

Life Stealer

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**INT. CAFE - MORNING**

In a quiet cafe in the middle of a village, a few patrons chat lowly. BRIM (23) and LILLY (20) sit in a back corner with their backs to the restaurant, eating silently, wearing hoods.

The door to the cafe slams open; Lilly visibly flinches. The patrons snap to attention. A royal guard, HOUND (32)--a Shape-Shifter in his half form of a basset-hound--strides in, his droopy eyes scanning the room.

Two other guards follow, they all wear uniforms and medallions from a nearby kingdom.

HOUND

We have word that the Cursed have made their way into this village. We are searching for Brimstone The Destroyer, of the Shape-Shifter clan, and Lillian The Life-Stealer, of the healers, the Treeples.

Lilly has pale-green skin and the Treeples symbol on her forehead. She stiffens and looks at Brim in panic, pulling her hood over her forehead. Brim doesn't acknowledge her, and continues to eat; Lilly becomes visibly more upset.

HOUND (cont'd)

Everyone remove any garments on your head or face as we make our rounds. Anyone who does not comply will be punished.

Lilly tugs on Brim's cloak, not daring to speak, her eyes pleading. The guards make their way around the cafe, apologizing for the inconvenience as they dismiss patrons from their search.

Brim continues to eat, a towering Shape-Shifter that dwarfs Lilly even while seated, her piercing gold eyes shining under the shadow of her hood.

She finishes her soup with a loud slurp.

The guards eye the duo for the noise, and make their way over. As their footsteps grow louder, Brim sets her empty bowl down calmly. She grabs her satchel. Lilly is shaking.

HOUND (cont'd)

Excuse us...

Brim abruptly stands, her chair scraping on the floor. She towers over the guards. The guards' hands hover readily over their weapons.

HOUND (cont'd)  
 (sternly)  
 Remove your head-wear so we may  
 identify you.

Lilly's soul has left her body. She is more pale than green, her body is trembling. The leading guard notices. The duo still has not faced the guards. Lilly's shaking hands reach to pull off her hood, her crimson eyes filling up with tears.

Brim finally locks eyes with Lilly, and she freezes.

HOUND (cont'd)  
 Remove your head-wear at once.

Brim WHIPS her cloak off as she turns to face the guards, revealing her stark white hair and red-brown skin, throws it and herself onto them, easily taking them all to the floor.

As quickly as she went down, she gets up and picks up a table effortlessly. She turns to Lilly, who watches, paralyzed.

BRIM  
 (Snarling)  
 Run!

Lilly sprints out of the cafe, scrambling around patrons who step out of her way. Brim slams the table down onto the stunned guards, and follows Lilly out of the cafe.

#### **EXT. THE VILLAGE SQUARE**

Brim and Lilly explode from the cafe. Lilly's hood falls from her head, revealing the big leaves and large red lily that grows atop her head.

They sprint through the little village, ignoring those that watch them sadly. They come to a small house on the outskirts of the village, where MADAME WILDRE (90) is working in her garden.

BRIM  
 Madame Wildre, they're here! It's  
 time.

Madame Wildre nods and rushes into her house. Lilly's usually soft voice is shrill in panic.

LILLY  
(breathlessly)  
Brim, what do we do?

Madame Wildre re-appears with a small sack. Brim stuffs it into her satchel, interrupting Lilly with her gruff voice.

BRIM  
If we can make it out of their territory we should be fine for a while.

LILLY  
But we have no idea where we're going.

Brim turns to Madame Wildre.

BRIM  
I'll have to carry you out of here.

Madame Wildre reaches up to Brim, who is hunched down to grab her, and places a hand on her scarred and freckled face. She shakes her head.

BRIM (cont'd)  
What? No, you're coming with us.

Brim goes to grab her, but Madame Wildre grabs her hands, a stern look on her face. She shakes her head more sternly.

BRIM (cont'd)  
You're NOT staying, they'll arrest you.

Shouts sound in the distance.

LILLY  
Brim, they're here!

Madame Wildre shows Brim an orange crystal in her hand, and smirks. Brim's eyes widen.

BRIM  
(reluctantly)  
Okay, fine. Thank you, Madame Wildre.  
We will never forget your kindness.  
Stay safe.

They briefly hug, and Brim slings her bag over her shoulder.

BRIM (cont'd)  
Let's go.

Brim thunders off, Lilly scrambling and panting behind her.

LILLY  
Wh-what happened?  
(pant)  
Why is she staying?

Brim doesn't answer.

