

Inner Peace

I open my eyes as sunlight streaks into my room. I squint into the bright light as my eyes adjust allowing me to see. I stretch, letting out a grunt and then a sigh. I sit up in my bed and look around my room. The stones of the room were a smooth white marble compared to the grey stones i had woken up to on Innistrad. A smile spreads across my face like the sun rising across the horizon. It's only been a few months since I left Innistrad behind upon Avacyn's madness and returned home to Rigo.

"Good morning Angelis." A feminine voice says from the window. I look look over to my window to see the angel queen Anlex land on the window sill, plunging my room into darkness.

"Good morning Anlex." I say, standing up and heading over to the window.

"The sun is up today and it is nice and bright right now." Anlex says, taking off from my window sill. I step onto the window sill and push off, expanding my wings and gliding on the air currents that move around the tower my room was in. Anlex comes up next to me and stays quiet.

"Why has there always been someone watching me at every turn. I prefer to have my privacy." I say.

"We want to try to prevent you from leaving this world again." Anlex says calmly. I stop and hover in place and look at her.

"You mean planeswalking right?" I ask her. Anlex nods. I sigh and close my eyes. I push my consciousness away from the center of Rigo and stop once I can feel the blind eternities on my back. I hear Anlex gasp loudly and I pull myself back into reality once again.

"Is it really that easy for you to do?" Anlex asks me in awe and surprise. I nod calmly and shiver from the cold of the blind eternities touching my back. It is cold here at Riga since we are close to the Northern Mountains, but the blind eternities are even colder.

"Planeswalkers are able to control where they planeswalk to and when they planeswalk. The only time they are not in control is when their spark first ignites and flings them randomly into the multiverse and onto another world." I say, gliding down steeply to a fire that helps to keep the humans here warm, and angels for that matter. Anlex follows me in disbelief.

"We thought it was all random. Heck, we even thought you were cursed and we wanted to try to free you from it." Anlex says, "But it was all you, so then why didn't you return home right away?"

I gently land on the street next to the fire pit. The humans nearby the fire pit run to their houses when they see Anlex land next to me.

“Why are the humans afraid of you, but not me?” I ask Anlex. Anlex thinks about it for a moment, but ends up shaking her head no.

“When I was on Innistrad, the angels on that world didn’t terrorize the humans, they protected the humans. I saw the flaws in the way most of us treated the humans on this world. My conviction to make change became strengthened and I studied these angels and their form of justice. My conviction only grew when the leader of these angels, Avacyn, descended into madness. It was at this time that I decided to return and begin to make changes on my own world to better benefit us all.” I say folding my wings against my back, “When I returned, I used my notes to help create a group of angels loyal to me and my cause and more humans are living under our protection as a result.”

Anlex scoffs and laughs, “You really believe that?” I nod my head yes. I look down the street to see a head poking out of a doorway. I beckon the person to come over. The girl, no older than 7, dashes toward me and skids to a halt, looking between me and Anlex. Anlex steps forward to talk to the girl, but the girl backs up, fearful of Anlex. I put out an arm in front of Anlex to let her know I’ll handle the girl.

“Hey there little angel, what’s your name?” I ask the girl, kneeling down so I’m at her level.

“I’m Amrica!” The girl says cheerfully. I place a gentle hand on her right shoulder.

“Don’t you have a mother?” I ask Amrica, receiving a nod, “Go on home to her.”

Maya’s Curse

Everytime I look up at the ceiling of my bedroom, I can’t help but imagine how naturally growing coral had made the skeleton for the city that I now live in. It took 100 years to build up the city around the coral base, mainly due to the fact that we had to use resources that only humans could get efficiently at the time. I imagine the workers of old placing down the bricks of my room.

“Princess, when are you planning on getting out of bed?” A voice says from the direction of my door. I turn my head to the side to look at the voice’s owner, one of my many handmaids.

“I was planning on getting up in a few minutes, but thanks for checking in on me Victoria.” I say.

“Thanks Milady.” Victoria says. I get up and swim over to her, putting my hands on her shoulders. Victoria has been one of my handmaids since she was 4 years old. That was when I was 12 years old. I am currently 21, making her 13. I have taught Victoria so much that she almost feels like my child.

“How many times do I have to tell you that you can call me Maya?” I say, lifting her chin.

“I’m not allowed to call you by your first name.” Victoria says.

“You are given permission to call me whatever I ask you to call me.” I say, stroking her hair.

“I always forget that, sorry.” Victoria says, adding on, “Maya.” I give her a smile and pat her on the head.

