

March 12

Today Sorrel and I took a stroll on the outskirts of the city. The weather was quite lovely for the season and we walked for quite some time, simply for the joy of it, no destination in mind. While on our journey, we crossed paths with a young man, certainly no older than twenty-five, bright-eyed with youth. Sorrel, likely in an altogether unnecessary attempt to impress me, challenged the lad to a duel of wits for his name. Although I have never seen it happen before they claim it is typical for the fae.



At first I thought nothing of it, but as the battle went on and the boy fell behind beyond hope, it occurred to me that he had no understanding of what the contract meant. I don't wish to go into details, but now he wanders the countryside with no recollection of his identity. Seeing another human in such a state hurt me beyond belief. Was I right to stand by idly while a human fell victim to the fae tricks? The human did not dishonour the Court (or, as Queen Camellia would say, nazhonashonit tom inlu tom yelar), nor did he cause any harm to Sorrel or to me. I knew that fae could do this, but I never imagined the pain it would cause. What am I in this scenario? Am I a victim of the fae and their tricks as well?

I am uncertain of how human I am anymore—I no longer feel hunger, I never tire. Food and sleep have ceased to be necessities. I have been so readily accepted as one of the fae that I fear even Sorrel, as clever and insightful as they are, has forgotten that I am only human, just like the boy who they robbed of a life. My humanity wanes with each day and I worry that soon I will be the one stealing names, instead of being one whose name has been stolen.

March 14

It is difficult to tear my mind away from what happened two days ago, and it was especially difficult to do so during Queen Camellia's visit. I appreciate all the help she has given me towards becoming Queen, but I am beginning to have doubts about my dedication towards the fae.



However, until I can think more upon my current situation, I will continue to dedicate myself to learning the Royal Tongue.

Today, our discussion was centred around the final part of the coronation. To prepare for this, I must summon the Queen's Crown. Queen Camellia has hidden the crown behind a lock of some kind, and I must reveal both the Crown and its hiding place by saying the following in the Royal Tongue: "I am queen and I will rule. This crown was crafted with the forest's flowers. With it, I will not dishonour the queens who ruled before."

Today's language lesson focused around crafting. Crafting... can such a word be applied to me? Are the fae crafting me into something I am not? I trust Queen Camellia wholly, but after Sorrel's display of trickery, I am not so sure of their intentions.

I will craft a crown. *ikrishiyān rem o yāyā.*

It will be a great crown. *epiyā ki om āyā gya.*

With flowers, I will craft it. *oto ifrupeyim, ikrishiyān rem iki.*

I will not craft a necklace before the celebration. *ikrishayit rem o kaklu ipra tom yenyamin.*

I asked Queen Camellia what the crown would look like when I summoned it, what flowers would it be woven from? She simply laughed and said *rankoshiyān tom āyā oto tom ifeyā naluttri*: the crown will sparkle with the moon's grace. I do not know what this means, but I expect it will be clear to me when my coronation occurs. If my coronation occurs.

March 19

Sorrel apparently noticed my sour mood after our walk last week. In an attempt to brighten my mood, they suggested that Wisteria and I join them in watching a "human show," which I have learned is what they call a



play, a name I find mildly offensive. The show was Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I must admit I have never seen before.

Sorrel and Wisteria seemed particularly amused with their selection, which I did not at first understand. But it became clear why they thought it was so funny soon after the play started. I thought that the actors were lovely and displayed such passion, both for their craft and for the audience, but Sorrel and Wisteria took issue with nearly every element of the play. They nitpicked and critiqued every detail, constantly pointing out what they would have done in the place of Puck and making snide comments about how unrealistic the whole thing was. I tried to explain to them that the play is fiction, written years ago by a human not so different from me and that perhaps the court of Oberon and Titania held different rules than ours, but this only made them fault the play more. I wanted to tell them that they couldn't see the forest for the trees, but something that Queen Camellia said stopped me: *pai tom itlepeyim tom itlekak*. "The trees are the forest."

