

# Quiet Moments

*This is the keyword-rich,  
attention-grabbing subtitle*

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TITLE

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**M***ara sighs as she puts away her gloves in her*  
night stand. She rubs the palms of her hands together slowly, turning her hands over as she follows every line of scar tissue that crosses her once smooth, pale skin. Being home should be a relief, a much needed break from the chaos that has been her life for so long now. But instead, she can't help but compare life before leaving Essestria to now. She gingerly traces up the scar

on her arm and grimaces at the memory of receiving it.

Curses, especially the type to consume anything magical, are not unfamiliar to the average adventurer, but for Mara, First Princess of Essestria, they are a new development. But when faced with the ultimatum of watching children die from this curse or take it on herself... Well, princess or not, she chose to acquaint herself with it. What kind of monster would she be otherwise?

“Wonder if I’ll ever get used to this,” she murmurs to herself.

A knock at the door startles her, and she whirls around, waves of copper hair flying about, to find a young man leaning against the door frame to her room. Helios. He smiles and gives a small wave.

She frowns. “What do you want?”

He pushes off the door frame and brings a fist to his chest, moving it in small circles. “Sorry,” he mouths.

“You’ve already apologized,” Mara replies before moving over to take a seat at her vanity. She glances back over her shoulder at him, and he cocks an eyebrow at her, fist still over his heart. “It’ll just... take some time,” she continues. “You can’t just do what you did and expect everything to be okay again.”

She should be used to betrayal. A tactic used to gain power and favor from those as high standing as her family. But she had trusted him. Let him stand watch at night while she and the rest of their party rested. Had his back in battle against all manner of monsters and eventually man. Told secrets and insecurities to him when the others were too preoccupied to eavesdrop. All this only for him to sell the party, her, out for what appeared to be a mere trinket. But of course, in a land of myth and magic, there are no such things as “mere trinkets”.

Helios drops his hand to his side and nods in understanding. Moments pass in awkward silence as he remains in the open doorway, carding a hand through his dark mess of hair.

“Ugh, come in,” Mara grumbles, beckoning him into her room. He seems to brighten just a bit at this as he enters the room, closing the door behind him. “You just came to apologize?” she asks.

He gestures to some parchment and a pen on her vanity, and she quickly hands it over. He scribbles across the page and turns it toward her. “Wanted to check on you.”

“I’m fine,” she replies snappier than she means to.

“Just... making sense of my new reality I guess.”

He nods again and points at her hands.

“Y-yeah,” she says, hiding her hands in her lap. “Getting used to that too. Mjirn went to hold my hand earlier and flinched, and -“ Her gaze drops to her hands. What a silly thing to be upset about. Griffin is covered in scars and never cries, who is she to break down over some roughed up hands? Especially hands that helped save children for the gods’ sake!

Helios taps her shoulder, but she just looks up to his reflection in the vanity’s mirror instead of turning to face him. He waves his hand in front of his face, closing it into a fist again.

Mara sighs. This conversation would be so much easier with Elowen translating. A conversation with the ever curt and enigmatic woman instead may even be less awkward than this one, maybe preferable. “What?” she asks.

His reflection points to her lap then holds out his hand expectantly, and she turns to tentatively offer a hand to him. He takes it, rubbing the back of it with his thumb and signs again. “Beautiful,” he mouths.

Her stupid face betrays her as it flushes. Taking her hand back and absentmindedly rubbing where his thumb



was, she replies, “It’s stupid, I know. I’ll get over it. It’s just... no one will want me to touch them with these messed up hands.”

Helios smirks at her, and her face is even warmer.

“I don’t mean it like that!” she blurts out, stumbling over her words. “Like Mjirn’s hand holding or high fives from Faith! Not... not -!” She buries her face in her stupid scarred hands that had put her in such an awkward position. Princesses should be eloquent, not tongue-tied and blushing, and who even is she anymore??

She startles as he takes her hand back, tracing along the scars with his thumb once again. When she looks up to meet his gaze, he signs again.

Beautiful.

His eyes watch her. so focused, looking for any reaction from her it seems. But Mara just freezes, face so warm but fighting the urge to shiver as he continues to trace along her scars. She’s been here before. Maybe not with Helios, but she’s definitely been in this situation with this warm feeling filling her chest as she flicks her gaze between his burning golden eyes and slightly parted lips.

The thought pops up, and she has to do everything in her power not to flinch at it. Would he let her touch him?

Her ridiculous brain begs the follow up question. If so, where?

He watches with a bit of wonder and confusion as she completes mental gymnastics through that train of thought. She recalls a sign she'd picked up at some point when they first started traveling together and brings her free hand to her chin, moving it away from her face very slowly. "Thank you," she whispers.

