, we fought the coming evil. We fought the dark and terrible things, and created wonderful, forever things. There were bumps and bruises and loved ones left behind. But… they’re only waiting. The things we’ve lost will always find their way back to us.” The blonde shifted her folded legs to face him.

“Eventually,” she continued, “we figured out a way to best it all. Voldemort sought to divide us for so long. They even took me away at one point, but Harry came back for me. You see the colors near the end of the painting. They felt a bit like freedom. It was a pretty ending, we all fell in love at the end. I just fell out of it first. I loved him but he loved the idea of me and that’s not fair to anyone.”

Him?

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Geralt plays house. He’s real bad at it.
Luna had told the story once before, to press. She had even referenced it countless times in her own articles in the Quibbler. The Quibbler had become a prime news source during the war and it’s accountability had gained the respect of thousands of loyal readers. That number was quite impressive as well, considering how their numbers had been steadily dwindling over the ages. The loss of life Voldemort had instigated might as well have put wizarding kind on the endangered species list.

Tragedy, how muggles need to send up media flares to beg one another to stop killing creatures with wild abandon.

The journalism business was thriving to that day, though it was from sentiment more than anything. The paper was residual income that allowed her to do as she pleased in her spare hours. Perhaps she’d taken the sentiment a bit too far. The mentality might have become quite the sizable problem. The witch now had a bizarre magical creature in her living room that was shaped much like a grown man and she’d made herself his keeper.

Now, while Luna was a bit naive to the attention of men, she was hardly a child. This individual was clearly attracted to her and that was about all she knew. Neville had been a fling, unfortunate as that was. They had been the last of the famous six not to pair up and it made sense at the time. Their relationship lasted exactly three months. Luna knew he fancied Hannah Abbott more than he cared to admit, and when she relieved him of his obligations to her, Neville married Hannah less than a year later.

Hermione married Ron. Harry married Ginny. And Luna… Luna had her books and her maps. Honestly, the last time she remembered feeling any sort of fascination with a man was when Hermione had invited Viktor Krum to one of her infamous dinner parties. Perhaps it was repressed guilt that instigated the idea, but both of Luna’s female friends had spent the entire evening
attempting to pair the two together. Both witches had children and family now; they reckoned Luna was searching for the same. Viktor was a gorgeous, formidable man, but he’d never gotten over Hermione. Luna endured being second best to her lover for precisely one season of her life; she would never make that mistake again.

The youngest Lovegood was hardly interested in men the way her housemates had been at Hogwarts. She appreciated beauty in all forms, but that was it. There was no desire in her to sacrifice any part of her lifestyle for the sake of a man. That being said, she was hardly asexual or even completely aromantic and the puzzle before her had caught her interest. The brand of that interest… well, jury was still out on that.

“I… ought pop down the hall. Daddy lives in London now but I’m certain he’s left something behind that will fit. Mind you, he’s a portion your size but he does enjoy his looser cloaks so… I’ll find something to suit.” Luna popped up from where she had been seated at Geralt’s side, feeling his gaze following her as she did so.

Truth be told, she wouldn’t mind a change in attire herself. Despite the cleaning spells she had utilized earlier, she could feel the grime still clinging to her. The man peering up at didn’t seem much of a talker. Luna had filled the air with enough natterings for the both of them. Perhaps once the witcher felt more comfortable, he may open up to her a bit more. Truth be told, he seemed a bit disoriented, like a ground dwelling creature blinking into the unfamiliar sight of the sun.

“Wait here!” Luna exclaimed, bounding down the hall. Xenophilius Lovegood was getting on in age and the last several years had been difficult on him. Her father had never been able to shake the suspicion that the Death Eater’s would be back to take her from him. The stress had made him sick. Many of his possessions were still contained within the renovated Rook House, as he came to stay when he felt shaken, but Luna had set him up in a flat above a shop in Diagon Alley. Ollivander looked in on him from time to time. George too, when he had the piece of mind. The support system she had afforded her father brought her great comfort.

Back to the matter at hand. She’ll be hard pressed to find anything other than browns, yellows, or whites. Those wouldn’t do, not at all. The witch felt most at home in yellows and pinks, sometimes baby blues (she’d grown out of them for the most part), she’d feel weighted down by blacks or reds. Thus, she sought to afford her new acquaintance the same courtesy. He wore black; he looked good in black. The monochromatic style made him appear aloof and regal. That was probably a fun sort of way to feel. She’d cater to it.

Should she owl Hermione? Otto, her pessimistic barn owl, was likely fluttering around the makeshift animal property harassing the pigs again. Luna’s little messenger was hilariously quite the bully, not that the pigs paid him any mind. What would she even say?
‘Dear Hermione,

Against your recommendations,

I was facing off against a Nundu in the Norwegian hillside.

Sadly, I failed to make friends with the cub. He was very cute.

On the bright side, I staged a prison break.

There’s a confused wizard in my sitting room.

Any thoughts?

Respond at your leisure,

Luna Lovegood’

That wouldn’t do at all.

Should she owl Ginny? Her dearest friend kept no secrets from her husband. If she owled Ginny, Harry would know immediately, and Harry would likely tell Ron. Then Luna would have a band of makeshift big brothers breaking down her door.

Hermione was the only option sound enough to keep it to herself. Even so, it would only be for the sake of professionalism. Geralt would end up in a holding cell at the Ministry until a full investigation had too place. The paths laid themselves plain within the Lovegood’s mind.

No, she had no desire for that at all. Even lacking the finer details, she knew her guest had been imprisoned long enough. None of those options would do; the blonde was on her own for the time being.

Digging through her father’s possessions, she managed to find a pair of neutral black pants and a white shirt. The likelihood of Geralt being the same shoe size as Xenophilius was admittedly though, but shoes held up to engorgement charms well. The witch eyeballed the black ankle boots and spelled them up a size. Geralt wouldn’t need to wear them until venturing out anyways. The Rook House was a slippers only house. Searching deeper into the chest of garment, she discovered a dragon hide waistcoat and decided it would suit fine.

It was then that Luna realized she was still wearing her work boots. Had she been that distracted? Kicking them off, she compiled her selections into a neat little stack. She made her way to the adjacent room and threw open her own closet. The witch selected a pair of wide legged sunflower patterned pants and an oversized yellow pullover. Changing quickly, she scooped up the borrowed attire and made her way back down the hall. She dropped the boots by the door, her own feet bare,
before continuing back to Geralt’s side. The man had risen and was stretching languidly, inspecting the his surroundings as he did so. His shoulders had lost some of their tension.

“Here you go.” The clothing changed hands. “There’s a wash room two doors down to the left. You can change there.”

The man snorted, a sort of chortled exhale through his nose. An easy smirk overtook his features, and he scanned her pointedly from head to toes. “Does the male form disturb you, my lady?”

Was he… flirting?

“I understand this is all a bit strange, but feel no obligation to treat me like a friend. I don’t make them very easily, you know.” Luna’s self esteem hadn’t taken a blow in the whole Neville affair. It had only readjusted her view of how she was perceived. She loved herself just the same, but doubted a man’s interest in her ever went beyond the physical. She stepped away, headed to the kitchen.

“We have that in common.” His words followed her from the room. “I was trying to relieve the tension.”

“Are you so tense? Would you care for a cuppa?” She asked, horrified, twirling to face him.

The witcher scrubbed a hand over his face. “I’m truly shite at this. I –… why? Why… any of this? In my experience, people are not so overcome with kindness for nothing’s sake.”

“I found you imprisoned as a tourist attraction, Geralt. Do you reckon I’d leave you there?”

The witcher inclined his head, distancing himself from his next words. “Frankly, yes,” he stated coldly, “just as the dozens before you. Best case scenario, at that. I was a freak show, a means of pleasure for the aristocracy. You were meant to turn a blind eye.”

There was a sharp pain in Luna’s chest, so intense she visibly jerked, clutching a hand to her chest. Is that what humanity had been reduced to? They had fought for the better part of a decade to keep the muggles safe. Had they been so blind? Was cruelty really so abundant? And what had happened that this man had been left out of the fold? Yes, they had sealed the gates between the worlds, but it hadn’t been to keep anyone out. It had been to contain the toxic ethnocentrism that
had run rampant through both sides at the time. Muggles had been butchering each other over the mere possibility they were depleting wizarding kind. Hundreds of wizards and witches were defeated; thousands of muggle innocent were murdered. So their forefathers quelled the sounds of war, retreating, quietly sealing up the wards behind them.

This was what they had meant to prevent.

They had failed once again, after centuries of practice.

Emotion crept into her voice, devastation, empathy…recognition. “I’m so sorry.”

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Luna struggles with self expectation. Geralt feels the sun on his skin for the first time in years.
Chapter 6

The Farm

Geralt

The ire drained, replaced by guilt. He had known only kindness by her hand. “… you are not at fault.”

“I’m sorry…” She began to clarify, “I’m sorry no one came back for you. I’m sorry it had to be a stranger that freed you. I’m sorry that… the universe left you behind. No one deserves that. And I’m so very sorry that you were made to feel you were anything less than divine and cosmic and unique.”

He was none of those things. That he was certain of.

Yet, he could not voice such things without giving weight to her sentiments. The woman stood only a single stride’s width from him, seeming much younger now. Shiny white teeth were worrying her bottom lip. She clasped her hands together. How was she so affected by his plight? The poor thing was nearly in tears. This was some manner of empathy he had never bore witness to. She was visibly shaking as upset as she was. His first thought was that he had scared her.

Was what he did next the logical step? Certainly not.

Making apparent his intentions, (the last thing he wanted was to be immobile on the floor again) Geralt gently rest his hand upon the back of her head. Applying the smallest amount of pressure possible, he drew her into him, silently urging her to rest her head against his chest. To the witcher’s surprise and bemusement, she melted into him right away. The little thing was far too trusting. Slender arms wrapped around his sides, only reaching halfway around the broad expanse of his back.

“I – … fuck. You have it wrong. Tragedy did not befall me. I am not a goodly person, sorceress. Most would not consider me a person at all. What happened in those caverns was none less disgraceful than I deserved. I have wronged so many, in so many ways. My penance was due.” His deep voice reverberated through his chest, making it so she felt as much as heard him. This was intentional, in an effort to get through to her. The longer the close proximity lasted, the more he questioned if it was truly for her benefit.

The blonde pulled away, shifting just enough to stare up at him whilst remaining in his arms. “You believe I misunderstand when it is quite the other way around. I am no innocent, Geralt. Did you not listen to the story? I have been a soldier and a friend. I have been a prisoner and an adventurer. I am no one thing that you can find yourself lesser than. There is blood on my hands and ash behind my ears that will never scrub clean. We are neither as good nor as bad as we believe we are. Life isn’t about what we deserve. But if I had my way, you’d be given better. We all would.”

How could one person be so kind?

How could a stranger have better intentions for him than those he’d spent decades beside?
As soon as the moment came, it was gone. The witch withdrew from him, offering direction as to where he could sleep and wash up. The house had been newly renovated and there were several guest rooms on the ground level. The bedding was fresh. The space was filled with plants and artwork.

Luna didn’t say much the rest of that evening. However, her chatter rose again with the sun.

The witch had the sleep schedule of a farm hand, as he quickly learned. Geralt rubbed the sleep from his eyes. Movement outside the window had awoken him. He removed himself from the bed to approach the panes. Without his sword, he felt empty. Displaced. Figures were rushing about outdoors. That much he could tell. Someone had specialty stained the glass and he couldn’t make out the details.

His curiosity got the better of him. Geralt crossed the room and open the door. The hall was unoccupied. No one was moving around within the house. He made his way to the inner landing and tugged on the boots his host had left out for him. All that stood between the witcher and the outside world was a single door.

Geralt breathed in.

He opened the door.

Scents and sounds rushed to greet him. The flowerbeds lining the front of the house were bursting with life. Radish plants climbed the outer walls. The entirety of the front lawn was a garden. Some of the plants Geralt did not recognize, many he did. Common herbs and fungi he’d known wizards often sought grew in bunches and rows. There was even monkshood, which would have fetched a large prize of silver in the markets of his youth. A black stemmed plant with white flowers was glowering at him.

By the Gods, the sun. The warrior had hardly registered the days creeping past in his captivity. He had forgotten the warmth of the rays of his skin. Leaning his face back, he allowed himself to bask in the sensation for the briefest moment. It was a small rebirth. A deep breath through the nose, out through the mouth. Nature endured. Life and beauty endured.

Following an offshoot of the stone path that wrapped around the side of the house, Geralt saw the sun a second time that day. This time was not in the form of a great ball of fire above them.

The peculiar woman who had taken him in the day before stood epicenter a quaint farm. Each type of animal present was contained within a generous segment of land. There was a hen house, a hogpen, and cows mulling about in an open pasture. Small, strange creatures played games on the stone fences between each section.

This was a home. She was a home. To the outcasts and the downtrodden. She collected strays, from what Geralt was witnessing. Each of the odd creatures between sects was of a different species. The humanoid creature with frog legs and a round belly was missing a wing. The blue salamander kept icing over, seeming unable to regulate its own abilities. For a moment, Geralt was offended. Is this how she viewed him? A broken thing to keep care of?

Then the witch lifted a hand and a small bird of prey landed upon it. The owl hooted at her and she laughed. A full voiced, life loving laugh that shook his foundations. He came from devastation and sorrow. From what he’d learned the night before, so did she. Alas, that laugh. The sunlight painted her hair yellow. Her blouse was the color of cooked salmon; her trousers a deep burgundy. His annoyance melted away. Nothing this creature did was malicious, as she was a thing of nature itself. Gaia-blessed.
Was this the way sorceresses were designed now? Was there a grand architect who shaped them from earth and wind? Or was this individual apart from the rest? He was rested now. He should be on his way, should find a new place in this world. A purpose. Despite himself, the easy peace of the dwelling urged him to stay. If only for now, if only for a moment. As a boy, this is how he dreamed his future would look.

‘T’is not my future.’ Geralt mused, observing the way the creatures adored their keeper. ‘T’is the one she carved out all her own.’

Only then did she notice him there. He leaned against the side of the house. They locked eyes, and he enjoyed the warmth he found there. The seconds ticked by. Those silver eyes widened.

“Otto…”

Otto?

“Otto, no!” Her attention wasn’t the only one he’d drawn. The bird of prey had rotated it’s head completely around. Feathers shifted and ruffled as it threatened the new arrival. Then, all at once, the bird dove for him.