“I love you my little angel.” I whisper into her ear, bringing a smile to her face. “Go and eat your breakfast.” I tell her. Victoria nods and swims off down the corridor. She almost takes out my sister, Katie, as she rounds a corner.

“You need to control her better sister.” Katie tells me from down the hall.

“I like seeing her when she is excited sister.” I say, swimming over to her.

“I understand that, but she seems to almost always run into me when she’s excited.” Katie says, swimming past me, “Oh, Mom and Dad want to talk with you.”

“What is it this time?” I ask her, rolling my eyes.

“How should I know?” Katie says, “Queen Tymaria and her husband are the most secretive of all of the Coral City’s leaders.” We both laugh at this comment.

“I may as well get going then.” I say, arching my back in a stretch. Katie nods and swims off down the hall as I make my way in the other direction, toward the throne room. I pass by a few other mermaids and merfolk, giving a wave to each one as they give me recognition for my royalty. I finally make it to the throne room doors. The doors are one of the few non-coral, non-serpentine stone objects in the coral city. It is actually made with wood from a tree known as a redwood. I let out a sigh and push the big wooden doors open. At the other end of the room are my parents, sitting on massive coral thrones. I swim up to them and kneel before them, as best as I can with a fish tail after all.

“You may stand Princess of the Coral City.” My mother says. I get up off of the ground and I look right into my mother’s eyes.

“Maya, We want you to take this staff, as a gift from me and your mother.” My father says, handing me a deep blue colored staff similar to the ones I have seen pictured in our textbooks about magic. I take it with shaking hands.

“For a while now, we have known about you magical capabilities.” Tymaria says.

I look up at my parents with shock. Were they trying to tell me that I was some kind of a mage?

“We had another mage study the flow of mana between the land and our people, and you were one of the ones that drew mana in from our city. He believes that you could be a hydromancer, a water mage.” Tymaria says.

“You are going to meet up with an angel who will be able to help you hone in your ability to control the waves.” My father says, “The same beach you went to 5 years ago.”

I let out a small gasp when he mentioned the beach because I had gone to the continent and was almost taken advantage of while I was in the human city.

“You should probably get going now, Angelis may already be waiting for you.” Tymaria says, giving a gesture letting me know that I could leave now.

I incoherently mumble a thanks and swim out of the throne room faster than I had meant to. I went straight to my bedroom and propped the staff against the open door. I went to my dresser and pulled out the serpent scale I had found just outside of the Coral City when I was 14. The scale was still sticky due to it’s resin, which I was thankful for. I carefully stick the scale to my forehead and let my blue hair cover it.

A crash comes from the door as it is swung open a tiny bit because the staff had slipped and fallen to the ground.

“Lady Maya, where did this staff come from?” Victoria says. I turn around and look at her, seeing her eyes tearing up.

“I don’t entirely understand this either, but I am supposedly a mage of some sort.” I say, swimming over to her and looking into her eyes, “The place I have to go isn’t very kind to our kind and they see the young as the most vulnerable.” I felt horrible telling her to stay behind, but I wanted to protect her from the human I ran into last time. I lean down and pick the staff back up and look into her eyes again, which have welled up with tears. Just like humans, our tears don’t have salt in them, making it easy to tell when a mermaid or merfolk is crying. I place

a hand onto her shoulder and give a little squeeze. She wraps her arms around me and I feel her body shaking as she cries.

“I won’t be gone for very long.” I say, slipping out of her grip and swim past her and down the hall. I turn toward the western end of the city and swim. The moment I spot a window, I swim outward and up toward the surface of the ocean. The noises of the city die down as I work my way up to the surface. Eventually the noise of my city is gone and I’m alone in the ocean climbing toward the surface to take a breath of air for the first time in years.

Finally I break the surface and take in a breath of air. I float for a bit enjoying the sun on my face. I hear a splash behind me and I take a look at its source.

“I’m never going to leave your side.” Victoria says crying.

“I’m really glad you’re here to be honest.” I say with a smile. Victoria smiles back at me and dives under the water. I let myself sink under the surf and point in the direction we are headed. Victoria nods and swims alongside me.

The last time I swam to the coast of Furur, I never ran into trouble, but this time we ran into trouble pretty fast, trouble with a mouth full of razor sharp teeth that is.

I hear Victoria scream and I turn around quickly. I see a dark shape that solidifies into the form of a massive shark. I began to turn back around until the shark began charging toward us. I lift up the staff and do my best to focus on the scale hoping it will power my magic. Victoria tries to launch a stream of bubbles at it, but doesn’t even faze the giant shark. I grab her arm and we swim out of its path, narrowly missing its jaws.