He squeezes her hand ever so slightly, and suddenly she's aware that he is leaning in bit by bit. She wants to demand how dare he, after only just now rejoining the party and trying to redeem himself? Does he think that pretty words and pretty hand holding and pretty kisses will change what he did to Elowen, his own sister? To all of them?

But gods she wants to know how soft his lips are, has thought about it previously more than she cares to admit. Wants to know if he means the pretty words. If she can put her hands on him.

His free hand brushes through her hair before gently cupping her face. He stops just short of kissing her and looks into her green eyes. Asking. Wanting.

And gods, she wants back.

Hesitantly, she leans in the last little bit and presses

her lips to his. Oh. He's so soft. And warm. And his hand in her hair holds her steady as she feels like floating on air. He pulls back too quickly for her liking, and once again searches her face for a reaction. Her stomach flutters, and all she wants is his lips on hers once more. She's tempted to hide her face when she asks but knows he won't understand unless she looks at him. "Again?" she whispers.

He smirks again and nods before leaning back in. Letting go of her hand, he places both of his on her face. She places her own on his chest debates if her next move is brave or stupid. Her tongue peeks out and slides along his bottom lips, and one of the hands on her face finds her hair and tugs gently as he opens his mouth for her.

What in the hells is she doing? He just reunited with the party. Just started the healing process. And here she is with her tongue in his mouth and hands grasping at his shirt, doing everything in her power not to moan into his mouth as one of his hands settles on her waist and the other continues to tug on her hair. So not how a princess ought to act; who is she??

The bed bumps into the back of her legs, and oh, they'd been moving while she was wrapped up in thoughts and him. He breaks away from her slowly and

sits before gesturing at the bed for her to join him.

The audacity! This is her room, and he's inviting her to sit on her own bed? She rolls her eyes and shoves him playfully. She also apparently doesn't know her own strength as he falls back, but not before catching her wrist and pulling her back with him.

Straddling a boy isn't even new to her either. She thinks back to the farm hand, Tarran (whom she was a bit disappointed to find had left the castle on his own adventures), and how they'd wound up in the horse stables like this a few times. But gods those damn eyes watching her, waiting for her next move. The heat in her chest travels lower in her belly, and she notices that Helios' shirt has lifted slightly in the fall. Her skirt is hiked up at her thighs she realizes, but she keeps her gaze fixed on the stretch of stomach. He must catch her wandering eyes as he takes one of her hands from beside his head and places it on his exposed skin.

Oh. He is asking her to touch him. With her scarred, ugly, "beautiful" hands. She sucks in a breath. She's seen men naked before. Or at least seen them topless. But touching bare skin... Her eyes flick back up to his face.

"H-Helios?" she breathes.

"Touch me," he mouths, pressing her hand gently

into his abdomen for emphasis.

Mara bites her lip and resists the urge to melt into a puddle and escape in embarrassment. She moves her hand carefully across his skin, eyeing him as she lifts a bit more of his shirt. He doesn't protest. It reveals a shapeless dark pink mark just below his ribcage, and she can't help but run her fingers along it. A birthmark? She has the sudden thought of him signing "beautiful" at her. She might just think the same of him.

She shakes her head and sits up on her knees, still straddling him but doing her best to make as little physical contact with him as possible. Her hands come back up to hide her face. What is she doing? Yes yes, she's been attracted to him for a while, there's a spark, yadda yadda, but weren't his little signs of affection just a ploy? To get close enough to her to get the trinket? Logic tells her to kick his ass out of her room. Something else tells her to keep him in her bed. She's mortified that the second thing is winning the tiny war in her brain, and what is the matter with her?

Chancing a glance down at the probably very confused young man beneath her, she sees him sign something unfamiliar at her. He brings his thumbs and fingers together on each hand, fingertips of both hands

touching.

“More,” he mouths, eyebrows raised in a question.

Mara sucks in a breath. Hesitantly, she lowers herself a bit, gently falling into place in his lap. Helios’ hands move to grasp her waist but stop abruptly and pull back before he can touch her. Traitor, rogue, gentleman it seems. She watches as one of his hands comes back to his chest, palm flat and moving in a circle once again in a new sign.

He averts his gaze when he mouths the meaning. “Please.”

She moves her head back in his line of sight. “‘Please’ what?”

This time he stares into her eyes as he mouths and signs, index finger pointed out and middle finger pointed down, hand moving from left shoulder to right to hip: “princess”.

That’s a fun trick she thinks as she feels something twitch beneath her and a shiver run down her spine all at once. Doesn’t she deserve fun? Doesn’t she deserve something nice with a pretty man who sets her skin ablaze and makes her shudder in the best of ways? He’s here under her, offering, asking for more, and gods she wants. And isn’t that okay? As long as he’s okay and

she's okay, then it's all okay.