Before Geralt had a chance to duck or repel the attack, Luna lunged forward. She snatched the attacker from the air in a careful but first grip. Her melodic voice berated the animal as though explaining battle strategy to a king.

No. He’d hazard a guess this was not an average mage. A truly bizarre individual. He took a walk around the property, leaving her to argue with her… bird.

The next several days they spent dancing around one another. The witch and witcher dwelled in silent agreement, simply existing in the same space for the time being.

Geralt explained his inability to age, and Luna seemed fascinated by the concept. The woman prepared three meals a day, disappearing between them for long hours. She never spoke as to where she went off to. According to his host, the Rook House had once been a single, cylindrical building.

When the Lovegood’s came into unexpected wealth after the war, it was remodeled larger. The elder Lovegood, whom made no appearance over the days, had thought it fit to equip the dwelling to serve as a headquarters if Death Eaters, as they were called, sought revenge. Luna had been taken from her home by the soldier’s during the war. Her father had helped design the dwelling so each room had multiple exits and hiding spaces. The dining room cabinet slid away to a long staircase that tunneled under the yard. Additionally, there was heavy warding around the property. The household’s mixed pot of residents were a line of defend in of themselves.

The witcher had volunteered to do the tending to them for her one morning. He’d been lit on fire four times and stabbed twice.

As she applied an enchanted healing suave to the gash, they decided the care of magical creatures was best left to the witch. Each evening before supper, Luna walked the length of the property and reinforced the wards. Geralt trailed along behind her, taking careful stock. “Are you keeping the creatures in or others out?”

“Both, watch for Gregory.” Gregory was an insect hound hybrid who hurtled weapons when disturbed. Luna giggled as Geralt snatched a dagger out of the air before it took his ear off.

“Fuck. Little bastard. Where is he getting arms to take up?” The witcher groaned.
The blonde resealed her last ward. She turned, plucking the blade from his hand. “He conjures them, of course. He’s a magical creature, much like you and I. Come along now.”

Gregory clicked his pinchers menacingly as the pair bypassed him. Geralt made as though to kick the serpent, not getting the chance to follow through as Luna yanked him away. Most of the animals in the yard hated him. He suspected it was because of their intense loyalty to the lady of the house. The White Wolf did not begrudge them it. He had never been so safe and so well fed in his life. There was a shiver that seemed to live in his spine saying this would never last.

How could it? He was not her husband or keeper. He was hardly her friend. Geralt owed Luna his freedom, yet she owed him nothing. How long until her hospitality came to an end? What puzzled the hunter even more was how isolated she seemed to be. There were no suitors coming to call. While she spoke fondly of her friends, all of the letters and parcels she received were from colleagues. Did none think to take stock of her safety?

Geralt’s anger flared at the notion. He still doubted that one could be as inherently good and pure as Luna appeared to him, yet from what he’d seen she deserved better. Over the course of their time together, the witcher repeatedly asked for more detail regarding the fling she had mentioned. He intended to lynch whatever lad had broken her heart at such an early age. Luna only reassured him her heart was ‘very much intact, thank you’ and that Neville was ‘a lionhearted boy with a wildflower wife’.

They came through the side door, into the kitchen. The witch did not shortcut her domestic tasks with spell. Using her hands alone, she started prepping the roast for the oven. The witcher leaned against the counter to observe her. “What monsters are native to this region?”

Luna’s whimsical laugh filled the air between them. “Well, the Burrow isn’t far away. Every now and again one of Ginny’s mum’s rabbits’ll find their way. But that’s far and few.”

“… you said the wards kept something out.” Geralt frowned.

“In a way. Perhaps it might be more apt to say someone. But there’s a fair few someones I’d rather not come round.” Her eyes didn’t meet his. The gruff man immediately recognized this as one of the topics that should upset her but didn’t.

The witcher crossed to her in a few steps. Luna stilled, unsure what prompted the proximity. “Luna.”

Her breath hitched slightly. Geralt allowed himself a moment of smugness that he finally had an effect on her. The caverns had not robbed him of everything. “You’re not here to guard me, you know. You’re my guest, Geralt. At least until you get your bearings.”

“Who would seek to destroy you, Luna?” There was an edge to his voice.

“You are so very dramatic. It’s quite funny, really. No one, not me in particular, anyways. But when children champion seasoned criminals, they take offense. The criminals, that is. You’re safe here. I’m safe here. I’ve been sailing the ship long enough to know where the fly mode is.” The witch attempted to shrug him off. She made light of every situation.

Geralt didn’t understand half of what she’d just said. “I cannot make sense of it. Why would a woman such as yourself be alone to begin with?”

“I am not alone.” The blonde scoffed.

“Those you heal and care for count for little.” He scoffed.
Luna opened her mouth to protest, then closed it again. He’d struck a nerve.

“From your stories, you have spent all your days being balm to the wounds of others. And now that the world is safe, you do not know what to do with yourself. You took me in, not knowing if I might be danger to you. Do you believe it your duty to care for all you encounter?” Geralt was goading her. He’d admit it. There was something hidden in her he wished to coax to light.

More than that, he was growing attached to her. The witcher was one hell of a hunter, fisher, magician, and warrior. Yet, he did have one fatal flaw. His downfall was his repeated stupidity with women. He convinced himself, time and time again, that the universe was drawing them together. First Renfri, then Yennefer, and now here he was doing the same with a woman he fell kingdoms short of.

“I – … I don’t make sense in their story anymore.”

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Geralt starts to catch feels. Luna drops them.
The Confrontation

Chapter 7

The Confrontation

Luna

The Lovegoods never focused on their shortcomings. They were oddball country folk who only saw the good in things. Their conspiracy theories were a mask for trauma. They knew the world did not want them. So they made their own world. Their little family had kept out of the first war by managing to be purebloods that none of the old bloodlines felt worth having around. At the core, it had been just that: the light had not wanted them and neither had the dark. And Luna was the most confident among them. She was unashamed, unabashedly herself, though she knew she was not without her faults.

It had been unheard of during the first war: remaining impartial. Xenophilius and Pandora had met years after Hogwarts, but during their education they’d both been targeted for recruitment by both sides. Xenophilius had cared little for muggle welfare; he’d never even met one. Her father had once described to her an encounter where Lucius Malfoy had approached him and inquired as to whether he had any opinions about the organizations that were coming about. The eldest Lovegood had only assured him that while he found pop culture pivotal in shaping the journalism business, he had no interest in being crew to a pair of rival folk-country celebrities. Malfoy had been so thrown off kilter that the rest of the Death Eater’s steered clear of the peculiar Ravenclaw after that.

Pandora, on the other hand, had turned down her invitation to join the Order on account of being ‘simply far too busy’. Luna’s mother had been a intensely self motivated individual and she would let nothing pull her from her work. She had very few friends while at Hogwarts, and less after she graduated. The accomplished witch was a bit of a workaholic, as was Xenophilius in a way. They both knew what lives the wanted to live and weren’t willing to sacrifice them for a significant other that wished to slow them down. They were two halves of a perfectly balanced coin, a love story for the ages. And, like many great love stories, it was of the tragedy genre. The sun rose and set each day after, but nothing was ever the same in the Lovegood household.

The loss of Pandora had shattered Xenophilius’ psyche. He was stuck in the moment in which he lost her, the sick realization setting in when he came home to find his only daughter covered in his wife’s ashes. The journalist did the best he could to fill the void left in the dwelling, but he was a broken man. He never took another wife, never so much as considered it, focusing on his daughter’s needs. Where he feel short was adjusting for the emotional impact the horrific event had on her. Xenophilius was frozen in time and Luna… Luna was different. Her silver eyes saw
beyond this realm and into the next. Her father was too weak to push the household forward, the loss of his better half too devastating, and Luna had stepped up to fill both her mother and father’s shoes. At the young age of nine, the witch was the stability within her household. To that day, without Luna there was no Xenophilus. Her safety and happiness were the crutches keeping him upright.

Then she went to Hogwarts, and she met a boy who needed that same strength and insight.

Luna Lovegood had never known herself to be more than a supporting character. And Geralt was clearly the hero of whatever story he was writing. Why he was so interested in her emotional state was beyond her.

No one had ever called Luna out on her toxic selflessness.

No one had ever even noticed.

During the war, there hadn’t been time for anyone to get to know the youngest Lovegood beyond what abilities she could aid the cause with. After the war, everyone had focused on their own personal happy ever afters. Neville had been a dutiful boyfriend. That’s just how Neville was: always doing his very best. In the end, they didn’t fit. The herbologist wanted to settle down in a little cottage somewhere and rest. He was tired. He had fulfilled his purpose.

Luna… Luna wasn’t sure she’d even found hers yet. They fought a grand war and they won against all odds. What a fantastic tale it all was. They had been children then. Was that all life was? You woke up one day and the world was quiet and you were done? Grow up, get a house, get married, have children, and waste away. What a terrible existence that was. Hannah was good for Neville; Hannah liked the quiet.

Geralt had only been with her a matter of days, and in that time she hadn’t been able to bring herself to sit still. The witch appeared back at the house during meal times, but the remainder of the day she was restless. There were articles to be written, research to do, and discoveries to be made. Not to mention the mysterious man taking up residence in her guest room likely wanted time to himself. He’d been forced to abide by a ring master’s routine far too long. Luna was giving him space to sink back into his own.

Men liked the quiet, didn’t they? Men liked things that were calm and simple and easy to understand.
Didn’t they?

’I don’t make sense.’ she’d vocalized. And even that small sentiment… she’d said too much. There was too much weight behind the statement, too much truth. It wasn’t a reality she liked to think about. In fact, she didn’t like to pay much mind to reality in the first place. There were adventures to chase and challenges to win.

“I’m not entirely certain what you’d like me to say. I don’t reckon I’ve got the answers you’re looking for.” The blonde continued, worrying her bottom lip between her teeth.

She pretended not to notice how his eyes were drawn to it. Imagining things again, wasn’t she? A chipper smile painted itself upon her face once more, and she attempted to direct her attention back to supper. As she shifted towards the oven, she found herself caged in. The witcher has little use for his warrior’s reflexes as of late, but they remained at his disposal. He held her gaze for a moment, then placed large hands upon her waist and steered her into the sitting room. Was this how students felt when McGonagall had called them into her office all those years back? Luna had no first hand experience; no one had attempted to confront her before.

Allowing herself to be situated upon her sofa, the blonde’s eyes widened slightly as the man took to his knees so they were eye level to one another. “… are you upset?” She asked, cautiously.

“… no.” Geralt responded simply, though something in his tone suggested he’d have found anger easier to express. Perhaps he was just out of his depth her as she was. “I’m -- hmm.”

“I wish you would stop calling yourself that.” An attempt to lighten the mood, though Luna still had to willfully stifle a giggle all the same.

The witcher groaned, scrubbing a hand over his face. “I’m terrible at this. I’ve never had a way with powerful women.”

*Powerful?* The woman was more than confident in her own abilities, but never had she heard that word to describe her before. Once Ginny had come into her own, everyone had started referring to her as ‘the little one’. It wasn’t her fault she was slight of frame, soft where the ginger had built muscle. All the same, she’d challenge any one of the famous six to outrun her.

Something fluttered slightly in her chest. She understood what he was saying. In theory, she adored people. She genuinely thought they were all so lovely. But in general, they found her quite odd and
off putting and she’d never cared to puzzle out why. Why did it matter? They accepted her for who she was or they went on their merry way. “You reckon I’m powerful, Geralt?”

“Are you fu -- kidding? Are you… kidding?” He corrected himself, none too subtly. “You downed me in a word. You broke the shackle from my neck as though it were made of straw. Do your own people not think you are extraordinary?”

“Not in a good way,” she rebuffed, “they do reckon I’m extra a load of things. They reckon I’m too much, in fact, with the so much extra that I am in so many things.”

There was a tick of time, an angered twitch of Geralt’s jaw. “They do not like you.”

A realization. Clues piecing themselves together into a conclusion behind golden eyes.

“Oh, no! They like me well enough!” The protest was spirited, loud. She would never condemn her friends in such a way. They loved her, she knew that. “Truly! I mean, perhaps the general public does find me a bit distasteful at times. And, yes, perhaps no one really, well, fancies me, but that’s entirely alright you know, I’ve been told I’m a bit odd to look at as well and that suits me just fi --”

“You were pivotal in re-balancing the entirety of your civilization and they turn up their noses to you!” The towering man was on his feet in a moment, pacing the length of the room.

Was he upset on her behalf? Even Harry didn’t rage like this when Luna’s was disrespected. To be fair, Ginny usually broke someone’s nose before her husband got the chance, but still. They all laughed it off afterwards; it was hardly so pressing a matter. The witch observed him with no small amount of concern, leaning forward to the edge of her seat.

“Sons of whores, the lot of them,” Geralt continued, “What a cruel awakening to find people still so ungrateful, centuries past!”

Luna shot up from her seat at that, on the defensive. “People are wondrous! They just don’t always fancy what they don’t understand, and they are under no obligation to! They owe me nothing!”

“They owe you everything.” The witcher seethed, conveniently seeming to forget the other five individuals that had played essential roles in the story.
He was overcome with emotion in a way like Luna had never seen him. In the past several days, she’d come to know him as a quiet, often stoic man. That was a stark contrast from the impassioned lunatic animating across her living room. Even as the thought occurred to her, she realized the irony of it. It was her who was made of madness. The man before her was composed of molten lava, storm clouds, winter nights, and anger beyond what she could conceptualize.

“I have no need for their approval. But I’m hardly a pariah.” Her tones were soft, soothing.

Geralt turned on his heel, eyes wild. In such a state he was, he hardly seemed aware of their surroundings. It fascinated the witch, honestly. For many years, she had been bored. She’d been stuck. Nothing new had appeared in her life and she had no interest in settling for a life more ordinary. This was strange. This was bizarre. Who felt so much but showed so little until it simply all came pouring out?

“Geralt, I didn’t say th--” Her words were halted abruptly by his handles cupping either side of her jaw firmly.

Luna’s hands flailed out by her sides in surprise, and then his lips were on hers. He was kissing her. She was being kissed. Something in her brain was short circuiting like one of Mr. Weasley’s many muggle contraptions. And… it was nice. Well, maybe nice wasn’t the right word for it. She’d been kissed before, but they had been boyish, innocent kisses. Neville’s hands had shook when they held hers. The young couple had been each other’s uncharted territory. The Gryffindor’s mouth was always dry and he’d blushed when he’d stared into her eyes. Neville had always been out of his depth when it came too Luna.