“Victoria, create a wall.” I whisper to her. She nods and creates the wall, blurring our vision of the shark. I can still feel its presence and try to nudge it away with my willpower, but to no avail. At that moment, a massive kraken comes from below us and attacks the shark. We use this moment to begin swimming away from the Kraken, but it notices us. Without thinking I send a blast of water at it, ripping it in half.

“We need to get out of here.” I say as blood comes out of the Kraken. One thing I know about sharks is that they are drawn to blood.

“You used your magic thought.” Victoria says shaking. I grab a hold of her hand and begin to swim away from the mess we left behind.

“Yeah, I did without even thinking about it.” I say smiling. I look back quickly and pause.

“Look at that Victoria. A whale and a Kraken fighting each other.” I say pointing.

“Something we may never see again.” She says

“Must be why this place is a graveyard for ships.” I say, turning back around and swimming away from the two brawling creatures with Victoria’s hand in mine.

“Wait, you also used a form of magic, what was that?” I ask her. Victoria just shrugs back.

I hear the whale bellow in pain. I begin to swim faster hoping that we can get out of the area before the Kraken finishes and notices us. I hear the bellows fade as we swim away from it.

It isn’t long before we see the ocean bed rise up and create a plateau as we swim closer to the coast line.

“We’ve reached the continental shelf, we don’t have much longer to go now.” I say, breaking the surface and seeing the land that I had seen 5 years ago. We continue to swim toward the continent.

Victoria becomes increasingly excited as she spots individual trees and rocks. Eventually, I can feel rocks brush against my chest. I crawl my way a few feet closer to the shore until I feel rocks scraping my skin. I push myself up and out of the water and do my best to sit up, watching my tail transform into a pair of legs and a beautiful orange dress covers me. I look back at Victoria as she is covered by a white dress.

I’m the first to stand up and I walk over to her on shaky legs. I hold out a hand to help her up. She takes my hand and stands up on her new legs and takes a few steps, almost falling down. We slowly work our way out of the water. When we make it out of the water, I climb up onto a rock and watch Victoria as she explores the beach.

“How do you like your dress Victoria.” I say.

“I like it a lot. White is an amazing color.” Victoria says, twirling around a bit.

I begin to run my hands through my hair, trying to straighten out all of the knots in it from all of the swirling it has gone through while I have been underwater. I feel another pair of hands begin to work on my hair, undoing all the knots in my hair.

"Thank you." I say, not even turning around.

"You are welcome Maya, Princess of the Coral City." A feminine voice says from behind me. I turn around to see a white winged angel standing above me, looking at Victoria.

"What is your name angel?" I ask her, standing up.

"Oh, sorry." She says, looking at me, "My name is Angelis. I am an angel of Riga and a planeswalker native to this world."

"You already know my name, but the other girl over there is Victoria. She is my handmaid, but any humans should think of her as my daughter." I say, extending a hand to Angelis.

"I'm guessing you have your reasons for it." Angelis says, taking my hand and shaking it.

"Victoria, come on over and say hi to Angelis." I call out.

"Coming!" Victoria says, scrambling over to the rock I am on. She tries her best to get onto the rock that I am on, but only manages to cling onto the side of it with only her head making it over the top.

"Hi." Victoria says. I grab her arms and help her up onto the rock.

"I know that you are able to use magic, but why did you bring your handmaid along with you?" Angelis asks me.

"Let's just say that she brought herself along for the journey. She also has magical abilities of her own." I say patting Victoria on her shoulders.

"What kind exactly?" Angelis asks me.

"Wind I guess." I say, looking at Victoria.

"A mermaid that can use a form of green magic." Angelis says to herself.

"Green magic?" I ask her.

"Each type of magic uses one of five colors of mana. Victoria's magic draws its strength from green mana." Angelis says.

"What are all of the different colors then?" I ask her.

"The colors of mana are white, blue, black, red, and green. I was told that you can use hydromancy, a form of magic which draws its strength from blue mana." Angelis says.

"This is nice and all, but how are we going to learn to use our magic?" I ask Angelis.

"First we need to remove that." Angelis says, brushing my hair aside and pulling off the scale on my forehead. Victoria looks at the scale in curiosity.

"It is only decorative." I say.

"It isn't actually." Angelis says, looking at the scale, "I can feel mana coming out of it. You need to learn how to call on mana from the land around you and lands you have seen."

I look up confused, but Angelis continues on, gesturing to the forest nearby.