Right?

Her hands find his and place them on her hips before she leans over him once again to kiss him. Wavy hair tumbles from her shoulder to curtain around his head, and she brushes it away with a hand to keep it from tickling his face. His thumbs brush at her hip bones, but he doesn't grab hold like she wants, like she needs, and suddenly her mouth is kissing down his jaw to his throat. She bites into his soft skin and rolls her hips, and ah, now he's got a proper grip on her. He throws his head back, and she bites again, this time letting his hips rise up to meet her. Even this is nothing new to her, but she relishes it like it's the first time. She's so warm, and her hand is back in his hair, and he keeps holding her against him, and there is a hunger she has felt before that she has never dared to feed and -

She stops and sits up again, fighting the urge to grind into his bulge again on the way up. She mimics the "more" sign, eyebrows raised as he had done before. She can't demand anything of him, but fuck it, she can ask for whatever she wants at least. While he's offering, right?

Helios makes a knocking gesture followed by the sign for "princess" again. He could be being sarcastic

with the whole “princess” thing, but Mara doesn’t care. For now it feeds the hunger just a little bit, and that works for her.

His hands tug on her hips, as if trying to lift her off him, and she obliges, clambering off of him and onto the bed next to him. He removes his shirt, revealing a tattoo of a sun spiraling out of a shield on his left shoulder, a thin, precise scar cutting through the center of it. Before she can stop herself, her hand reaches out to touch it. He reaches out to take her scarred hand and brings it to his lips to kiss her knuckles gently.

She wants to see more. She’d told Samira she had seen more, and damn it, she doesn’t want to spend her whole life a liar. “Can I... um, can I do this part?” she asks, free hand curling a finger under the waistband of his pants.

He lets go of her hand to make the knocking gesture again and nod.

Her hands shake only slightly as she moves to undo the button on his pants. He lifts his hips up dutifully to allow her to slide his pants down, and she takes his underwear down in the same motion.

Mara stares for a while. She hadn’t been exactly wrong in her description of a penis to Samira, but it



wasn't a complete description either. Not that she has any words at this moment as she sits next to Helios and just... stares. Propped up on his elbows, he watches her for a long while before opening his mouth and bringing up a hand to say something. But it's too late, she's already reaching her hand out for him. She stops just short of the head of his cock and stares at the scars across her fingers for a moment.

Fuck it.

Her fingertips brush down the length of him, and gods he's so hot under her touch. She hears a sharp intake of breath from him as she wraps her fingers around the shaft, but she doesn't pull her attention away, instead just listens to him settle back on his elbows as he tries to control his breathing. Slowly, slowly, her hand moves up to the head then back down a few times.

"Is this okay?" she asks, turning to face him so he can understand her. It doesn't matter though, his head is thrown back, eyes closed and teeth biting back any sounds he might accidentally let out. Her free hand taps his sternum to get his attention, and he looks up at her sitting next to him. "Is this okay?" she repeats.

He nods, but brings an index finger up, as if to say "one thing". Carefully he wraps his hand around hers and

tightens their combined grip around his cock. Oh. His hand guides her through stroking him, keeping her fingers tight. Part of her wants to be annoyed that she wasn't doing it right on her own, but fuck, he's stroking himself with her hand and making little pleased humming sounds, and she's very okay with their situation.

Suddenly, he starts moving faster and faster, eyes shut tight as he bites back any further sounds than the humming. He spills finally, cum collecting in a pool on his stomach, and he releases his grip on Mara's hand. She lets go of him but stares at the mess left. There's a weird puff of pride in her chest. She did this (admittedly with help but hey she'll give herself at least some credit). She made him feel good.

His knuckles brush down her arm, and she looks over at him. He points to her, pulls both hands palm up towards himself with fingers curling slightly, then signs "more" again, mouthing the question "Do you want more?"

Does she? He's finished now, right? What else could they do at this point? And is she ready for it? She swallows and drops her gaze to her hands. Wanting so much is a bit frightening, but fuck she wants so bad. She nods.

Helios sits up, awkwardly looking around for something to clean himself up with and reluctantly settles on using her sheets. She opens her mouth to object, but he's already finished and moving off the bed. He pats the edge of the bed and looks at her expectantly. She scoots to the edge of the bed and awkwardly fiddles with the hem of her dress, her skirt still hiked around her thighs.

"N-now what?" she asks.

He places a hand on one of her knees gently, looking into her eyes with eyebrows raised. More?

She chews on her lip but nods.

His free hand comes to her other knee and both hands slowly, agonizingly slowly move up her thighs. Her skirt sits at her waist and her panties are exposed to him.