This was different. Geralt’s hands were steady, sure of themselves. One kept hold of her jaw whilst the other smoothed down to the small of her back, pulling her closer. Heat surged between them, reaffirming their instant chemistry. This was how it felt to be kissed by a man, instead of a boy. Luna felt as though he were speaking volumes through the contact. It was filled with frustration, sincerity, and a small, confusing hint of desperation. The once Ravenclaw acted on instinct that she did not know her body contained. She pressed closer to him, allowing herself to be swept away in the moment. It had not once occurred to her that he saw her as much more than a gracious host. If anything, his hints at attraction had seem joking to her.

The witch’s eyelashes fluttered closed, allowing Geralt to take control for a brief moment. Then, as soon as it had begun, it ended. The man pulled away from her, taking a step back as though to steady himself. Anger had drained from his frame, and now he looked to her at a loss. All his grand exclamations of ire died on his tongue. He looked at her as though he was a man dying of thirst, and she was a ornate vase of water too fine to risk handling. But he had. He’d clung to her like the world was ending, and Luna was glad it wasn’t, as she’d never fancied being forced to action.
What approval could she even offer? She had no understanding of the motivations behind his actions. What would she be endorsing?

“Thank you.” was the response she finally decided on. The witch reached out to pat him on the forearm, congratulatory. Noticing the bewildered expression upon his strong features, she merely shrugged and made her way back to the kitchen.

The roast wouldn’t marinate itself.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Ginny Weasley has big brother energy and no small case of PTSD.
The Ginger Who Would

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter Eight

_The Ginger Who Would_

**Geralt (ft. Ginny)**

She was going to be the death of him.

Thank you?? Geralt had poured his earnest into a kiss meant to express the sincerity of his interest and Luna had _thanked_ him? What did she intend with that phrasing? Was it meant to deter him? Was she playing coy? The witcher was lost in his thoughts. He sat among a large variety of rustic weapons in the basement of the Rook House. It should have come as no surprise that the Lovegoods had an armory. He'd only met half the duo and he expected anything from either one of them. The White Wolf found himself bemused all the same. More than that, the armory was composed of the finest weapons he’d ever seen outside a king’s smithy. He had never discussed Luna’s lineage with her. The artifacts spoke loudly enough. This was a family of the old blood.

Geralt had selected a sword reminiscent of his past. The silver blade was dulled from years of disuse and there was gold inlaid into the hilt. The man polished the blade vigorously, misdirecting his frustrations. He had banished himself to the basement for the time being. Luna was doing her midday sun salutations. When asked, she’d explained that she preferred to do them when the sun wasn’t visible from any of the windows because ‘he likes his privacy from time to time’. While he understood her elaborate posing was a ritual of sorts, he was only a man.

The robes the witch wore for the activity were customarily tightly fitted. The last thing he needed was to be sorely reminded of his failure to capture her attention with the display of her womanly curves. She was obviously slim; her day to day attire painting her shapeless. However, her night gowns and ritual attire told a different tale. The woman had wide hips and full thighs that tapered down to delicate knees and ankles. Her waist was slim but her --

The hunter quelled that train of thought with a shake of his silver mane. That was the last thing he needed to be dwelling on at the moment. The silver blade needed care to return to its former glory. The least he was capable of was the upkeep of basic weaponry. Years before, shining and sharpening his side arms was a nightly ritual. The act in itself was vaguely soothing. The motions were comfortable muscle memory. Geralt allowed himself a reprieve from his frustrations. His mind wandered to think of what the future might hold now that he was free.
As if on cue, the chickens outside began squawking loudly in unison.

The witcher was on his feet. He jolted to attention, sheathing the freshly sharpened blade. The door to the armory was only a few feet from the base of the staircase. A few athletic bounds later, Geralt was up the stairs. Luna did her salutations on the enclosed back sun porch -- she would readily be target for an intruder.

The White Wolf had gained his reputation for his savage nature. There was no flight in him, only fight. As he reached the back porch, his hand was already on the hilt of the blade. Maybe he was too quick to draw. Yet, he had his head still for that instinct alone.

The scene playing out beyond the coup stopped him dead in his tracks.

The whimsical blonde was practically floating across the moss lawn. A broad smile unlike any she’d offered him painted her features. This was a loving smile, one of complete adoration. Golden eyes searched for whom it had been proffered to, and fixed on the figure emerging from the wards.

“Ginny!” Luna exclaimed. The petite woman ambushed the other in an embrace.

The newly arrived woman was the other side of the coin to the one he’d come to know. Whereas Luna was pale, blonde, and unmarked, Ginny was an artwork of rustic color. A smattering of freckles coated her nose and cheeks. She was clothed in green and yellow armor, a teal robe pinned round her collar. Fire red hair was gathered in a knot at the base of her neck. Several strands refused to stay in place, sticking up wildly in all directions. Unlike her friend, Ginny was well muscled and tan. The lopsided grin upon her lips spoke of an easy confidence. She was a hurricane of a woman.

Ginny swung one padded arm around Luna’s neck. The hug was masculine, unlike he’d ever seen a woman gift another. Hanging around Ginny’s opposite shoulder was an ornate broomstick. The exchange lasted all of a moment. The blonde pulled back first, beaming, but the red head’s attention was elsewhere.

“Luna, who’s on your porch?” The visitor asked, looking thrilled. “A dashing stranger at the Lovegood residence?”

“Oh, that’s Geralt. He’s immortal.”
The Blaise Faire statement had the witcher raising a brow, but the redhead simply scowled. “Oi, Luna! Please tell me you’re dating another vampire.”

Luna blinked at her. “When did I date the first one?”

“Was that a rumor?” The ginger gasped, grinning.

They continued to chatter happily. Geralt was forgotten in the doorway of the porch, hand on the hilt of his blade, mouth agape. He let out a harsh exhale. A calloused hand kneaded a tense muscle at the back his neck. The witcher felt more a fool than ever. In his earnest to protect the homestead, he’d failed to consider the obvious. His host had loved ones, family even. She was not like him in the sense that any that came looking for him wished for a chunk of his hide. Broad shoulders stiffened, closing off. He crossed his arms and leaned against the door frame, scowling. There was no desire in him to play nice with her friend. Not after the humiliation of the day before.

“Geralt!” Luna’s voice rang out. That sunny smile turned to him. His resolve weakened. No power upon any realm could have refused her in that moment. His scowl faltered. Luna fluttered up to the steps with Ginny in tow. “I can see the thoughts growing bigger in your eyes. Did you find a sword that suited quite right?”

The ginger interjected before he could respond, “A sword, whachu need a sword for?”

“He’s a legendary swordsman, Ginny. He doesn’t make any sense without a sword.” Luna spoke on his behalf.


“You’re a Leo, you wouldn’t have.” The blonde protested.

“That’s such a Virgo thing to say.” The ginger bickered.

Luna sighed. “I’m an Aquarius, you’re thinking of Hermi--”

“Hm.” The witcher cleared his throat loudly. The two women went silent, turning in unison to
observe him. To his bemusement, they looked like children caught out. The pair must have been companions a long time to squabble so. Shifting his weight off the doorframe, he descended the stairs. Ginny was momentarily transfixed. Brown eyes traveled up and down the length of him, overwhelmed by the enormity of his frame. The swordsman took pause directly before her. He swept one arm out from his chest in an abridged bow. It was so informal he didn’t even bother inclining at the waist. “Geralt. Of Rivia. Pleasure.”

Ginny snorted through her nose, then mockingly bounced two fingers off her own forehead in a salute. “Yeah, yeah. Ginny Weasley-Potter, King Arthur. I don’t know the Rivia’s but save me the pureblood rhetoric. It’s been a decade. Your side lost, get over it.”

Well, he royally fucked that up, didn’t he?

It just wasn’t Geralt’s week.

The witcher scowled, moving to stalk away. Pale fingers came to rest on his chest, stilling him. By instinct he covered the hand with his own. His gaze shifted, discovering Luna had stepped between them. The ethereal creature was frowning at her friend. On his behalf? He enjoyed the chase as much as any other, yet he had believed she’d made clear she held no affection towards him only the day before.

“Ginny.” Her voice was stern. The sudden shift in demeanor took both the athlete and the witcher by surprise. “People aren’t always what you think they are, you know. Be kind where you can.”

The Weasley’s shoulders slumped slightly, ashamed. When someone like Luna was disappointed with you, you felt it in your bones. Geralt allowed himself to feel smug for the moment. A hint of a smirk dominated his feature, yet it was quickly wiped clear when the blonde glanced back at him. His fingers curled around hers.

“Come along, you two. I’ll put the kettle on and bring out some pudding.” Luna instructed, tugging on their interlaced fingers whilst maintaining the contact. She bounded up the stairs. Geralt had no choice but to follow.

Ginny trailed after slowly. The youngest Weasley was more than accustomed to her friend’s antics, though not in terms of relating to men. The only interaction of the romantic variety she’d seen from the blonde was with Neville. When Hermione had conspired to fix Luna up with Viktor Krum, the Lovegood had been obvious near the entire time. Viktor had picked up on it, somewhat, but Luna was difficult to carry on a conversation with when English was not your native language. She was one long run on sentence.
The ginger indulged her curiosity for a moment. This… Geralt had a strong build and weighted shoulders. It wasn’t the most apt way to describe them, but Ginny was married to a man that carried himself the same way. Those were the shoulders of one bowing under great burdens. Over the years, Harry’s stance had become more relaxed. The Boy Who Lived no longer did so in constant fear of an enemy swinging in from the rafters. They had their occasional rumor of a Death Eater resurgence now and again over at the Ministry, from what she heard, but nothing too pressing. The danger had passed. Voldemort had been a cruel master to many. His power had been all but unmatched. It was a miracle they had won the Final Battle at all. Ultimately, that’s what Harry Potter always had been: a miracle.

Revenge seekers after the war were far and few between. Unless they were lying in wait for whatever reason, there was nothing to fear. A chill went down Ginny’s spine at the thought. She glanced over her shoulder. All that greeted her eyes was the garden, the pasture, and the shimmering line of the wards. It was nothing. She was sure of it. They had just all lived constantly on guard for so long that she got in her own head from time to time. Sometimes it felt like she could still feel Tom Riddle whispering to her in the dead of night. The war had left a mark on them all.

So, who was this newcomer? Who was this man who wore battle in his stance but no familiarity in his face? He didn’t even carry a wand, unless he was hiding it. The ginger made note once more of the sword on his belt. It didn’t affect his gait. This was a man who always carried a weapon. ‘Merlin’s beard, Luna, where did you find this guy?’

Even with the Weasley’s instant distrust of him, she could tell he was soft for her friend. Luna had that effect on people. Either they were entirely repelled by her or came to completely adore her. The swordsman’s body language proved he was falling into the trap of the latter. A trap, Ginny reckoned, because as much as she loved her friend, she was as mad as a march hare. Even the Lovegood’s patronus took the form of a rabbit.

Luna had a hold of Geralt’s hand and was babbling away. The man was listening intently; a furrow had appeared between his brows as he attempted to decipher her quick speech. Merlin help him, he was gonna have his hands full with her. Ginny hid a smile behind one freckled hand.

Let the misunderstandings abound.

It had been far too quiet for far too long.
Up Next: Geralt makes the formal decision to court Luna. He didn't expect so much bloodshed to be involved.
Eventually, Luna had reclaimed her hand and was now using it to whisk together butter and sugar. Ginny had offered up some of her mother’s kitchen spells, but Luna felt it was less authentic that way. The blonde liked to do all her baking by hand, and cookies were already a fast treat. She was perched on the counter, legs hanging off the side, a large bowl of ingredients in her lap.

“Do you reckon I should make butterscotch or sugar cookies?” She inquired of the man leaning against the counter across from her. His arms were folded across his chest; he looked too large for the modest kitchen. It had been part of the original floor plan for the Rook House and Luna had seen no reason to expand it with her living there alone.

The witcher shrugged, “I can’t say I’m intimately familiar with either one.”

“What are you intimately familiar with, Rivia?” Ginny interjected from the dining room table, leaning back so far to be seen she nearly tipped her chair over. The ginger had thrown her Quidditch boots by the back door and currently had her feet propped up on the chair across from her. She’d come directly from her Holyhead Harpies match, hence why every muscle in her body was tense and overworked.

Luna observed as Geralt shifted to stare, unimpressed, at the visitor. The cookie mixture had become soft and fluffy in the bowl. The hostess would need to decide on a design before she proceeded much further. All she’d ruled out at this point was oatmeal. She would have had to have used brown sugar for those ones. The pair were already at each other’s throats again and she really needed input unless she was expected to eat all the sweets herself. Well… honestly that sounded a bit of a dream. Luna’s mind floated away for a moment, thinking of cookies.

“What do you take me for?” The deep rumble of the witcher’s voice reverberated through the kitchen, bringing the Lovegood back to reality.
“I mean, I’m married so… can’t really put a price on it.” Ginny cackled, grinning over her shoulder.

Geralt smirked bitterly. “And surely to a more patient man than I. I’d not have you for any price on your head.”

“I basically just said the same thing but like a normal person would.” The ginger heckled, giving as good as she got. It had always been a talent of hers: driving men to the brink of their sanity. She was rather impressed he was holding up as well as he was. Maybe there was something to this bloke after all. She stretched leisurely while she still had his eyes fixed on her. They didn’t follow the gesture. Again, impressive.

The woman on the counter was glancing between the both of them, hopelessly lost. While Ginny had a talent for picking up on the slightest nuances of male behavior, Luna genuinely had no idea what was going on. What were they discussing the price of? It was probably some sort of innuendo. She knew what innuendos were, she was just especially bad at deciphering them. When creatures wanted to mate, they just did a neat dance. That made sense to her. This was just silly.

“Well, I’ll just make the butterscotch then. Otto likes butterscotch.” Otto, the Rook House’s ‘spirited’ owl that was MIA once again. Once the smell of sweets hit the air, he’d be back around. All the animals Luna cared for were fiercely loyal to her. She reached into the bins behind her to gather the ingredients she needed. Then she hopped down from the counter to fetch another bowl, paying no mind to the stare down going on across her kitchen.

“Oh…,” the blonde realized, “I’ve forgotten the eggs. I’ll pop round the coup and grab some.” Neither of her guests broke from their ire to acknowledge her. Well, she’d leave them to it then. Ginny knew her way through the house well enough to make sure it didn’t catch fire while she was outside.