As they make their way into the woods beyond the village, they begin weaving between trees and bushes. Brightly colored flora and glowing carvings in the trees fly past them in a bountiful display overflowing with life.

LILLY (cont'd)  
Brim, what is she--

BOOM--they both stutter to a stop as the ground shakes; they turn and see smoke rising from the direction of Madame Wildre's house.

BRIM  
She distracted them for us.

Brim starts running again.

LILLY  
THAT was a distraction?! She blew them up!

Lilly starts after Brim.

LILLY (cont'd)  
Brim, she BLEW UP the royal guards!!!

BRIM  
Shut up, and run!

**EXT. FOREST - LATE AFTERNOON**

BRIM  
We can't stop; that was a Hound. We have to outrun them.

Lilly is lying pathetically on the forest floor as Brim crosses her arms and stands over her.

LILLY  
(out of breath)  
I...I can't run anymore...  
(gasp)  
I threw up three times...  
(MORE)

LILLY (cont'd)

(pant)

How are you... how are you still running?

Brim growls in frustration and grabs Lilly by the shirt, hauling her to her feet.

BRIM

We don't have time for--

Their eyes widen as a howl rips through the air from a distance. Lilly begins to breathe harder and faster in panic.

Brim SLAPS a hand over Lilly's mouth and covers her own with a finger. Brim grabs her up like a piece of luggage and quickly but quietly picks her way through the forest.

Brim looks over her shoulder, sniffing the air, scanning their surroundings.

She trips over a log.

There is a crash of snapping branches and rustling leaves.

HOUND (O.S.)

Over there!

BRIM

Shit!

Brim stands, grabbing a flattened, winded Lilly and tearing off, silence forgotten as she hurls over logs, dodges between trees, making a huge racket as barking and galloping sound closer.

ZIP--an arrow THUMPS into Brim's leg. Brim grunts, falls, spilling Lilly onto the forest floor.

GUARD #1 (O.S.)

I got her! Go, go, go!

Hooves are heard as the guards approach, and they are seen atop their steeds.

Lilly, groaning, looks in time to see Brim RIPPING the arrow out of her calf. She roars in pain; RED SCALES crawl over the wound, and she stands. Scales start appearing around her eyes. The guards ride closer.

LILLY

Wait! Don't do that, I can--

Brim gets to her feet and starts again. She glares at Lilly, her golden eyes ablaze.

BRIM  
There's no time.

The guards ride closer and stop, with only a few meters separating them. One wields a crossbow, the others wield swords. Brim stands protectively in front of Lilly, favoring her leg.

Hound hops off of his horse, baring his teeth in a snarl.

HOUND  
HALT! You are hereby under arrest in the name of King Dormiscus for plaguing our world with The Curse! Come quietly or come as corpses--the choice is yours.

Brim's hulking, built frame is speckled by red scales. Her pupils become slits. Her fanged teeth grow bigger somehow.

She takes a warning step forward.

Lilly can only watch as the guards tense up, a crossbow is loaded, and Brim's fingernails burst into deadly claws.

Hound gets into a fighting stance with his sword.

HOUND (cont'd)  
You are a disgrace to the Shape-Shifter clan! You soil our heritage's name with your monstrous existence!

Brim roars and launches herself at Hound.

LILLY  
Brim, no!

GUARD #1 fires his crossbow into the air quickly, and Lilly watches as it sails up, up, up--and EXPLODES into a display of colorful lights; a signal flare.

Lilly backs up in fear, trembling.

Hound and Brim fight. GUARD #2 dismounts his steed. As Hound charges Brim, she jumps clear over the swipe of his sword--roundhouse kicks him, sending him flying into Guard #2.

Guard #1 finishes re-loading his crossbow with a black arrow adorned with purple carvings.

Lilly looks at the battle, then to the trees behind her-- back at the battle. She clenches and un-clenches her fists.

Hound and Guard #2 are getting to their feet. Guard #1 shoots--THOCK--right into Brim's shoulder. She roars in pain and rips it out, and scales begin crawling over the wound.

Lilly takes a tentative step forward.

LILLY (cont'd)  
Brim, stop, let me help!

She is interrupted by Brim's snarling; she isn't listening, she whips towards Guard #1 and charges.

She trips over her own feet--THUMP.

HOUND  
Quickly! Round up the other while we tie her up.

Brim tries to get back up but her arms give out.

BRIM  
(growling weakly)  
...The arrow...Poison...Lilly...

Lilly backs up as Guard #1 and #2 approach her, she looks to Brim, who is baring her teeth at Hound as he nears, trying to get up. The guards are closer, a crossbow is aimed.