"There are a grouping of targets set up in that forest. Your objective is to take down each one without taking down any trees or causing massive damage." Angelis says.

"Okay." I say, lifting my staff and pointing it toward the nearest target. I focus my strength to the staff, trying to recreate the reaction from earlier.

"Don't try and force it." Angelis says.

I close my eyes and do my best to connect with the ocean. It is really hard to do, but eventually, I feel my body tingle as energy pulses through my body and into my staff. The for no reason at all, I think of home. I think of all the details of the structure itself. The next moment, I'm flying backwards and land in the ocean. My staff goes flying out of my hand. I gasp for air when I surface and open my eyes.

"What happened?" I ask. As long as we are in a human form, we can't breath underwater.

"You had a lot of mana put into that spell." Angelis says.

"I thought of home right before I went flying." I say, swimming over to the shore and make my way back to the rock.

"It worked though, you took down every single target I had set up." Angelis says, using her form of magic to make the targets whole again, "Try to control your magic this time if you can." I nod and climb up the rock and sit down this time.

"Go for it." Angelis says. I close my eyes for a moment to picture the Coral City. I open my eyes again and look at the first target. I point my staff, which I grabbed on my way back, toward it and let the mana flow into it. I carefully form the sphere of water on the end of the staff and then mentally throw it at the middle target. I watch as it shatters the target's head. I grin at the success of it, and cut off the flow of mana to the sphere of water, only to realize it wasn't under my control anymore. The sphere splits into two smaller spheres which each take out a target of their own before coming back together as a single sphere.

"That was not me." I say.

"I believe you may actually be able to make elementals." Angelis says, coaxing the sphere to come closer. The sphere comes closer, turning into a serpent.

"Wait, what?" I ask her.

"Elementals. Specifically you can make water elementals." Angelis says as the elemental coils around me.

"When do I get to practice my magic?" Victoria asks Angelis.

"Now if you want to." Angelis says, fixing the targets, "Give it your best shot."

"Thanks." Victoria says, quickly hugging Angelis around the waist.

"Maya, after Victoria finishes up, we'll be heading over to the Oceanic City after this." Angelis says, prying Victoria's arms off of her. Angelis hops off of the rock and I follow her.

"You should know that I don't like humans." I say to Angelis.

"Why?" Angelis asks me. I beckon her over.

"I don't want to worry Victoria, but a human tried to rape me the last time I came to shore." I say in a whisper.

"My gods!" Angelis says, followed by a loud crack from the forest.

"Sorry!" I hear Victoria say, "I accidentally took down a tree just now!"

"Stay calmer next time." Angelis says as I try my best to stifle a laugh, "Try to make them bend slightly."

"Okay!" Victoria says.

"A human actually tried to?" Angelis asks me.

"Yeah, but I got out of there unscathed." I say, "I don't want Victoria to have to deal with what I had to."

"Let's hope for her sake that that human stays put." Angelis says.

"Yes! I did it! I did it!" Victoria yells, followed by a crack.

"Dammit." She says.

"You did fine Victoria." Angelis says, flying to her side, "Just remember to control your excitement." I smile and join them on the rock.

"Ready to go?" Angelis asks me.

"Yes." I say. We walk into the woods and I look at the trees Victoria had taken down. I shiver at the thought of how much damage she could cause when she masters it.

It was only a fifteen minute walk from the coast line to the city. What I saw made me speechless.

"These buildings." I say in awe. The buildings were colored with reds, blues and greens. What really caught my eye was the architecture. It looked more like I had stepped into the Coral City, except it was out of water.

"This city was once a place where your kind used as a trading post to get supplies from humans that you were unable to get in the ocean." Angelis says, "Impressed Princess?"

"Yeah." I say. A city filled with humans that my kind once used? Purely amazing to see.

"We are here to meet with the daughters of Alexander, the current human king." Angelis says, walking toward what seem to be a massive palace. People clear a path for her as she walks by. I couldn't tell if it was out of respect or fear.

"Welcome Angelis to the Oceanic City!" A feminine voice calls out from the palace's steps. I look up to see a girl with black hair, golden shoulder pads and a black dress waving to us.

"Hello Maddie, I presume Lillie is nearby as well?" Angelis asks her.

"Of course she is Angelis." The woman named Maddie says, "Come on up with the princess and her handmaid."

"Come on Maya, come and meet some other royalty of this world." Angelis says with a smile, gesturing for us to go ahead of her.

"Wow, that woman knew you were royalty, amazing!" Victoria says.