Said ginger had heard Luna’s declaration loud and clear. She simply hadn’t paid it mind over the war of wills she was waging. Maybe she was being a bit ridiculous, but in her mind no man was worthy of her best friend’s attention. There had to be some deep dark secret this stranger was harboring and she intended to get to the bottom of it. She’d made grown men cry enough times to know how to weasel information out of them.

“Have a seat.” The athlete instructed, kicking the chair across from her out. Yes, it was a bit for show, but neither Ron, Harry, or Neville were present so she’d have to be the big brother for now. She had enough of them to know how they acted.
The witcher sighed, but humored her. The well muscled man dropped into the chair across from her. It was only then that Ginny really got a good look at him. Sure, as far as his body went, he was fit. Ron would be jealously pouting if he was around. Her brother couldn’t manage to keep muscle on no matter how many of his mother’s recipes he convinced Hermione to make.

This bloke had the sort of face she could imagine Luna fancying. Her friend had never been attracted to the typical. Geralt had a strong jaw, a cleft chin, unnerving golden eyes, and long hair that looked freshly trimmed. Despite him showing little age in his face, the thick strands fell silver down past his shoulders. He was oddly pretty, emphasis on the oddly. Ginny didn’t find him attractive, by any means. She was married to the savior of the wizard world. All other men bored her.

“So… Luna’s fantastic, isn’t she?” The ginger started, gauging his reaction closely.

The witcher raised one elegant brow, amused. “She has been a most gracious host to me.”

“Why do you talk like you’re from a Merlin novel?”

“I cannot say I am much of a reader.” Geralt responded, unshaken.

Ginny felt her temper building. “Look, mate, Luna’s really important to a lot of people, so if you’ve got some sort of ulterior motive, there’ll be hell to pay. And I’ll be the one bringing the fire and brimstone.”

They shared a meaningful look. The swordsman was suddenly serious. “I am not a man deserving of your friend. Yet, it is by her grace alone that I have regained my freedom. As long as she will have me, my loyalty is hers. I am not without honor.”

The witch bit her lip, trying to detect any signs of dishonesty. This was a wacked out scenario; it always was with Luna. From what she was gathering, the Lovegood had stumbled across some imprisoned tower lad and was now his de facto keeper. That wasn’t malicious. He hadn’t come looking for her. While he seemed to have a lot of respect for her, he hadn’t reacted at all when she’d mentioned ‘a lot of people’. Something told her that he had no idea how important Luna was to their community.

“Alright. Fine, but if I --”
Her threat was cut short as a spectral hare burst into the room. The creature bounded up onto the table, tilting back its furred head to deliver its caster’s message, “The wards have been breached.” Spoke an unmistakable voice.

Ginny’s heart dropped into her stomach. She didn’t know what to do or feel. It was supposed to be over. Who would be coming after Luna? The war was done. Luna had no enemies at all, which had to mean it was either one of Harry’s or her own. Or worse, whoever was infringing on the property was a common enemy -- a death eater, a hag, or of equal detestibility. Ginny’s head spun with possibilities, struggling with the information.

Geralt had no such difficulties. As soon as he had recognized Luna’s voice, he was out of his chair, charging for the back door. It was not unlike how he had arrived on scene earlier. This time he moved with surety. This time blood rushed past his ears and he shifted into the gait of the warrior the world forgot.

The ginger watched this all unfold, then scrambled to her feet and rushed after him. “Luna! Luna, where’d you go off to?!” Her hapless calls met open air as Geralt swung open the back door.

Who was this man? No one she knew had reflexes that quick save her husband. Harry had been the butt of many cruel jokes the first eleven years of his life, then a literal target the next seven. His reflexes had been born from trauma and cruelty. Who was Geralt? Why did he act so similar to a battle ready Harry Potter?

They found Luna at the edge of the property, casting reinforcements rapidly on the failing wards. Something was brutalizing the barriers straight ahead of her, the normally invisible wall of magic rippling and warping under the pressure. After the wards had failed in the Final Battle, they had been careful to reformulate them in such a way that they would be around half a mile thick. As such, when the wards caved they would have time to react before an enemy came barreling at them. These particular wards required each invited visitor to offer a signature incantation before being allowed through. Without it, the wards would batten down against an intruder, informing the home owner immediately.

Geralt was in the thick of the chaos in moments, positioning himself to Luna’s right, sword drawn. Ginny brought up the end of the pack, looking pale and worried. She placed herself to her friend’s left, trying to catch a glimpse of what enemy they faced. They both looked to the Lovegood to provide more detail.

The blonde had since stored her wand behind her ear, switching to grand gestures of wandless magic as she called upon the earth to aid her. The wards were unique in that sense as well: they were tied to a unique magical signature so stayed active even when their keeper was disarmed. In an essence, Luna was draining her magical reserves to buy them time. The intrusion was inevitable.
“These wards are coming down any moment, they’re too damaged, they need to be reset.”

“Luna,” the ginger asked, “who’s out there?”

“Greyback.”

Ginny gasped: that was the worst case scenario. It had took nearly a dozen of them to weaken Fenrir Greyback in the final battle, and both Neville and Ron to immobilize him after that. The werewolf was not only savage, but his resistance to magic was notorious. Neville had to take him on with a sword --

A sword.

The witcher clearly had no idea who they were speaking of, but he seemed unconcerned. His golden eyes seemed darker, fixed on the threat ahead. This was the face of a man who would slay this monster or die trying, and, by Merlin, Ginny hoped it wasn’t the latter.

“Ginny.” A whimsical voice met her ears, soothing. Luna’s arms were shaking from the strain of holding the wards steady. “There’s no time. It’ll be quite alright but… we need to stand together. Some will keep fighting until they die. But he couldn’t have us before and he won’t now.”

The fire that kept her going all those years past welled up in her chest. Ginny gave a sharp nod and the blonde dropped her arms, wobbling on her feet as the wards came down.

Luna had never shared her friends’ belief that one grand battle would end it all. The magizoologist knew some of their opponents had been more beast than wizard, and she knew beasts well. They had long memories and never forgot a scent. Greyback’s appearance had even more pressing implications than that of potentially ripping them limb from limb. During the war, the werewolf had become a messiah for his kind. They readily blamed the light for casting them aside. If he had managed to make a resurgence, more would follow.

The Lovegood had only just reached the chicken coup when she’d noticed the bowing in the wards. Seconds later, the built in alarm system had sent bright red light to envelop her, an ominous warning. With great haste, the witch sent out her patronus to notify the others and set to work fortifying the wards. When she’d seen the familiar face in the distance, she’d known the efforts were futile. Otto had darting off, hooting madly into the sky, likely headed for the Burrow in hopes they would call for help. The terrified little barn owl would never get there in time for
reinforcements to be of use.

The wards fell.

Fenrir charged.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Fenrir's a monster. Luckily, Geralt's a specialist.
The Fallen

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter Ten

The Fallen

Geralt

In the witcher’s experience, peace was always short lived. Some nights before, he had awoken just shy midnight. He had been unable to resume his slumber. Instead, Geralt had sat up attempting to decipher the mural in the guest room. Luna seemed intent on painting every inch of blank wall, and as such, each room in the house told a separate tale. It was as though the paintings in the common areas were the main story and those in the offshoots were subplots. The only thing featured in his quarters were faces.

A young man with honeysuckle locks wearing yellow and black. A frail little creature with huge ears and a lopsided smile. An elderly noble with sparkling purple robes. A regal man with dark shoulder length hair and a wolfish smirk. There were so many face. Each figure was acknowledging one another, yet it was in stillness. These paintings were unlike the animated moving pictures of the books and papers found scattered across table tops within the dwelling.

Each individual seemed significant. A pink haired woman stood proudly beside a heavily scarred man, resting her head on his shoulder. A dour looking man with sallow skin and black hair had a cauldron before him, overflowing with butterflies. A stunning ivory bird of prey lead the insects upwards. Upon making Ginny’s acquaintance, the figure showering sparks upon them all became apparent as a Weasley. The red hair, the freckles, and the wicked grin was unmistakable.

All four walls and the ceiling of the room were coated in paint. There were dozens upon dozens of people depicted in vibrant color. The style of the tribute implied they were all dead. The figures had little in common other than a sense of peace and fondness. These were not relatives or celebrities. These were fallen warriors. Geralt spent hours imagining each’s end. His morbid nature allowed him none else. Ash and blood grew the gardens upon the land there. That much he knew for certain.

When spectral hare came to call, he knew the storm had begun. Enemies he knew nothing of were at the door. He breathed into instinct, allowing the warrior of centuries past to take control.
Corruption seeped through his veins and all at once he was capable of anything. For a time, he had been allowed to call this place home, and he would either defend it or they would bury him on it.

He’d taken note of the fear in Ginny’s face, heard the soothing words Luna had offered, yet it was a distant ringing in his ears. The sounds and sights slowed and blurred into the background. An enemy was on the horizon. The shifting of the wards obscured his view. Then the barriers collapsed entirely. They locked eyes.

His opponent grinned.

The alleged Greyback sprung forward. He was a hideous being. Thick black hair coated his chest, head, and jaw. It grew in sporadic patches along the length of him, animalistic. The creature was clad in all black attire, the top torn and hanging from his frame. His chest was crossed with horrible scars in various stages of healing. Black was eating away at his bright blue irises in an unnatural ring. The thing, perhaps once a man, had no grace about itself. Blood dripped thickly from it’s vicious, gaping maw. Geralt had known many lycanthrops in his time, yet none had appeared so savage outside the moon.

The mages began casting in rapid succession. Many of their enchantments bounced uselessly off Greyback’s hide. Others sunk into the ground around him, slowing him yet failing to halt him entirely. Ginny was creating the brute of the spells as Luna had used up much of her stamina retaining the wards. The animal grinned knowingly, directing his path towards her. Greyback had always delighting in preying on the easiest target first.

Geralt got there first.

Greyback grotesque features warped into shock as the swordsman forced him back several feet. A well placed kick off-balanced the lycan. The expression of a kicked puppy appeared for the briefest moment before the monster grinned once more. Greyback would readily tear into anyone. He had mistaken Geralt for a rogue auror, thinking to make quick work of him. But this was far more fun. It had been some time since he’d seen hand to hand combat, and he did so enjoy the feeling of blood gushing between his fingers.

Geralt was a daunting foe to have, as was Greyback. It was a battle of titans. Wolves tearing at each other’s throats. The only difference between was the two was Greyback was void of morals. The lycan was without the channeling rods both sorceresses toted about, relying on fangs and claws. He had one furred hand wrapped around the blade of Geralt’s sword, tendrils of smoke billowing outwards as the silver burned his palm. The monster’s free hand was aiming to rip golden eyes from their sockets. The swordman twisted and weaved out of arms length.
They were evenly matched, the power of Greyback’s feral nature weighing evenly against Geralt’s years of specialized training. The longer the altercation went on, the more the lycan’s confidence faltered. Never before had a single man been a thorn so deep in his side. They were eye to eye, Greyback’s breath more putrid than ever. The witcher craned his neck back, then smashed his head into the wolf’s skull. His opponent went tumbling back, losing his grip on Geralt’s sword. That fumble was all the swordsman needed. Greyback’s head rolled from his shoulders, hitting the grass with a sickening *thunk*.

Fenrir Greyback was no more.

Ginny Weasley lowered her wand, mouth agape. The bloke had just defeated public enemy number one within the span of minutes. All the fear and helpless she’d been feeling was replaced by sheer, numbing shock. She turned to her friend, seeking confirmation that she hadn’t just imagined the whole thing.

The blonde offered her a reassuring smile, then collapsed in a dead faint, power spent. She never hit the ground. A powerful arm caught her around the waist as the other sheathed his sword. Geralt cradled her against his chest as easily as one would a child. He situated his now free hand under her knees and lifted her, wordlessly carrying her toward the house.

The Weasley sat down on the ground. Greyback’s body was strewn out a few feet from her. She looked at it, or rather through it. Was this the beginning or the ending? The ginger drew her knees up to her chest. Otto returned from his search and fluttered down to perch on her elbow.

That was how Molly and Arthur Weasley found them when they arrived on scene a short ten minutes later.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Luna's an expert on the birds and the bees. Just not those ones.
Luna jolted awake well past midnight.

There was a distinct throbbing behind her temples, and she pushed back covers that felt strange to her touch. Careful not to jolt herself too severely, she sat up. The petite witch glanced about to discover herself in her own guest room. For a moment, she couldn’t recall how she’d gotten there.

Then, it all came rushing back.

Fenrir Greyback was dead. Single-handed, Geralt of Rivia had ended the once Death Eater’s bloody crusade. The display of skill leading up to the killing had been… immense. Much as she imagined heroes of old to behave, it had been a valiant (albeit brief) battle. The Lovegood had a habit of overestimating others, not the opposite, but it seemed even then she hadn’t given full marks for his abilities. Part of her wondered how her own altercation with the witcher may have ended had he truly been attempting to hurt her.

Speaking of which… the woman scooted up to rest her back against the headboard, still feeling faint. Illuminated by moonlight streaming through high windows, there was Geralt, stretched out in rocking chair that usually occupied the corner of the room. It might have been amusing, any other time, imagining the outdated thought process that had brought them there. The warrior most likely considered a woman’s sleeping quarters to be intimate, as he never sought her out whilst she was within them. It was humorous that this respect held steady even fresh from saving several lives. That is the only reason the witch could think of that he had brought her here rather than her own bed.

“You should take more rest. I have seen to all unattended affairs.” That deep baritone was soft, gentle. Golden orbs observed her carefully, watching perhaps to see if she might black out once more. “You endured impressively. I have know many a mages who would not have fared half so well.”
Luna cradled her head in her hands, willing the headache away. “Did Ginny go home?” was all she could think to say.

“Her mother and father came to collect her. They were shaken, as was she.” Geralt presented her with a tonic she recognized from her own stores. They had exchanged passing words on the properties of the potions cabinet but nothing more. He was a quick learner. The draught was for helping rebuild magical stores and could combat exhaustion.

The witch downed it in one gulp, scrunching her nose up against the taste. “Poor Ginny. She’s been on the front lines since this whole ordeal began. I imagine she’s dreading the dawn now.”

“What significance did the creature hold?” He took the empty vial back from her, setting it on the bedside table. The man seemed different now, more at home in his own skin. She remembered how comfortably he’d worn the spatter of blood upon his hair, and wondered if it was for her benefit that he’d clearly bathed sometime in the course of the evening.