What now? Is this it? Mara finally loses her virginity? She can't look at him, her skin is on fire and she just wants and nervously worries her lip between her teeth. "It's okay," she finally gets out before falling back on the bed, arm over her face. Looking at him is just too much, she should just try to relax and enjoy instead of overthinking for once in her goddamn life.

He carefully peels her panties down her legs, dragging lines of heat down with them. No turning back now, she's bare to him. Now she waits, wondering how

on earth he's supposed to be able to fit.

Warm breath touches her core instead and jolts her up on her elbows. The sight of him on his knees, head between her thighs, is surprising but not unwelcome. Gold meets green and he tilts his head to plant a kiss on her inner thigh, not breaking eye contact. A moan escapes her and she covers her mouth immediately with a hand, mortified.

He smirks and kisses her thigh again, this time getting his teeth involved to nip at her. She squirms under his touch, struggling to keep from making any sound, but his grip on her thighs holds her steady.

She can't help but think the word "mean" as he teases her. How dare he make her move like this? Make little embarrassing sounds like this, fucking want like this, and not give her what she really wants? Mara opens her mouth to give him a piece of her mind, until his tongue on her clit halts her all together.

It's her turn to throw her head back in ecstasy. Mara gasps and falls back on the bed as he continues to lick her folds. She tries not to tighten her legs around his head, but she's no longer in control. Every touch of his tongue on her makes her squirm, and she mutters "fuck" under her breath. She'd normally have the decency to be

embarrassed, but right now she is too caught up in the sudden feeling of his finger entering her, stroking her from inside, to care.

Her hand darts down to grab his hair. Helios doesn't seem to mind as he moans against her, slipping another finger inside her.

"Please," she finds herself breathing out. It's so silly, he can't hear her or read her lips with her laying back, plus how embarrassing to beg if she cared enough, but she continues anyway as the coil in her stomach tightens. "Please..."

Definitely the best apology she's ever received, and she never wants it to end. She could stay here with him between her thighs forever, but what a ridiculous thought. She probably shouldn't even be here like this with him, but once again fuck it. His fingers and tongue are too good, and her body burns in the best way, and she wants, she wants -

He has to know she's close as his fingers pick up their rhythm. "Yes... please," she continues to pant. Just a bit more... please!

Waves roll over her as she finally climaxes, moaning oh so loudly. Catching her breath, she chances a glance down to Helios as he removes his fingers from her. A

cocky grin spreads across his face as he licks the remnants of her off those fingers, and Mara shivers a bit once again. She sits up, anxiously looking away from him as she brings her fingertips together as he had done before. “Can I have mo-”

“Mara?” Mjirn’s voice rings out behind the closed door.

Shit.

“Everyone’s been asking for you, I thought I’d come fetch you!”

Mara grabs the bed sheet to cover herself, despite Mjirn’s inability to see her. She grimaces at the scent of Helios left on the sheet, post climax clarity sinking in. “I’ll, uh, be down in a moment! Thank you!” she calls out.

“Okay, please don’t be too long though!” Mjirn replies.

Helios continues to grin up at Mara from his place on the floor.

She points to his pants left discarded next to them and hisses, “Hurry and get dressed!”

“Yes, Princess,” he signs to her and picks himself up. She watches as he hastily throws back on his clothes and crosses the room to the door. Carefully, he opens it and

peaks out, unable to hear Mara hiss at his recklessness. What if Mjirn catches him in her bedroom, what will the elf think? Helios brings his head back into the room, nodding to himself. The coast must be clear.

Mara sighs and shakes her head. What a mess she'd gotten herself into. And she was prepared to ask for more! What was wrong with her?? Thank god for Mjirn and interruptions, what would she have to say for herself if they had -?

He takes her hand softly in his, pulling her from her thoughts, and raises her knuckles to his lips again. Smiling, he places a soft kiss against her skin and turns to leave. Her hand remains in the air where he had left it as he walks out the door, carefully checking the corridor for any passerbys before closing it behind him.

One hand clutching the sheet to her chest and the other still in the air, Mara is left speechless and breathless. She brings her knuckles up to her own lips and holds them there a moment.

Gods, what a fool she is.

# About the Author

Giselle Sinclair is a passionate storyteller who weaves tales of desire, intimacy, and the spark that lingers long after the last page. Living in the lush heart of the Southeast United States, she shares her life with her loving spouse and a lively pack of furbabies who keep her days filled with laughter and cozy chaos.

When she's not crafting steamy stories that explore the complexities of love and connection, Giselle can be found chasing her latest creative project—whether that's dabbling in art, exploring new worlds through books, or finding inspiration in everyday magic. Her writing is as much about the journey as it is the heat, inviting readers to indulge in stories that leave them breathless, enchanted, and wanting more.



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