LILLY  
(panicked)  
NO!

Lilly raises her hands, the symbol on her head shines a gleaming gold. Her eyes turn the same shining color.

GUARD #1  
Look out!

The guards back up, suddenly fearful.

The grass, the trees, the beautiful flowers--the colorful foliage begins glowing--Brim glows as well. Hound's face turns urgent as he quickly begins binding Brim's hands.

HOUND  
I order you to stop! I order--

In less than a moment, in a pulse that no one feels but travels outward from Lilly, all the foliage turns shriveled and black as far as the eye can see.



Lilly clenches her fists, her eyes ablaze. She opens her palms towards Brim, almost throwing something.

The scales over Brim's shoulder and leg retreat as a golden aura around her burns brightly, revealing no wounds left behind. Brim takes a gasping breath. Hound points his sword.

HOUND (cont'd)  
Stay down or I will be forced to--

Brim whips up with such speed that Hound cannot react before she BITES his sword, smashing it to pieces, and continues forward to tackle him.

Yelling, the two guards charge Brim. Brim turns and pounces, snarling, a sword grazing her side as she tackles Guard #2. Hound is left mangled.

Guard #1 fires an arrow, Brim rolls out of the way with the other guard in her grasp, slamming him down. She charges the remaining guard.

He shoots again as he begins running backwards and misses.

LILLY  
Brim, don't!

Brim glances for a moment, Guard #1 is scrambling to reload.

She pounces, and he goes down. She pins him easily with one hand and crushes his crossbow with the other. Brim glances again at Lilly's horrified face and back again.

BRIM  
Tell your "king" if he wants to kill  
us, to do it HIMSELF--  
(snarling)  
We haven't done anything wrong! Leave  
us alone!

Trembling, Guard #1 nods, his hands up in surrender. Brim delivers a solid punch to his face and knocks him out, sparing him. She stands, turns to Lilly, panting.

BRIM (cont'd)  
He's gonna wake up with a headache.  
Let's go before--

The thundering sound of hooves--hundreds of hooves--barrels towards them. Lilly gasps and backs up, trembling.

LILLY  
They're here! They're here, what do  
we do?!

Brim lumbers over towards her, the black grass crunching underfoot.

BRIM

There's too many. Can you keep healing me?

LILLY

I-I--Yes--Maybe, but--I just used so much, we need to go where there's more--

BRIM

There's no time, c'mon.

She grabs Lilly's shoulder, this is the first time we've seen her be comforting. Shouts of alarm are heard, the first few enemies are visible, rounding the blackened trees.

BRIM (cont'd)

We'll be fine. You know what to do if things get bad.

Brim turns towards the enemy and marches towards them, takes off her satchel and tosses it to Lilly, who scrambles to catch it.

Scales explode across Brim's form, her muscles swell, she GROWS impossibly bigger. Her footsteps shake the ground. The enemy shouts and hollers in warning.

Brim is completely covered in scales, her teeth are impossibly large and won't fit in her closed mouth. She's unrecognizable.

SOLDIER #1

CHARGE!!!

Brim erupts into a guttural roar that is deafening and terrifying. The first ironclad, sorry soul that charges to her is effortlessly swiped from their steed.

The enemy descends upon Brim like a swarm of wasps, attacking like mad--most are deflected by Brim's scales, and she charges like an unleashed bull into the fray.

Lilly is nowhere to be seen.

Soldiers are knocked up, screaming in pain--THUNK--an arrow finally breaks through into her shoulder.

Encouraged, the soldiers round on her more heavily as she rips it out--scales cover it--a massive scaled and spiked tail manifests from Brim's backside.

Brim's hulking form swings around, her tail swiping soldiers off their feet as she attacks. THUNK--an arrow in her back, a screech of pain; she reaches to take it out.

BRIM  
LILLY!!!

Immediately, a golden sheen covers Brim and her wounds are healed--THUNK-THUNK--it's not enough. The soldiers' arrows cease as dozens of enemies fall on her, attacking.

Brim's scales can't cover her wounds fast enough before they are ripped open again. She's panting heavily, losing steam. Brim is knocked to the ground.

Brim turns her head to the sky and she unleashes a painful roar.

CUT TO:

Out of immediate sight, Lilly crouches in a dead tree, its black, shriveled leaves providing cover. She watches the battle, clutching Brim's satchel nervously.

Brim is hit by two arrows and she goes down. Lilly gasps and reaches behind her, her symbol glowing, but it putters out.