"They probably knew I was coming." I say, patting Victoria on the head. I turn around and take the stairs two at a time. I can hear Victoria running up behind me. By the time I get to the top, I am out of breath and doubled over.

"You are pretty strong for someone who almost never uses legs on a daily basis." A different feminine voice says. I look up to see a woman with white hair, white gloves and an ice blue dress.

"You're ... Lillie ... Right?" I ask between breaths.

"Yes, and you are Maya I presume and your handmaid?" Lillie asks me.

"Victoria." I say, gesturing behind me.

"I'll get her." I hear Angelis say, who came out from somewhere. I hear her wings flap die down and then rise in volume. I hear a thud as Victoria is dropped a bit above the ground next to me.

"That ... was ... hard." Victoria says, taking giant breaths between her words. I stand up on shaking legs and look at the two woman in the eyes.

"What do you want to talk to me about?" I ask them.

"We want to forge an alliance between our races." Maddie says.

"Well, that could help both of our races." I say, helping Victoria to her feet.

"To the meeting room!" Lillie declares, motioning for us to follow her into the palace. I feel adrenaline flowing through my veins as I walk toward the palace's doors.

"Go on, they are very nice." Angelis says, putting a hand on my shoulder. I look at the palace doors and walk through them, entering a massive room with a patio looking out to the ocean beyond.

"Please sit down. This will be new for you, so we'll be patient." Maddie says, motioning to a pair of chairs on one side of the table. I walk over to the chair and sit down in it.

We talked for about an hour creating our alliance. They only focused on the basics and said that we would focus on more important issues later on. Still, I never knew alliance making could be so damn hard. Victoria got super bored and went for a walk while we were talking. We finally shook hands and I stood up and began to look for Victoria. I finally found her out on a dock.

"What are you looking for?" I ask her, walking up right next to her.

"I thought I saw a whale out in the water." Victoria says, pointing outward. Victoria then shrieks as she gets yanked backwards. I turn around to see a man in his early thirties with his hand over Victoria's mouth.

"Hello beautiful." The man says, "I remember you." He points toward me with his other hand.

"Let her go!" I growl, already making the water around us churn.

"That is a no go." He says, "She is of the right age." He leans in toward Victoria, who tries to lean away. The man sniffs her while he moves his other hand to her chest. At that moment, I let out a roar and swing my arm.

"Missed me." The man says, taking a step backward into a wave of water, my real intention when I swung my arm. The water pushes them both off of the dock and I jump in after them. Victoria is too shocked at the moment to be able to transform into a mermaid. I force the man's hands off of her and push Victoria upward.

"My turn now." I say as I turn into a mermaid. The man tries to swim away, but I create chains of water with my magic to hold him in place.

"Should I?" Victoria asks me, now in her mermaid form.

"Yes." I say glaring at the man, "Let it be a reminder to those that seek to take advantage of us." A smile creeps onto Victoria's face that is semi creepy. She then focuses her magic to create a constant cycle of air to keep the man alive.

We finally break the surface to see Lillie and Maddie running toward us with a group of guards.

"Are you two okay?" I hear Angelis yell from above us. She lands on the dock and helps us out of the water. Both me and Victoria go to our human forms almost immediately.

"We took care of it." I say, stabilizing myself by putting a hand onto Angelis's shoulder.

"Where is your attacker?" Lillie asks me. I point toward the ocean.

"Is he dead?" Maddie asks me.

"No, not directly and not yet." I say, adding, "We trapped him under the water as a reminder not to mess with our kind."

"Remind me not to piss her off." Maddie says to Lillie.

"Of course Maddie." Lillie says, holding Maddie's hand.

"Thanks for the alliance." I say, extending a hand.

"Of course princess." Maddie says, shaking my hand with her free hand.

"And to you Angelis for making us better at our forms of magic." I say, giving Angelis a curtsy.

"You are welcome my princess and remember to take your staff with you." Angelis says, handing me my staff.

"Thank you all." I say to everyone. I turn around and take a hold of Victoria's hand and begin running down the dock as fast as we could before jumping off into the ocean. We both instantly become mermaids as the oceanic waters wash over our bodies. We quickly turn back the way we had come to get to the shore and begin to head home. I close my eyes and focus my mind into the land around me. I come across the leylines and mentally trace them around the world, feeling the changes and even cut off at one point. I eventually make contact with the plane's center and feel a dark presence seeping into it. I mentally ask Rigo what is wrong with it and it replies gloomily telling me that nothing can help it.

"You may think we can't help you, but we will." I say quietly to myself.

The Sage's Visit