

Titus - The Creature

WORD COUNT: 1,160

+1,100 words - 11 shards

Prompt Entry - 4 shards

Monthly Prompt - 1 ethereal shard

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Total: 15 shards + 1 ethereal shard

It had been a long year, with a long recovery, and finally at the end of it all Titus finally felt... better. Perhaps not good, but better than he had been. There was a part of the corruption that still lingered- clinging to his fur and blurring the edges of reality and the shattered zone that lay between the bellecoste and andrassian skies. Regardless of how long he waited, that lingering corruption still remained.

"No use staying cooped up in-doors waiting vainly for something that will never happen..." he tried to remind himself as he took the first step out of his house. The winged woolyne had left the house to get groceries from time to time of course, but he had always gone out when the markets were almost closed and the bustling crowds had long since left. Today was very different as it was considered one of the most magical times of the year.

As winter snow fell and graced the landscape with Amirlyn's blessings woolyne across Andras rejoiced as multiple Solstine festivals kicked off leading up to the Solstice and Amirlyn's blessed day. The streets of Aldlight were packed to the brim with revelers and mirth as people shopped the many pop-up vendors and perused the various attractions scattered across the city. Titus placed a hand nervously on the front door, heart hammering fervently in an unsteady beat.

"It's fine. You've done this 100 times before... there's nothing to be nervous about- no one knows and no one will know." he reminded himself. While perhaps his silver colored hair and mint colored fur may have made him stand out, the dark thick winter cloak he had tightly wrapped around him kept most of his body concealed, which was the way he preferred it. Slowly opened the door.

Immediately the sounds of the outside world felt loud and deafening- voices called and shouted out, some to friends drifting apart in the crowd, some strangers trying to draw attention to their various wares. Titus' mouth snapped shut and he slowly drew in air through clenched teeth, slowly letting it back out as he forced himself to take that first step. Drawing his hood down lower, hoping to muffle some of the sounds of the world around him, he followed the road of him, blending in with the crowds of woolyne as they wandered around the city.

Titus walked around aimlessly for several hours, long after the sun had set. With time his heart slowed to a normal rhythm, and his fur no longer bristled when he was bumped into by an errant stranger, it was all slowly starting to feel normal again. How long had it been since things felt normal? But the chill was finally starting to nip at his fingers and nose, the cloak could only fend off the cold for so long.

"Perhaps I should just head back, this... was a lot and it went well," he admitted to himself, he paused for a moment, still planning to turn back when his stomach growled. A tantalizing scent reached his nose. Without thinking, he turned his nose in the direction of the

scent, it seemed to be coming from a restaurant from his left- some sort of pub based on the sounds and voices that were drifting from inside. In the darkness, the light from the windows cast a comforting glow and the voices from inside sounded... almost inviting.

Yet going inside seemed so daunting...if he went in and ordered, he would need to lower his hood and that would make the lingering corruption visible. The thought alone forced him to take a half-step back. He had been brave enough for today- and he wasn't quite ready to force himself over that hurdle. Yet as he turned back towards the street, a flash of something caught his eye. Among the legs of the woolyne still miling about from stand to stand, something small and iridescent seemed to be flashing between peoples hooves.

He blinked once.

Then twice.

Yet the strange flash of color amongst the crowd still remained. Cautiously the woolyne tried to get closer- the object seemed to flick left, then right, and just as Titus got close enough to touch it, the strange thing seemed to throw itself down a small alley. It was a short sort of alley, with a tall wall at the end, the sort used for businesses to place their trash or bring in deliveries without blocking up the front of their stores and restaurants. From where he stood he could tell he was dealing with some sort of animal.

Titus considered his options carefully, he could just walk down the alley and try to grab the creature, but there was no telling how it might react to being snatched up. While he could also forge the wind to lift the creature and force it to come with him, there was no telling how long it would take for it to trust him enough to get near it a second time. Alternatively, perhaps giving the creature something warm to eat might be enough to earn it's trust and have it willingly follow along with him.

"Well, who says no to a free meal?" he looked around for the nearest food vendor, buying a few skewers, a couple of fresh rolls, and a couple fruits- unsure what the creature in the alley would be drawn towards. Thankfully when he returned the creature was still there, crouching a bit further towards the back, near some boxes.

"Hello there little fella," he called out softly, taking slow measured steps towards the creature. It's appearance was... bizarre to say the least. It was light and glowey, but clearly not some sort of elemental. It's fur- or rather body seemed to be covered in a mix of half melted snow and dirt which muted whatever colors it normally was and making it difficult to get an idea of what they were. As Titus approached the creature let out a quiet growl, pressing itself against the ground.

"Easy, easy, look im a friend- see?" he pulled a piece of meat off a skewer and tossed it towards the creature who tentatively sniffed at it. He continued to walk a little bit closer, until he could sit on one of the crates- the small creature had finished the meat by the time he say.

"That wasn't so bad now was it? Look, I've still got more." Titus crooned quietly dropping another piece of meat between his hooves. Slowly the creature came closer, tentatively nibbling on the new piece of meat. He dropped a piece of roll beside it and the creature nibbled at that too. Titus smiled down at the unfamiliar beast "Well it seems nice enough, but what in the world am I going to do with this?" he wondered to himself as he continued feeding piece after piece of meat and bread to the tiny stranger.