“Fenrir Greyback was a man. Creatures are far kinder.” Her eyes roamed the walls of the room and Remus Lupin’s image smiled back at her. “He was evil. But not because he was a werewolf. He didn’t have a reason for it. Greyback controlled a legion of werewolves during the war. Ginny probably reckons we’re on the cusp of an uprising.”

The chair was so close to the side of the bed that his knees brushed the coverlet when he shifted to face her. “You disagree?”

“I’d have to consult my crystals.” She responded thoughtfully, paying ode to her knack for Divination. It was true that her readings had warned her of something formidable on the horizon. She had convinced herself they had been referring to her sudden house guest.

Geralt snorted. “I see you are not immune to the nonsense of wizards.”

“A little nonsense is what makes life exciting.” Luna insisted with the faintest giggle. What a day it had been. Her head was buzzing with bouts of new information to make sense of. Ever the Ravenclaw, she eagerly accepted the challenge. It was just funny, wasn’t it? When she’d believed there was little new left to see, that life had become entirely boring, a wild adventure had sprung to life.

There was a long silence.
“Do you think lesser of me now?”, queried the witcher, voice softer than she’d ever heard it.

“I’ll admit I wasn’t thinking about you at all.” It wasn’t intended to be hurtful. She never intended anything to be hurtful. Luna was simply entirely herself, full of whimsy and wisdom alike. Better to speak truth than fall prey to pretty lies. Them at the Quibbler had always prided themselves on not fearing ugly truths. The publication remained popular because Luna’s articles never sugarcoated anything. They may have been occasionally beyond the realm of common perception, but being inaccessible to some did not make them dishonest. “But as for Fenrir Greyback… natura non constristatur.”

“Nature is not saddened.” An instinctual translation. A man who had traveled many lands and learned many languages throughout his life.

“My hands are not clean of carnage, Geralt. I am not a flower who will wilt in the cold. Greyback would have killed us all, brutally at that. And he would have enjoyed every moment.” It was difficult to get a read on him, but Luna was saw the soul within the flesh.

By her reckoning, he imagined she saw him as some manner of monster. Many had condemned Harry as well, for sinking to Voldemort’s level. The other papers, outside her own, had attempted to pigeonhole them all. They saw Ginny as a lady knight, Hermione as an underrated genius, and herself as a naive little girl who had tripped into the whole thing. Now, Ginny and Hermione both had families of their own and Luna was still traipsing headlong into danger. Perhaps she’d become a thrill seeker as she’d aged, but she’d rather die of madness than boredom.

The blonde offered her open palm to him, beckoning. She watched curiously as he ghosted his fingers over her wrist, gently accepting her hand in his own. The contact felt important. Then again, the Lovegood had nothing really to compare it to. It had been the better part of a decade since she had looked at anyone as a potential partner, and she honestly wasn’t even sure if that’s what she was doing now. For once, Luna was entirely uncertain as to what she wanted. The man was attentive to her in the way a lover might be, but she wasn’t sure she wanted a lover. She certainly didn’t need one.

As lonely as she had been growing up, or perhaps because of how lonely she had been growing up, her needs for companionship were easily met. A pat on the back, a hug, a letter, or perhaps a remembered birthday was all she needed. Her time with Neville had felt like a social experiment. It had been nice, to have someone. A default, she supposed, was what people sought out. They wanted someone that would chose them first over all else.

Did she have that? Did she want that? Her father would choose her first. Ollivander would choose
her first. Near every animal she’d ever encountered would choose her first. Why use had she for a partner? A spouse? Then again, sometimes an overabundance was lovely. One could never have too many flowers, or fruits, or pairs of shoes (she was always leaving hers somewhere). Could one have too much attention? Too much contact? Too much devotion? It hadn’t even occurred to her if the battle worn warrior would be a good match for her, though she was sure it haunted the man in question all to often. Ripped from his old life by his captors, he had little else to focus on outside their interactions. In time, she was certain he would realize he was fixating for no good reason. All the same…

Life isn’t about who we are worthy of. Life is about who we want to be worthy of.

Ginny always told her that she made people better, but she liked Geralt the way he was. This was hardly the time to be thinking of romance, anyways. What need had she for validation if another war was on the way?

Her head still hurt.

His palm was warm against hers, his hand strong and steady.

This land had been her own little piece of paradise that she had built for herself. There were protections upon this place that dated back well before the turn of the century. Many who had come to known Luna, then laid eyes on the Rook House afterwards had been more than a bit confused. It was only upon witnessing the shape of the dwelling that they were illuminated to the fact the Lovegoods were indeed purebloods. The shape of building was that of a traditional household.

If you were to read a book on famous wizards in history, you’d likely come across two sorts. There were elegant, court sponsored mages who conducted themselves with flawless social grace and cunning. These were the most often written about. Then, there were the warlocks who lived in trees, wore outfits made of tree bark, and made shrines out of dirt. And as much as the rest of the pureblood community wished to deny it, the tree dwellers were there to stay. They had the same claim to the blood rights and rituals as rest.

Mad as a march hare, the lot of ‘em. She’d heard that phrase often as a child when her father had taken her out to the shops. At least the Lovegood line would not soon be forgotten; better notorious than nameless.

“What of us now?” The witcher broke the silence, beseeching her to clarify how she saw him. How she wished to see him. They had been isolated, kept safe from the reality of the world around them
by the wards. There was an entire world out there he knew nothing of, and briefly Luna wondered if it was her place to face it with him.

*What of us?* What of everyone? What of everything?

“Now… we seek the console of a specialist.”

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Enter Hermione, battle goddess of paperwork.
Geralt sat at the dinning room table. A decadent slice of rhubarb pie was centered on a plate in front of him. His appetite was always formidable, yet the events unwinding around him were of great distraction. He picked up his fork. He set it back down again.

The morning after Greyback’s demise, Luna had penned a letter to a close contact of hers. Why she hadn’t called on Harry Potter himself escaped him. If the public adored the wizard so, would he not have the most influence? The witcher didn’t question the Lovegood. Her friends were her own and she knew their strengths better than he. The warrior cataloged all the names he’d heard his host utter within his mind. With nothing else to attach his attention to, he’d found himself fixating on what if’s. Now, an east wind was coming and he felt more himself. All his life, he’d known struggle. Time passed and little seemed to change.

Otto, the barn owl, swooped off into the blue sky. Even the weather smiled upon them that day. As the bird departed, Luna put a pie in the oven. The timer had chimed at the same time the fireplace flared to life. A stern appearing sorceress had stepped from the flames. Geralt had been seated on the sofa when she arrived, catching her off guard. Chocolate brown eyes scanned him suspiciously, blushing when he caught her gaze. Thick brown hair billowed out around her head, controlled only by two thick pins straining to keep the wild locks in place. She was much the way a court physician would be: formal, plain, dignified. Her arms were piled full of parchment and a quill floated along behind her.

Before they could exchange formalities, Luna traipsed into the room. In one hand she held aloft a freshly sliced portion of pie. Setting the treat down on the table, she waved her arm in a beckoning motion. The pie had clearly been created to keep him occupied whilst the two witches exchanged words. It had been appetizing at first, yet as the voices in the next room grew louder he found it impossible to focus.
“...you stole a man!” Hermione, it could be none other, was struggling to keep calm. This was the first he’d heard her voice. It was low pitched with heavy intonation of formality. Each syllable was crafted with care. This women addressed the public on the regular.

The witcher let out a heavy exhale at the phrasing. His suspicions were correct. Luna followed her instincts, be damned the consequences. Her government sought to regulate her and she refused. It wasn’t a side effect of being a mage. It was the reality of being Luna Lovegood.

“He’d been stolen already.”

“Nonetheless, you should not have kept it to yourself.” There was no doubt Hermione was enunciating around a scowl. “Whether he’s as ancient as you claim he is or not, he needs to be registered.”

“Only wizards need to be registered.” Luna shot back.

“And?” A touch of humor.

“Geralt isn’t precisely a wizard. He’s a witcher.”

“Well, magical creatures ought to be registered all the same.” Hermione reasoned.

“Alright, we’ll start with the house elves. Do you wish to list owners as well?” There was a dryness to the Lovegood’s voice he hadn’t heard before.

“That isn’t fair.” A struck nerve.

“Exactly my reasoning.” The blonde stated pointedly. “Registration is suppression. You may trust your precious Ministry all you like, but I’m not convinced it’s free of double agents. Harry ensured the Rotfang Conspiracy was put to rest. What has the registry done?”

Hermione gave an almighty sigh. “Harry only said that to ease your mind. That conspiracy was
never proven.”

“I will not allow you to treat Geralt as a test subject.”

All at once, they had the witcher’s full attention. Had he been too generous in his imaginings of the modern sorcerers? After his childhood had been stolen from him by a cruel roulette, he’d been treated as a detestable mutant. He had accepted the reality of being different. Whether this reality spurned him or accepted him was of no consequence. His profession was easily accomplished solo. Only curiosity kept him tuned into the conversation. If they sought to cage him once more, there would be a rude awakening waiting for them.

“That’s not my intention.” Stern but apologetic words. “I only want to keep you safe. Luna, you know nothing about this man.”

Here was the moment the concerned townspeople turned the curious maiden upon him. History had no new tales to write. The witcher sighed. Golden eyes scanned the length of the residence, taking note of the most readily available exit routes.

“I know that he saved countless lives yesterday, including Ginny’s and my own.” Luna’s voice allowed for no contest. Whimsical tones rooted themselves, a great oak of stubbornness growing up around them.

Geralt stilled. How could she be so sure of him? He was neither good nor evil. There was little he had done in his life he had come to regret. Luna was a pillar of light. What business had she vouching for him?

“I am very grateful for that. But you can’t continue with this blind faith all the time.” Hermione grit out.

The mighty White Wolf rose from the table, disregarding the sustenance before him. Another time, another place. With a subtly strange for his large form, he took leave of the dining room. The two mages were so enraptured in their conversation they failed to notice him in the door frame.

Luna and Hermione were huddled together near the end of the hall. The posture was intended to muffle their conversation. In their excitement, they had forgotten that. The brunette had her arms folded coolly across her chest. Luna was speaking with great animation, illustrating her points with hand gestures. There was a wildness in her eyes. She truly had to detest the governing body in
question to be so riled. This was a conversation the pair revisited time and time again, clearly.

“I am not the one who fails to see what is plain before their eyes.” Luna insisted.

“If I don’t register him, someone will.”

“Then register him as something mundane and unremarkable.”

“I won’t falsify documents, not even for you.”

“Registering him in any form is falsification. Corrupt too. I’ll not see him back in chains.”

The brunette pressed two fingers to her temple. “Once the news about Greyback gets out, reporters won’t rest until they find out everything about him.”

“Tell them it was her who championed the beast.” The witcher interjected bluntly.

The elder of the two nearly jumped out of her skin. Both mages spun to face him. The brunette was blushing vaguely, embarrassed to be overheard. Her jaw opened and shut several times. His words had shocked her. Now she struggled to formulate a response. Luna, however, was grinning broadly, wildly. The argument had not strung tension through her frame the way he might expect.

Hermione regained her voice. Her next question was incredulous. “Excuse me? You did our community a great service and you don’t want to be honored for it?”

The swordsman shrugged languidly. “I have slain countless monsters. There is little honor in killing. The stories have forgotten me. This will be no different. I would rather save us all the headache than be a temporary plaything for overzealous bards.”

The once Granger chewed on her lip. There was a long pause. “Well… I suppose that would do for the moment.” She conceded. “I still would need to investigate where you were being held.”

“For what reason?” Geralt pushed himself off the door frame, striding towards them. Hermione
recoiled. Luna stepped closer. Opposing forces. “The others remain because they cannot bear to be seen in the light of day. No magic binds them. They sit in cages with keys in locks.”

“Others?” The blonde chirped at the same time her companion stated, “I’d like to determine that for myself, thank you very much.”

The witcher glanced evenly between the two. His gaze steadied on Hermione. “Suit yourself, little one.” He goaded. The brunette soured, clenching her jaw.

The blonde stepped between them. Were all her companions prone to violence? She acted as a perpetual peace maker. “I can say very much the same. Regarding where I found him, that is. If you back trace the Nundu portkey, it’s a kilometer southwest. But… I was entirely unaware others resided there. I only located him due to his magical signature, you know.”

The official let out yet another sigh. Her job was hard enough as it was with all the Ministry red tape she was constantly navigating. Acting as a makeshift auror was hardly her calling. She gathered her bearings, cleared her throat, and turned to face the man in question formally.

“It would be best to move you to a safe house in the mean time, Mr. Rivia.”

“Here suits me fine.” Geralt smirked, inclining his head to her. In a battle of wills, she’d find him even less pliable than the Lovegood.

“I must insist.” The woman tried again.

“He’s staying with me, Hermione.” The blonde bolstered the warrior’s side of the stand off. She was slight of frame but never spirit. “He’s plenty safe here.”

The once Gryffindor’s jaw clenched. First she met Luna’s gaze, beseeching. She found not give there. Next, she fixed Geralt with a frustrated glance. “Fine!” The sorcerers conceded. “But don’t say I didn’t warn you when this all blows up in our faces. It was hard enough not to tell Ron before coming here.”

Hermione picked up the pile of parchment she’d discarded, looking flustered. This was a woman unused to not getting her way. The scholar scribbled something down on the top notation in the stack then shoved all of the paperwork into the satchel at her side. She had departed her workplace
so abruptly that she hadn’t even bothered to sort the report forms out. This was a peculiar situation and no specific document would suit. Making to storm past the other mage, her anger was quelled as the younger witch grabbed hold of her hand.

The brunette pursed her lips. “What?”

“Thank you, Hermione.” Despite their earlier squabble, they were dear to one another. Silver eyes held true gratitude.

Hermione only offered a curt nod.

“I’ll leak the story to the Prophet when I get back to the office. I’ll insist on an afternoon special. Those wards out there are obliterated, Luna. They need to be built back from the foundation up. I’ll send some au--” The bookworm paused; they’d only just discussed Luna’s deep distrust of the Ministry. “I’ll send for Hagrid to gather some professors to come round and repair them. In the mean time, get out of the house. We don’t know if Greyback was after Ginny or you but I’m not risking anything. You want to stick together? Fine. But do it somewhere in town until I send you an all clear.”

Her pointed look allowed for no argument.

“And Luna, for the sake of everything, comb your hair.”

Not waiting for a response, Hermione strode past the both of them into the sitting room. She was gone in a swirl of flames and an exclamation of “Ladies, Whitehall!”