As they grappled with their identities, I was taken back to watching the boy lose his name and become a stranger to himself. Will he ever recover and find a life, find love, find an identity? What about me? Do I still have my identity? Am I still Alice? Again, I'm reminded of something Queen Camellia said: *pai tom etin peyashon anosodel*; the soul is grief's garden.

I decided to stay in a small London hotel for the night to gather my thoughts and have some time to myself. Maybe a night alone will do me some good.

March 19 (entry 2)

Alexander. The name of my only child. I left him behind when I accepted my role here. Memories with him come to me in this lonesome moment of unrest in an unfamiliar hotel. I remember a picnic we had one sunny summer afternoon. We went to a nearby field, full of flowers, lush and bright. Alexander ran around the outskirts of the field, laughing with delight and drenched in the happiness of summertime during childhood. He had run far,



but never strayed from my sight. I remember that he brought me a bunch of blue cornflowers, my favourite colour. He was the light of my life, bringing me joy every day. It is not often that I think of him, but when I do it is devastating. I have been told by Queen Camellia that I should not worry about my human lineage or legacy, rather that I should dedicate myself to the queenship and the fae. But I ache to know how Alexander has fared in the years since I've left him. *pai tom frupe tom yeklo napelin*; the flower is the seed's legacy. Ah, how I long to see my beautiful flower!

I realise now that I do not even know the age of my own son. Time passes strangely in the fae realm. Time has blurred, and the concept of a year has grown rather nebulous to me. Has he grown up? Has he grown old? Has he married and had children of his own? Has he passed on without my knowing? These are questions I will never find the answers to. I could return to my previous residence in the green hills of Hampshire, but I do not know if Cornelius and Alexander still reside there. I have no doubt that the human world has changed in my absence, and I do not have faith that I could re-enter it now. *pai etin narem se tom yitlekak*. "My soul is in the forest."

I miss you dearly Alexander. I hope your father cares for you as I once did.



March 21

I have never felt so overwhelmed as I do when I attempt this new language. The responsibility of learning it and doing it justice weighs so



unbelievably heavy on me. And now, with my current doubts towards Queenship and the fae, I find it even more difficult to commit Queen Camellia's teachings to memory. She visited me today with the intention of discussing my duties as Queen in more depth, reviewing the coronation phrase I now dread: "I am queen and I will rule."

Rule appears to be the subject of today's lesson; who rules and who tends and what responsibilities that entails.

The bird rules the trees. ayishen tom mirmir tom yitlepeyim.

The tree ruled the forest. ayishone tom itlepe tom yitlekak.

The queen rules the people, who rule the birds. ayishen tom ayafei tom ifeyim, inis ayishen tom imirmirim.

I will tend the birds who rule the trees. peyashiyen rem tom imirmirim, inis ayishen tom yitlepeyim.

I will tend the birds and the forest's trees. peyashiyen rem tom imirmirim plu tom yitlepeyim anitlekak.

Queen Camellia has been kind and accepting to me. I suppose this is in part because she wants me to be her successor. But to this day, I do not know why she chose me to be Queen. Is this another fae trick? I highly doubt it; Queen Camellia has never seemed mischievous. Yet the idea still lingers in a corner of my mind. Speculation will do me no good; I will ask her during our next lesson. Maybe by then I'll have a better grasp on my feelings towards the fae and my humanity.

March 21 (evening)

My mind wanders tonight and, despite no longer needing to rest, I long for it. I have thought much about my humanity and my duty to the fae, and no clear answers seem to be in sight. I wish to think no more, to simply



dream, but I suppose I will settle for another distraction. The Royal Tongue is still difficult for me, so I will practice the simple phrases Queen Camellia taught me in winter. Maybe after a few lines, sleep will return to me.

The bird eats the fish. kashen tom mirmir tom isulyi.