LILLY  
(gasping)  
N-no, there's no more.

She tries again.

LILLY (cont'd)  
I-I can't find anything else.

Lilly whips her head around as Brim roars a horrible roar, her head to the sky.

Lilly goes to stand--big, leathery wings rip from Brim's form and she seems to find new energy, tearing savagely into the soldiers.

LILLY (cont'd)  
No, no, please.

Lilly clenches the satchel tightly.

SOLDIER #2  
SLAY THE BEAST!!!

Brim's form swells, and she transforms into a rust colored DRAGON. Brim beats her wings, the force knocking down the closer soldiers, and she takes flight.

Lilly watches in horror.

**EXT. FOREST - MINUTES LATER**

It was over as quickly as it began. Not a soul is left standing. Brim grunts and growls in her dragon form, crushing corpses and wounded under her feet. She screeches and slays anything that moves.

Lilly, trembling, stands back on the ground, behind the trees. She reaches into her satchel, pulling out the smaller bag that Madame Wildre had given them.

Lilly takes a tiny step forward. Brim is turned away from her. Lilly opens her mouth to speak but nothing comes out. She is white.

LILLY  
(squeaking)  
B-Brim.

Brim's head whips around, she snorts, her eyes lock onto Lilly's small frame. She growls and charges towards her.

Lilly pulls a small purple gem with a white rune on it out of the bag, hyperventilating, and holds it in front of her.

LILLY (cont'd)  
(screaming in panic)  
BRIM IT'S ME--

As Brim thunders forward, the gem shines to life. Brim stutters to a stop just before Lilly, her eyes turning the same shade as the gem's glow, enchanting her.

LILLY (cont'd)  
(more calmly)  
It-It's me.

Brim's big eyes blink several times and return to yellow. Her slit of a pupil becomes a rounder shape, she grunts, takes in Lilly's form; the gears are turning. Brim swings her large head around, to the carnage behind her.

In a few seconds, her form deflates and she transforms back to her scale-less self. She is covered in wounds.

Brim falls to her knees.

BRIM  
...It happened again.

Lilly cautiously steps up to her and places a hand on her shoulder.

LILLY  
I-It's okay. It's not your fault.

Lilly attempts a small smile. Brim looks up in pain. She scoffs and smirks; she stands.

LILLY (cont'd)  
Thank you for protecting us. Again.

Lilly holds her hand out, showing the now cracked crystal.

LILLY (cont'd)  
We already had to use one. We only have four left.

BRIM  
We can't go back to Madame Wildre right now, it's too dangerous. Maybe we can when things calm down.

Brim takes the satchel back from Lilly and slings it over her bleeding soldiers.

LILLY  
I-I'm sorry I couldn't help more, I tried to heal you but everything alive is out of reach now...

BRIM  
Don't worry about it.

Brim starts limping in the direction they had been running.

BRIM (cont'd)  
You did enough. This part of the forest won't grow back for years. I can wait a bit before you heal me again.

Lilly looks hurt at this, and she wrings her hands. She starts after Brim.

LILLY  
I-I'm sorry, I don't mean to take so much-

Brim looks over her shoulder, bewildered.

BRIM  
What? No, don't apologize to me, shrimp. I would've died without you.  
(MORE)

BRIM (cont'd)  
Leaving all this dead stuff is just a  
huge tell where we've been. Can't do  
that all the time.

Lilly nods, but still looks disheartened.

BRIM (cont'd)  
Once we get out of this stupid  
kingdom, we should be okay for a bit.  
Plus, I heard there's another Cursed  
where we're going. Hopefully *they*  
won't be such a wimp.

LILLY  
Hey!

Lilly punches Brim on the arm, and Brim laughs.

**EXT. DEAD FOREST - HOURS LATER**

Hound groans, clutching his bleeding torso. He gasps as his eyes open. Not another sound is heard. He lifts himself up with an arm, beholding the carnage before him.

Hound lets out choked whine as he takes in the corpses, the blood, the blackened forest.

HOUND  
N-no...

Tears fill his eyes, he tries to stand.

HOUND (cont'd)  
(weakly)  
H-headcount... Headcount...! Is  
anybody there?!

A couple wounded soldiers groan and a few more appear from the tree line. They call out, identifying themselves. Hound continues to scan the battlefield.

Hound sees Guard #1 on the ground; he stumbles towards him and places a paw on the guard's chest, his nose is only broken, but his torso crushed.

Hound clutches his fallen soldier and erupts into a sorrowful, sobbing howl.