The house fell silent. The witch looked to the witcher, befuddled. In a hapless effort, the Lovegood cupped her crown of ivory curls. She ran her fingers through them to smooth them down. No such luck. “All the brushes in the house have mysteriously disappeared. I think the nargles are getting nervous.”

Gods help them all.
Up Next: Luna is hailed as a savior. She wishes she could correct them.
The City of Mages

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter Thirteen

The City of Mages

Luna

Diagon Alley was bustling with life, children running about upon the cobblestone and vendors shouting out specials they were hosting. Gringotts had a new roof, Potage’s Cauldrons was selling self brewing cauldrons, and Florean had an apprentice handing out samples of an ice cream flavor that made the taster a master tap dancer. Evening was upon them, as they’d flooed to King’s Cross and walked the rest of the way. ‘Them’ being Luna and Geralt, of course.

The Lovegood had swapped out her baking attire for a set of sky blue robes that billowed out behind her when she walked. They were paired with fitted dragon purple dragon hide trousers (they’d been a happy Christmas gift from Ginny) and a long sleeved top. The witch was more battle ready than she’d dressed in a long time, but you wouldn’t have guessed that from the easy smile she wore upon her pink lips. It had become apparent from the hush that fell when the witch first appeared at the crossing station that Hermione’s plans were proceeding according to schedule. Little old witches and wizards whispered to one another as they took stock of her distinctive features.

In general, the public paid the least mind to the Lovegood, in regards to the famous six. To put it simply, pressing her for details was more struggle than it was worth. The reclusive family had always spoken in riddles, and the main question on everyone’s lips was why the Quibbler hadn’t been the one to print the article. The Quibbler had become a pillar of truth for the latest and greatest news during the war. Xenophilius had proofread and sent out the newest edition only that morning. Within the pages of said paper were articles written by the youngest Lovegood herself. They could not puzzle out why she had not included a first hand account of the Greyback incident when 70% of the columns were penned by the peculiar witch.

Sure, she spoke in circles, but in regards to grand events she had always been forthcoming. The Daily Prophet had been the one to announce the news and no one knew what to make of it. In all honesty, they’d all but forgotten about the conspiracy theorist. The recent gossip rags had only featured information about Harry Potter’s auror reformation, Ginny Weasley’s latest wins, and a speculative article about whether or not Hermione Granger was stepping out on her husband. A cruel rumor, of course, but the head of the Department of Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures seemed aloof as of late.
Even the reporters at the Prophet were now itching for the scoop. What they truly wanted was a first hand account of the infamous Fenrir Greyback’s demise. The press release had been vague, essentially only names and cause of death. Now came the race between the popular publications for the rights to the hard hitting story. They’d risk enduring Luna Lovegood’s natterings if it meant laying claim to the only big resurgence story in the better part of a decade.

So, why was Luna so free to mill about and get the lay of the land over at Diagon Alley? Well, basically, the journalists were terrified, to be entirely honest. As the woman and her unidentified companion passed Gringotts, a cry of ‘that’s her!’ had rang up from a crowd of camera toting fiends. Absolutely beside themselves, the reporters had scrambled forward, as politely as possible, to take first crack at the story. The first to reach the pair had been a tall, dull faced wizard named Melvin Melborne. “Ms. Lovegood, a word!”, he’d exclaimed, fruitlessly attempting to elbow the competition out of his way. They were all shouting in unison. Melborne quickly decided that his only chance was to muscle up directly beside the petite blonde as he fished for details.

This was his biggest mistake.

Up until that point, the crowd had been paying the witch’s companion no mind. The man was large and had unique features, but to those used to seeing half giants and half veelas out and about, he was hardly remarkable. The stoic figure was clad in all black, as per usual, and had been giving his guide a wide berth as he took stock of all the remarkable shops that lined the alley. Melborne didn’t spare him a glance as the reporter beat out the crowd. Only when the wizard reached out, most likely with the intention of tapping the blonde on the shoulder, did he find his left knee kicked out from under him. The sickening crack had everyone closing in reversing their strides, rearing back in horror. The witcher, no expression present upon his strong features, grabbed the smaller man by the root of his hair and tossed him bodily back into the swarm of vultures.

A fellow reporter with basic knowledge of medical magics was quick to tend to him, even as Luna turned back to figure out what all the fuss was about. The once Ravenclaw inspected the scene, then turned her starry gaze upon the witcher. “Was that entirely necessary? We really ought to have a conversation on your people skills.”

Geralt steps closer to her, scowl painting itself upon his visage. “A man lays a hand upon a woman in my sight without her say so and he loses said hand. He’s retained his limbs. This is a mercy.”

It was a justice system, she’d give him that. Luna wasn’t opposed to instant karma, and she wasn’t exactly a fan of how other journalists conducted themselves. To be fair, she very rarely had to report on mainstream events. The contents of the Quibbler were entirely unique, no competition for stories or subjects. It must have been a nightmare to race to the finish on editions so bland that they needed to make up scandals for gossip rags. Every article in the Quibbler was thrice confirmed,
even if the general public tended to find all three sources suspect.

Granting disapproval wasn’t her forte. Luna preferred things that were slightly inane. She liked people who spoke out of turn and acted on pure instinct. If the witcher had truly felt Melborne worth punishing, she wouldn’t question it further. All the same, maybe she’d go over some conflict resolution scenarios a bit later with him. Probably not. To thine own self be true.

Luna let one shoulder rise and fall in a dismissive gesture. “Alright. But do keep the maiming to a minimum. We’ve places to be, you know.”

“Hmm.” The witch could have sworn she saw the ghost of a smile tugging at his lips.

They reached the other side of Diagon Alley in relative peace, arriving outside twin doors. On either side of the doors were business fronts: Ollivanders to the left and Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes to the right. A thin staircase led up and back, looping back around the front of shops into a row of flats. There were large crystal windows above them. Thick taupe curtains were roped back from the center, floor length window. It was a sun porch, of sorts. Xenophilius Lovegood had retired to a spacious flat that housed his printing press, his neighbors being Garrick Ollivander and George Weasley. The chaotic orange drapery of the latter mentioned flat was bound up tight. The former had no windows at all.

From the street, passerby’s could see a large rectangular table pushed against the glass of the window. Matching sofa’s sat at either end of the oak display. There were stacks of old Quibbler editions that reached several feet in the air, but the editor of said publications was nowhere to be seen.

The younger Lovegood peered upwards, shielding her eyes from the sun in an attempt to spot him. “We’re here to see my father.” She hadn’t mentioned that before, “Well, I am anyways. It’ll probably be best if I go on ahead first. Daddy’s a bit delicate these days.”

There was a steep incline of that silver mane, and Geralt shifted to lean himself against a lamp post opposite the entrance. It seemed he was keeping his features carefully schooled seeing as they were in an unfamiliar setting. “What will you tell him?”

“The truth.”

Chapter End Notes
Up Next: Neville is always the last to know, but the first to come running.
Neville Longbottom lived a simple, blissful life. After his failed stint as an auror, he might have fallen to wallowing over the ordeal had his mentor and friend Pomona Sprout not called on him to succeed her. The many wars she’d lived through had tired the jolly old woman. Year after year, the witch had near single-handedly produced the mass crop the potions masters and healers at Hogwarts required. Pomona grew weary of nurturing healing plants to stopper wounds and mend together fractured minds. She wished to grow flowers from the fires that had left them all scarred.

Neville had been recalculating his approach to life, forever the underdog, when he’d received a letter from the previous herbology professor inquiring as to his interest. It had been a choice that required little thought. All his life, Neville Longbottom had been the underdog. There were few skills he was known for, save valor and perseverance. Neither did much to grow the pocketbook. Herbology was not a particularly sought after skill. It was underrated, similar to how the man had been in his youth.

Near a decade later, the lionhearted boy was now a man. He paced the length of Hogwarts greenhouses, inspecting each flower and bulb. Plants had a specific love language that you had to be naturally attuned to. A green thumb could not be taught. However, the nuances of each classification of greenery could be cataloged. As a professor, the once Gryffindor sought to cater to those he found to be struggling. He taught each student that their circumstances did not define them. When a flower wilted, it was because it was not given the proper resources to survive. All could thrive with the right nourishment.

He was grateful for all he had: great friends, a peaceful career, and a gorgeous wife. Hannah Abbott had always been kind to the slow bloomer, even when he’d been the running joke of the castle. They’d fallen out of touch that final year at Hogwarts when tensions ran too high. He hadn’t reckoned she’d thought much of him anyways. It wasn’t until late that same summer did they come back in contact, meeting by chance in Hogsmeade when Neville had been on a date with Luna Lovegood.

Oh, by Merlin’s beard, Luna Lovegood. The herbologist’s nostalgia brought him round to her all
too often. He loved his wife, don’t get him wrong. Hannah was sweet, empathetic, compassionate, and calm. One day, she might even be the mother to his children. They had discussed it a few times. Neither was sure whether they wanted to go that route, but Neville was certain the once Hufflepuff would be a phenomenal mother. Hannah was a garden of good things, vibrant flowers swaying sweetly in a summer breeze. She was peace and love and a future he was proud to call his own. Hannah was a house on a hill with a pie baking in the windowsill. She was a warm fire and a freshly dried dressing gown in the dead of winter. Hannah was everything Neville had ever wanted.

Luna was… the smell of the air after it rained. Roots cracking through pavement as they grew out from a grand oak tree. You tried to capture rainwater in a jar during a storm, thinking you’d understand her more after, but she was not there. Luna was not in the rain, or the sun, or the breeze. Luna existed despite these things.

The youngest of the Longbottom line had come to Hogwarts a frightened lad. He was scared of monsters, the dark, and his classmates. Pretty girls made him nervous and he found himself poorly suited to Gryffindor. At fifteen years old, the boy had started to come into his own. Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Ginny had bolstered his confidence and self worth. Neville had started to believe in himself, just a bit, when he met Luna Lovegood.

At fourteen years old, Luna was infamous. Her inane ideas and her none-too-cautious view of the world made her an outcast. The thing had baffled the young wizard was how she didn’t seem to mind it one bit. Whenever Neville was mocked, he flushed, he angered, or he hid himself. Luna existed louder. On matters from criticism to death itself, Luna was unafraid. Those silver eyes had seen and had been seen. It baffled the then Gryffindor. It pulled him in; it shifted his spirit. Many years of his childhood had been spent wallowing in self pity. He’d lost his parents to horror and madness at a young age. They lived, yet their minds were beyond reach. At the very least, he could still see them and hope for their recovery.

Pandora Lovegood was dead, and Xenophilius Lovegood was properly off his rocker. If Luna could endure cheerfully, why did Neville struggle so much? She made him want to be better. She made him be better. Luna was kind; Luna was different. Luna held conversations with wasps and loved when snake scales glittered in the sun. Luna, Luna, Luna Lovegood.

He’d really loved her, he had. He still did, in a platonic way. That’s what he told himself, at least. That final year of the war, he’d been fixated on her. At first, he figured that he was just searching for something to cling to among the madness. Each of them had to come up with their own motivation. He hadn’t meant to make Luna his. He hadn’t meant to put that weight on her shoulders. Yet, overall, she’d acted unaware of the change.

In the moments before the castle had become fully overrun with Death Eaters, Neville remembered charging through the crowds, screaming her name. He’d confessed his feelings to her even as fire rained down overhead and she’d smiled at him. She nodded and said ‘alright’, like it
was the most natural thing in the world. Among all that chaos and tragedy, something had clicked into place for the two outcasts.

And when the world was recovering after all that loss, the pair had been closer than ever. The summer after the final battle was spent making amends and honoring the fallen. Luna had no experience with blokes and Neville wasn’t exactly a casanova. They’d held each others hands when the wolves had come. When it was finally time to rest, the man breathed a sigh of relief.

Luna grew restless.

Neville had held a softness in his heart for Hannah Abbott, and that had been a problem. But he never once had acted on or hinted toward it while he was with Luna. He had been loyal to her always. And the Lovegood had an endless capacity for kindness. Not once did he wonder if she was imagining what her life might be like with another man.

Maybe that was the issue. Maybe if he’d been competing with another man, he could have kept her at his side.

No, it was never that she found their romance subpar. It wasn’t even that she suspected that he might be happier elsewhere. It was that the call of wild spoke to her in the midday sun, in the forests, in the high hung moon of very early morning. How does one ask nature to stop courting their significant other?

Sometimes he imagined Luna had salt water in her veins instead of blood. That she was a siren tied to the land against her will. That she was a celestial deity on loan from the stars to teach them to be kind to one another. The silver eyed blonde was so effortlessly extraordinary that Neville couldn’t keep up. She was always a mile ahead of him, and was not ignorant of the strain that caused on their relationship. So, one day, she took him aside and told him she was going on an expedition to the Americas and that she didn’t want him to wait for her. Nobody heard from the Lovegood (save her father, of course) for the better part of three years. When she came back, everyone was different, except for Luna. Luna was the same old brand of whimsy. Maybe she always would be.

The herbologist blinked rapidly, drawing himself from his musings.

Why was he drudging this all up now?

It was a beautiful day outside. The sun hung high overhead and students were bustling about the
grounds. Neville peered through the greenhouse panes to observe. It was nearly time for supper and the post was coming in. School owls and delivery owls alike soared overhead. The professor observed as a regal, vaguely familiar barn owl greeted Hagrid in his pumpkin patch. The half-giant unrolled the piece of parchment eagerly -- he never received much in the post. After a moment, a concerned expression dug into the age lines visible around his thick beard and mane. Hagrid pocketed the parchment and set off in a determined stride towards the castle.

‘That was a bit odd.’ Neville thought to himself. A gentle hoot from a delivery owl that had swooped in through the open greenhouse door drew his attention. “Hullo Oggie. Have you got the paper for me?”

Oggie hooted in the affirmative, dropping the tabloid in question onto the office desk.

The herbologist crossed over to him, digging an earth worm from his soil samples as an owl treat on the way. The bird accepted the tip eagerly. It nuzzled the man’s hand for a moment, then took leave of the building.

Neville eyed the stack of articles suspiciously. The Daily Prophet? He’d been expecting The Quibbler. Maybe printing was delayed on the latter. “Must be a special edition,” he concluded aloud. Hazel eyes scanned the length of the folded page, shock setting in.

‘FENRIR GREYBACK SLAYED: AN UNLIKELY HERO’ read the massive headline across the top. The top of an image peeked over the fold. An unlikely hero? Greyback was supposed to be secured in Azkaban. No one should even have needed to challenge him in the first place. The professor sighed, unfolding the paper to search for the subheading.