The fish is eaten by the bird. pai kashenti tom sulyi am tom imirmir.

The person forges the sword. akreshen tom fei tom ikla ga.

The sword was forged by the person. sapu akreshenti tom kla ga am tom ifei.

March 22

I feel as though this love is killing me. I feel suffocated, unable to breathe, as I am never alone. As much affection as I hold for Sorrel and Wisteria, they are always there.

I long for time to myself, a rarity these days. I wish for a moment alone, and no matter what I say or how I say it, Sorrel and Wisteria ignore my words and continue to cling to me like bees to honey. Today was the last straw. I have felt so ignored, so unheard, so taken for granted, that I simply could not continue on. I thought that I might have a rare moment alone after my language lesson with Queen Camellia, but Sorrel and Wisteria were lingering in the hallway, perhaps listening in. My lesson ended a bit early and they were not expecting me so soon. I was leaving the room and saw Sorrel attempt a poor mockery of the boy whose name he stole, much to the amusement of Wisteria.

I never thought Sorrel was capable of such cruelty and mockery. It was distressing to see them make fun of a human whose life they ruined. A human like me, robbed of a life to live. I ran away upon seeing this, but not before Sorrel and Wisteria saw me. They tried to chase after me, but I got away and found a place to weep. How could they betray me like this?



In times like these I fear they have forgotten that I myself am a human, not a fae like them.

March 22 (evening)

Sorrel and Wisteria eventually found me, despite my attempts to hide from them. They questioned why I was so distraught. I tried explaining to them, but they seemed to not understand. It confirmed my fears that they barely see me as human anymore. On nights like these, I long for my old life back and wish to return to the human world, even if just for a short time.

Why did they choose me? I resent them for what they've done to me. I wish that I could turn back time to before they found me. The more days that pass, the more I feel like I am becoming more and more isolated... isolated from the human world of my origins, but also isolated from my new home as I learn a language that is just for me, away from everyone else. I thought I felt lonely and trapped in my old life, but sitting here now, there has never been a time where I have felt more alone.

March 25

Over the past few days, I have used my time to calm down and focus on what I want in my life. What I want, not what others want from me. The question that I keep returning to is if I want to be queen. The longer I endure this process, the more I feel like I am losing the agency to decide. I have been crafted into a faerie, carefully moulded over time, slowly, in the hopes that I would not notice the changes that were swallowing me alive. Now that I am trapped, I notice. But it is too late. I have no choice. The queen was the ruler; this queen will honour me. sapu tom ayafei tom ayishalan; azhonashiyan tol ayafei irem.

I am queen and I will rule. I must accept that and move forward as planned, even with all of these doubts that gnaw at me. I see no other options.



March 26

Thankfully, today has been less tense, but little has been resolved. I am very grateful for Sorrel and Wisteria leaving me to be alone the last few days. It has allowed me to finally think about the future in my terms without their influence and interference. I decided to break my solitude today and venture out, knowing that they would find me. I was correct, and they did.

They asked to talk in private, which I did not initially understand, but the reason became obvious once we had found a quiet corner. They gave me a gift for my coronation: a stunning necklace that has been passed down from queen to queen ahead of coronation. Apparently it is a legacy of every queen that has ruled over the ages, and each queen has added something to it. It symbolises the union of the two Courts: *pai tol fenei tom lemizhef anedri*. "This beauty is the sun's quality." *pai tol rayun tom lemizhef nalutri*. "This wisdom is the moon's quality." But the necklace has both. The necklace is the winter and the summer: *pai tom klaku tom sazh plu tom fizhef*.

It is a most thoughtful gift, though it is a painful reminder that I get closer and closer every day to becoming the queen. Upon thinking about it more, I think that their intentions may have been to make me want to become queen. Are they trying to manipulate me? I had no doubts before, but as I sit here, I question their values. But this is my fate. I must accept it, for I am past the point of no return. I have no choice.