Neville felt the blood drain from his face; his surroundings became irrelevant. The tabloid slipped through his fingers. With a sudden start, Neville Longbottom was rushing off towards the castle.

The paper laid forgotten upon the ground. A dated image of Luna Lovegood smiling as she posed in front of the newly renovated Rook House played across the page. The subtitle read: ‘A secret swordswoman? Official reports claim Luna Lovegood responsible for Greyback beheading’.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Geralt sees a ghost, and it's not Nearly Headless Nick.
The Memory

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter Fifteen

The Memory

Geralt

When the witcher brooded, the world took note. He should have laid low on his first venture into wizarding society. Now the alley buzzed with word of him. Self control wasn’t his forte. Bards, journalists, paper boys -- whichever name they went by now was of little consequence. They were pests. He’d tolerated Jaskier at best. The musician forced his company on Geralt enough times that the swordsman had simply accepted it. There were worse things to have than a voluntary manservant. That didn’t mean he’d come to terms with the profession itself. Those that earned their bread from warping the truth were bound to the belly of rodents. He smirked fondly, remembering the way the pest had yelped when brought to his knees.

The sights and sounds upon the cobblestone way were remarkable. Ancient architecture reached to the skies. Children laughed and mothers scolded. Lovers walked hand in hand as they peered in shop windows. It was peaceful. Yet, most of the shop fronts had new roofs and windows. At some point, war had ravaged this place too. Images of men on horseback throwing torches into villagers windows galloped by his minds eye. Centuries passed, cruelty remained. He needed to be more careful now, the monsters looked like men.

Indulging…some sensation (call it curiosity, boredom, or whatever pleased), the swordsman hazarded a glance at the enclosed porch above him. There he saw Luna’s familiar form lead a slender man to sit upon one of the rustic settees. She perched opposite her father. Xenophilus Lovegood appeared thrilled and honored to be in his daughter’s presence. Animated hang gestures signaled the beginning of the younger’s explanation. Geralt dragged his attention away. Let them speak in private.

A while later the doors beside him opened, signaling Luna’s return. She mustered a sweet smile for him. She looked troubled. “This sort of thing is a bit hard on him.” It was apparent she’d known he’d been watching, even expected him to be.

A gracefully arched brow. “And not you?”
“Perhaps. But I’ve sat quietly for too long.”

A throaty chuckle escaped him. Geralt could see the warrior spirit in her eyes. Her fire ignited his own. It had been far too long since he’d seen a good brawl. A sorceress more starlight than woman hadn’t been his imagined companion for battle, yet promise lived in her frame. She was a creator, and he was a destroyer. The witcher pushed himself off the wall, standing at her side.

Luna tilted her head upwards, basking in the sunlight. The witcher refused to let his eyes linger on the smooth expanse of her throat. He would never grow accustomed to her effortless magnetism. He refused to let his insatiable libido distract him from the task at hand. Well, not again, anyways. Many nights he’d laid awake cursing himself for spurning Jaskier over the sake of misplaced love. In age, he’d learned to accept his loses with more grace… mostly. His honor and mission would take the reins this time around. He would do what he had failed in the past and rid this world of it’s monsters.

“Well, no owl yet. Will you come with me to get pudding?” Silver eyes were alive with hope. This woman and her pastries. It was a wonder her appetite didn’t reflect in her build.

“By your leave, milady.” A playful rumble of tones, accompanied by a mock bow.

Luna giggled, the carnage of the day before forgotten. She surprised him by skipping forward to loop her arm through his. Something in the way she smiled made him feel they’d make it out alive. The witcher allowed her to drag him along, his far taller frame inclining slightly to accommodate hers. Their surroundings became unimportant. They were alone in the world.

“Oi!”, an unfamiliar shout shattered the moment. What now? “Oi, Lovegood! Wait!” Geralt felt the grip on his arm slip away. Ire built in his chest. They both turned to face the sound. A man he might have mistaken for a distant Lovegood relative was pushing his way through a distant crowd.

Platinum hair was cropped short round pale ears. His eyes were silver, but not the summer moon silver of Luna’s. This silver was steel, regal, and lacking warmth. He had the bearing of a royal. His rich emerald waistcoat was embroidered in silver detailing and the holster for his channeling rod was encrusted in precious metals. The stranger slowed to a halt in front of Luna, holding his side as he attempted to draw breath. “Loo--Luna. Er, Lovegood.”

“Yes. And you’re Draco Malfoy.”
The aristocratic man scoffed. “I know who I am.” Malfoy straightened his jacked, indignant. Then, all at once, the bravado faded away. He cleared his throat, embarrassed. “Sorry. Old habits.”

“That’s quite alright.” Luna’s tone was polite, laced with a hint of confusion. *Have they never spoken before?*

“Is it true?” The wizard could contain himself no longer. “Greyback’s dead? You killed him?”

“That’s what they all seem to think.”

“Merlin, Lovegood, can’t you give a straight answer for once?”

“Fenrir Greyback is dead.” The witch obliged.

“And you killed him?”

“That’s what they’re saying.”

“I’m asking you.”

“Why?”

Frustrated, the wizard flourished a copy of the Daily Prophet. “This is you in the photograph, correct?”

“Yes.”

“So, you beheaded Fenrir Greyback?”

“It appears so.”
“Lovegood!”

“Malfoy.”

The pureblood threw his hands up in the air, poorly containing his frustration. Royals were spoiled little brats as far as Geralt was concerned. There were few exceptions. Malfoy’s animation shifted his gaze down and to the right. It landed squarely on the witcher’s pointed dragon hide boots. Up, up, up, the two men locked eyes. Geralt offered him a feral grin. This boy would never survive in the wild.

“Er, who’s this then?” Malfoy asked nervously.

The witcher made no move to introduce himself.

Neither did Luna. “Why?”

“Lovegood!”

Geralt’s grin widened, and he shook his head. He tuned the pair out as they resumed their argument. Rolling out his shoulders, he realized Xenophilius Lovegood was watching them out the high window. One hand held aloft a paisley tea cup. His fingers shook. The wizard was not elderly by any means, yet he was frail. He had wild, paranoid eyes. Geralt looked away.

“I just want a straight answer.” Malfoy was saying.

“The course of nature does not proceed in a straight line.” Luna insisted.

“You bloody well know that doesn’t have anything to do with an --”

“Draco, dearest, leave her be.” A third voice joined the back and forth. This one was smooth, elegant, and dignified. A lady dressed in fine gray robes strolled upon the cobblestone a few paces away. She had her head inclined, smiling to the towheaded child that clung to her hand.
The wizard huffed, pouting. “This doesn’t concern you, Astoria.”

“No more than it concerns you, my dearest husband.” Astoria was very slender, yet charming. Her movements seemed haggard, weak. Her brunette locks were carefully styled, falling smoothly behind pearl earrings. A charm composed of diamonds was pinned to her lapel. The memory of royals lived in her stance. The lady fixed her heir’s waistcoat before rising to meet them.

Geralt’s reality jolted to a halt. Devastation found a home in his gut. Purple eyes fixed upon him. Those eyes, those accursed eyes. The ghost of Yennefer of Vengerberg mocked him. In that moment, he remembered it all. He remembered the sex, the battles, the enemies, the arguments, and the love. The sorry excuse for fate that he had manufactured for them both. The golden strings of wishful thinking that he had demanded the djinn tethered them with.

For centuries, wherever he had gone, he’d felt the weight of those strings. The tell tale tugging of chords when she was sad, angry, lonely, or even wanton. The power of the connection rested heavily on the edge of his psyche. He’d lost her, betrayed her before he even truly knew her, and she claimed her vengeance even as time forgot what they once had. Yennefer lived in his mind, taunting him mercilessly.

Until, all at once, she was gone. The chords were severed. He followed the strands again and again only to find an empty abyss. Yennefer of Vengerberg was no more. Part of him, well wishing, attempted to convince him she had merely found a way to sever the connection between them. Yet, the bulk of him knew she was dead. He’d never mourned her. Yen left him decades before she met her demise.

Geralt tasted iron. Earth resumed turning on it’s axis. The witcher realize the group had fallen silent. He had bit his own cheek so viciously that crimson liquid was pooling in his mouth and threatening to drip down his lips. He swallowed too late. Astoria was meeting his gaze with no small amount of confusion. These weren’t Yen’s eyes. There was no hatred in them.

Draco Malfoy cleared his throat, drawing his wife into his side. Luna was shifting her attention rapidly between Geralt and the once Greengrass, attempting to puzzle out the connection.

Astoria spoke first. “Are you quite alright, sir? You look as though I’ve given you a great fright.”

“...your eyes.” escaped from the swordsman lips, his teeth stained red.
Luna was staring at him now. “You’re bleeding.”

“My eyes?” Astoria queried softly. “They’re my family bearing. I--…” The witch flushed, looking down. “I don’t hold with their beliefs. Draco and I…we’ve put all that behind us. I sincerely apologize if those of my bloodline have wronged you in any way, and I seek to make amends if I can.”

Her husband reached out to squeeze her hand gently. They were much in love. They presented a united front. The man who held himself proudly only a moment ago seemed unsure. The pair had much to be apologetic for. Their son clutched his mother’s leg, her tone scaring him.

The witcher shook his head. “No. Think nothing of it. You simply look as someone I once knew.” Geralt felt sickness building in the pit of his stomach. He’d rather not vomit in present company.

A gentle hand laid itself upon his arm, steadying him. The contact was a beacon of light in an endless cavern of darkness. Luna shared a meaningful look with him. She took knowledge from his expression somehow, reading into an explanation he had not given. Silver eyes were too bright, too clever. The witcher felt laid bare before her. How could she be so innocent and so all knowing at once?

“Can I ask you a separate favor, perhaps?” The blonde wasn’t speaking to him.

Astoria jolted, those haunting eyes hopeful. “Anything. You’ve did our family a great service yesterday.”

“Is there any chance you have access to the Greengrass archives?”

The elite witch’s expression crumpled. “I don’t believe so. I’ve… cut ties entirely.”

“I do.” Her husband surprised them all. “It’s not the same, but He-Wh----… Voldemort. He hoarded all the old records at Malfoy Manor. He wanted to make sure we didn’t have any blood traitors in our ranks. Mother held onto all the important tomes after the final battle. She meant to return them, but… well, we’re not on the best terms with the other old families anymore. What do you want with a bunch of dusty old books anyways?”
“Call it a hunch.”

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Luna follows her gut instinct, and it leads to a whole mess of emotion.
No chapter tomorrow, leave your feedback & I’ll see you Monday.❤️❤️

Her last visit to Malfoy Manor had been far less pleasant.

Not that she’d remembered much of it. Luna had been carried in half conscious and thrown headlong into a basement cell alongside an ailing Garrick Ollivander. The Death Eaters had attempted to torture her for information at first, but after several attempts had given up on it. Luna’s mind was a difficult landscape to navigate. The few Death Eaters skilled at Occlumency had attempted to pluck intel from her memories and found themselves lost upon long country back roads. The sun was bright, the air warm. They’d walk for hours and hours only to find another field of sunflowers. They tried beating and hexing her to no avail. Her optimism was her superpower.

Narcissa Malfoy met them at the door, shadowed by a curious Lucius. “Draco. Miss Lovegood, an unexpected pleasure. And… I know your bearing child, but I’m afraid your name escapes me.”

Guilt lived in their demeanour. The group that had come to call had dwindled to three after their departure from Diagon Alley (Scorpius was getting cranky and Astoria had taken him home). The senior Malfoys did not greet their son as warmly as Luna might have imagined, confirming the rumors that had circulated about them disapproving of Astoria. The Greengrass family was one of the oldest and most noble in the wizarding community. They were also notorious for their blood curse. Astoria’s body was rapidly failing her, the poison in her veins winning out despite her attempts to abandon her line’s archaic ideology. A poor choice for a Malfoy heir, where the wife was expected to play the larger role in the children’s rearing.

“We’re not acquainted.” The witcher responded curtly, lost to his own thoughts. All three Malfoys met each others eyes in a silent exchange. Then they looked to Luna, ironically, for clarification. She nudged Geral’s side, expectant. “Hmm. A name that means little in the common age.” He
scoffed. “Geralt. Of Rivia.”

Narcissa stilled. She tucked graying locks behind her ear thoughtfully. “Rivia…aren’t you funny?”

“Cissa?” Her husband seemed confused, as did the rest of them, save Geralt. The swordman was raising one thick brow at the matriarch. His statement of origin was habitual. Rivia was long gone.

“It is an old tale.” The witch expanded. “Of the ages before Merlin came into his own. Rivia, Lyria, Cintra. Kingdoms forgotten, from when muggles and wizards waged war with one another. Yours is that of an old blood, then, to know of such stories, Sir Geralt?”

A spark of respect came alive within golden orbs. “One could say as much.”

“Then your secrets are your own. Welcome, to our home. You as well, Miss Lovegood.”

Draco’s anxiety overwhelmed him, unused to be kept in the dark so long. Only the proximity of his parents kept him on his best behavior. The urge to be bratty grew ever stronger. “Mother, they wish to inspect the old records.”

“Do they?” obliged Narcissa, “You two grow more and more intriguing by the moment. Follow me. Speak with your father, Draco.”

The prodigal son bristled. “--why can’t I come too?”

“Draco.” Aristocrat tones growled, warning him. Lucius Malfoy had chimed in at last, beckoning his son into the dining hall. Ebony robes billowed out behind him as he exited, infamous serpent cane aiding his strides. The father was refined, commanding power despite his age. His son scowled but stalked after him just the same. The hierarchy of the old families was not to be trifled with.

Narcissa Malfoy led the odd pair down a lavish, yet cold winding corridor. The walls were lined with portraits of Malfoy relatives, some asleep, most departed. Their journey took them to a tall black door with an intricate snake pattern carved into the frame. The aristocrat knocked in a specific pattern, a code of sorts, and the door swung open. Lady Malfoy turned to stride away. “Take all the time you need.”
The Malfoy family library was vast and tumultuous. High shelves were overflowing with tomes and scrolls, along with marble study tables that were stacked with poorly sorted tabloids. Clearly the materials stored within were meant to be forgotten. Thick dust coated much of the furniture, and Luna tugged her wand from behind her ear as she took stock of it. “Tergeo.”

The warmth of the Lovegood’s magical signature gave life to the room, dust, dirt, and grime alike lifting from every surface and vanishing midair. The witch heard the man beside her drawn in a relaxed breath. Sneaking a glance at him through her fringe, not turning her head, she saw some of the tension he held himself with leave him. That was… peculiar. Did he find her unique energy comforting? She’d never seen that before. Then again, she wasn’t used to be around those as in tune with shifts in power as she was. Luna wondered if he could see auras as she could. Her own aura, as she’d been told in the past, was a mixture of royal and light blue. Spiritual intuitiveness wrapped in serene peace.

Geralt’s fluctuated. In the wee hours of the morning, brilliant red haloed around him, speaking of passion, drive, and verocity. As the day trekked on, clouds built of unresolved anger and bitterness dimmed the color. Sometimes it would shift to copious amounts of orange, speaking of attachment and addiction issues. Luna reckoned a man of his time had once leaned heavily upon liquors. Then, rarely, she’d catch him looking at her fondly whilst shrouded in lemon yellow, a great fear of loss smoked into the air around him. He was a complex and maddening creature, but so was she.

Now he was blue, dark blue like storm clouds, fearing the future. He felt his world was spinning out of control, and despite her developing theories, Luna was at a loss as to why he would be feeling such things so strongly and suddenly. What had the sight of Astoria Malfoy sparked in him? Who was him remembering? What was he dreading?

The petite blonde reached for his hand, curling her fingers around his large ones, even as he startled and gave her an odd look.

“I’m with you.” She affirmed. He gripped her hand in return, red chasing away some of the blue. The woman sought to lend him strength, comfort, protect him against the horrors of the world. It was an odd sensation, considering she suspected he’d already experienced near all of them.

They spent the next several hours exhausting the Greengrass archives, night falling outside, though the windowless library did not inform them of such. Working in unison, Luna would scour texts for mention of the Greengrass family and put them in a stack; Geralt would then flip through each page, searching. He didn’t offer an explanation as to what he was looking for, and Luna didn’t ask. Finally, the ageless soldier tossed the last of the novels into the corner. “It’s not here.” He all but growled.
The witch could contain her curiosity no longer. “What isn’t here?”

A long suffering sigh. “There was.. a woman.”

“There’s always a woman.” Why did that bother her? A strange irritation teased at the edged of her thoughts. *Men’s first loves never leave them.* Maybe it reminded her of the Neville-Hannah debacle, but even then she had been more resigned that incensed.

The witcher let out a pained chuckle. “Yes, I suppose there is. They told legends of her even as she lived them. They called her the most powerful sorceress to ever live. Her hair was carved from obsidian, her eyes amethyst. They wrote lyrics to her. Yennefer of Vengerberg. Astoria Malfoy bears a striking resemblance.”

Luna let that sink in a moment, racking her memory for what those statements struck in her. “Hair of obsidian… eyes of amethyst.” She muttered, fables and folk tales dancing before her minds eye. Clarity struck all at once. “*Accio Merlin’s Fables.*” A velvet bound story book flew across the room.

Catching the compilation, the blonde flipped through the pages rapidly. She settled on a sketch of a young woman staring blanking into the distance, then proffered the image to him. “Do recognize her?”

Something sad, old, and cryptic told hold of him. The expression upon his unique features did not shift, but it was clear in the way he gazed upon the likeness that it pained him. “That’s Yen.” He handed the book back to her, as though he could bear to see it no longer. “What is her connection to this household?”

Luna cradled the storybook to her chest. “There isn’t one.” She let the book settle into her lap once more. “This is a rendering of what historians believed Morgan Le Fay looked like in her youth.”

“What became of her?” His telltale rumble hinted at the opening of old wounds.

“Well, she was quite famous, actually. There’s a lot of different variations. Some say she was born evil, you know. I don’t think so, though. I think something went wrong in her. Something happened to make her quite sad. Some accounts say she was the half sister of King Arthur, others believe that’s just what she convinced him was true. She was quite skilled at twisting memories.” The blonde ‘hmm’-ed softly, saddened. “Anyway…she went quite mad and struck down King Arthur, who was the great wizard Merlin’s closest companion. The darkness consumed her. Merlin slayed her with a legendary sword forged in a dragon’s breath. It was all very awful. I never liked the’
story very much."

The man didn’t respond, he didn’t even meet her eyes.

Setting the book on the floor, Luna rose to cross the short space between them, placing herself down near enough to his side that she could feel the heat radiating off his form. She drew her knees to her chest, crossing her arms over top of them. “You loved her, didn’t you? There’s no shame in it.”

“She left. She went to war over matters that hardly involved her. I had my own to tend to. When she needed me most, I was nowhere to be found. It hardly mattered. She had washed her hands of me long before.” The warrior recounted the events as though they belonged to someone else -- distant, detached, stoic. It was peculiar, the lengths they all went to conceal pain.

“I don’t think that’s true.” Gold met silver, searching for insincerity. “I think…people who are truly extraordinary are often asked to chose between love, power, and peace. You can never have all three. You’d be quite lucky to have two. I’m sure she just got lost on her way back to you. The things that love us never truly leave us, and the things we lose… well, they always find us again.”

“Who is to say she loved me?”

“I’m sure she will, when the time comes.”

“You believe I will meet her again in the next life.” A statement, not a question.

“Everything must come to an end, eventually. Even you, Geralt.”

A long, meaningful pause followed. Luna rested her cheek on her arms, holding eye contact. The witcher seemed to be contemplating whether to move away or press closer. All signs pointed to the latter, and the moment surely would have been something more, had the discarded story book not begun emanating light. The pages gave way to a swirling mass of silvery liquid, wispy white smoke chasing itself around edges engraved with runes.

The witch clasped the man’s arm excitedly, exclaiming, “It’s a Pensieve! Sealed with a code, your name! Your name was the code!” The library rattled around them, the movements of the memories within the basin growing impossibly strong.
It startled them both -- Luna, who had never seen a Pensieve behave that way, and Geralt, who had never seen one to begin with. He rose to his feet, pulling her to his chest as he did so. One well muscled arm secured itself around the witch’s waist as they observed the chaos heightening. The memories were beckoning to them, insisting to be viewed. Powerful, ancient magic was at play.

Luna reached for her wand, but she was too late. The growing portal into the past sucked them both in, sending them careening down a long rabbit hole of confusing imagery. Though she knew the fall was only a figment, the witch felt the air stolen from her lungs, soil closing in around them. All at once, it stopped. The winds let up; the darkness dispersed. Geralt let out a groan as he found himself laying face up on the a hard wooden floor, his blonde companion tucked securely into his side.

The woman sat up first, still leaning heavily against him. Despite her being the one to identify the magical object, none of the properties of this one abided by common classifications. The Pensieve had been imbued with power unlike any she’d ever experienced. No, wait, that wasn’t quite true. Though she’d never faced Voldemort directly, she’d stood in his presence before. The energy wasn’t near as toxic as the dark wizard’s had been, but it was just as enormous. What was peculiar was how sloppy it was. The entirety of the gaggle of spells was gross overkill. The power was indelicate and unfocused. If she had to hazard a guess, this was contrived in the years before wizards fine-tuned their spells with wands. Wandless magic required massive stamina for the simplest tasks.

They had arrived in the center of palace sleeping chambers. Judging by the colors and decor, the large living space belonged to a woman. There was a changing space portioned off against one wall alongside a row of extravagant black and purple gowns. A step down into an offshoot led to a large bed and across from that was a writing desk. They were alone in the chamber, and Geralt showed no signs of recognizing the space. He barely spared their location a glance as he sat up, keeping one arm wound around the witch protectively.

The clicking of heeled footsteps was muffled by the grand wood door, growing louder as the figure on the other side grew closer. A mage stormed into the room, leaving the entry open behind her. It was Lady Morgan. As this was a memory, she paid no mind to the intruders. The legendary sorceress was clad in deep magenta gowns with a circlet woven into her hair. She had established some manner of nobility within the European castle already.

A young lad shuffled into the room, skinny and awkward, perhaps in his twenties. He was wearing the colors of a high ranking servant, perhaps a court adviser or potions master. “Lady Morgan.” His voice was deep, hypnotic, and beseeching. “You know Arthur did not intend his law to deal you any offence.”
“Offence? Merlin, he seeks to do away with our kind.” Morgan was manic, pacing the length of the room. Her polished curls were rebelling against their pins, springing out in all directions.

“Our kind? Camelot’s new law will only put an end to malicious curses against the citizens. T’will be of no import to you or I.” Merlin, the most powerful wizard to ever live, felt the need to appeal to her.

The lady pressed the back of her hand hard to her lips, as though fighting the urge to vomit. “I will not see it so. I will simply need to… **persuade** him such oppression is not necessary.”

“**Lady Morgan.**” The wizard whispered urgently. “You speak of treason. Your methods of **persuasion** are precisely what have delivered us here. I have held my tongue long enough in the interest of your safety. One day, your little memory spell will fail, and you will need answer to the King himself as to why you allowed this ruse to continue.”

Morgan paled, devastated then angry. “I thought you were my friend, Merlin. We are the same, you and I. I thought you understood. I thought you knew what it was to be an outcast as I was.”

Taking her hands in his, Merlin sighed. “Yennefer of Vengerberg is dead. Lady Morgan holds a place at court. Yet, you are no noble. Why did you need to invent such a thing? Arthur has no sister. The longer your influence lives within his mind, the deeper his hatred of magic grows. Free him Morgan, free us all.”

“I cannot.”

The image of the ancient pair rippled, the scene shifting and morphing as time flew past. Snippets of fiery battles, archaic enemies, and passions long fizzled out materialized and evaporated with equal quickness.

A deteriorating Morgan Le Fay sat in an elevated chair in a council of mages. They were counting votes on a great many things, only to come to a stand still when the matter of muggles arose. Shouts of disagreement rung out: some members wished to chain the mundane, others wished to live alongside them peacefully. Only one voice stood apart.

“I would see them all exterminated. They have no use to us, even as servants.” Morgan’s extreme stance threw a hush over the others.
Merlin, at the head of the table, leaned over to whisper to a man wearing the Hogwarts coat of arms. He was older, sporting a thick beard and the hair upon his head turning gray. “We… have always valued your boldness, Lady Morgan. Yet we cannot help but wonder it might be better utilized outside this council.”

The lady’s purple eyes swam with hatred. She scanned the crowd, searching for any that may offer her a boon. “You seek to banish me.”

“No, Lady Morgan. We seek to bestow upon you the Kingdom of Avalon. Worry not for the lands that have wronged you. Madness warps you further by the day. Leave Camelot. Forget Aedirn, Nilfgaard, Aretuza. Forget halfbloods. Forget Arthur. Live in peace.” A contract floated up from the wizard’s right hand and settled itself before the sorceress, a quill following shortly. “Sign and depart.”

Morgan met Merlin’s gaze, expression pleading. “There are things I could never forget.”

“Then forgive.”

The scene tilted on it’s axis, dropping the watching pair into another castle, this one of the magical sort. Portraits on the walls whispered to one another as Morgan folded various belongings into a traveling case. The Merlin from the council meeting sat in a magenta chair behind an archaic writing desk. “We were friends once, Yennefer.”

The raven haired beauty scowled, “Do not call me by that name,” she snapped, “Yennefer was weak, forgiving. I will not make the same mistake.”

“We recall her differently. Seems only yesterday a wayward mage hobbled from the forest seeking asylum. I was proud to be able to afford her that.” The wizard crossed the room, offering her a stack of scrolls. “She preached of a better world, one that would not scorn that which they did not understand.”

“And she loved a man who sought to control her. Yennefer of Vengerberg was a fool.” Lady Morgan spat, shrinking the scrolls and storing them alongside her gowns.

Merlin sighed, low and tired. “Ah, yes, the infamous witcher. I have offered time and time again to unravel the ties that bind. You insisted they haunted you no more.”

The memory had been captured centuries before, hence why those conversing seemed ignorant of
the effect those words had on their audience. Geralt stiffened, drawing Luna’s attention to him. The infamous witcher. Clearly, these events had been designed for his viewing and his viewing alone. The Lovegood had tagged along as a byproduct of proximity.

“The is agony, but t’is my own. The connection serves to remind me that I can trust none other than myself.” The regal woman insisted, though her words fell flat. Lies.

The wizard wished to protest that proclamation in a notable way, yet he simply offered her a sad smile instead. “As you wish. I shall see you to the ferry at dawn. Rest well, Milady.”

The image began to twist, tall trees growing up around them. They were in a forest this time. A handsome muggle in red and silver armor lay still on the ground. His eyes were wide and bulging, the life draining haplessly from his body. Tendrils of dark magic dyed the veins in his neck a sickly black. Blood dripped sluggishly from a gash the length of his throat. He was beyond helping.

Lady Morgan stood at the edge of the crescent shaped clearing. The crystalline dagger clenched in her fist dripped black blood. The implications of what had happened were readily apparent.

Merlin appeared behind her, eyes dark and expression blank.

“It had to be done. He would never have left our kind in peace.”

“You are wrong, Morgan.” Grief was heavy in the wizard’s voice. “Arthur was always kind to you. This killing was meaningless. He died in vain. Was this what you wanted? Senseless violence?”

“I want…” for one brief moment, her sanity returned to her. “I want what I have always wanted. I want everything.”

“Then you will die with nothing.”

A smile ghosted across her lips, almost reaching her eyes. “Tell me him for me. Why I never returned.”

“I would not know what to say.”
“Then show him.”

The remarkable wizard contemplated it, inspecting the mage before him thoughtfully. “So be it.” Near quicker than the eye could see, Merlin drew the almighty Excaliber from his belt. Darting forward, he drove the blade into Morgan’s torso. She clung to him, choking on her own blood. The corruption had infected her so deeply the blood running down her jaw was charcoal black. The life drained from her body visually, her eyes glowing wholly purple as her mouth hung open in a silent scream.

Morgan Le Fay passed beyond the veil. The image did not fade immediately. All at once, Luna realized they were not viewing Lady Morgan’s memories, but those of Merlin himself. The wizard stood hollowly between the corpses of his two comrades. This was the end of the recounting.

The silvery winds picked up again, depositing them back onto the floor of Malfoy Manor’s Grand Library. Narcissa Malfoy stood in the doorway, fist hovering in the air, having just performed the opening sequence. She had appeared just in time to witness the storybook spitting the duo back out. The regal swordsman landed on his back, settling with just enough time to have the whimsical magizoologist land on top of him. They were both shaken, the former in what may have been a state of shock. No one said anything.

Narcissa cleared her throat, at a loss. “…supper?”

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Speaking of exes, Geralt wished Luna's was easier to hate.

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