

(sound similar to a heart monitor followed by a quiet groan)

ALASDAIR: Whim?

(another groan)

ALASDAIR: Oh thank the Creator. Guillermo! Guillermo they're awake! Woah, hey, easy there buddy. You've had a rough return. Shh, shh, don't try to talk just yet. You've been out for a while now, Whim. Save your strength, Memo will be here in a minute.

GUILLERMO: Whim! Stars, kid, we weren't sure... I thought I lost another kid. You're safe, Whim. You're safe. ...Don't look at me like that, kid. Please. I know what you're asking, but...

ALASDAIR: ...She's not back yet, Whim. I'm sorry.

GUILLERMO: ...We're not quite sure what happened. There were no readings for either of you and then...

ALASDAIR: And then there was a reading for *you* but not for him. And you were plummeting *fast*, Whim. Faster than a jump from the Fringes to reality would allow for. And when mum managed to catch you, you were so cold... We took you back here and Opal and I started to monitor your vitals. You were almost completely devoid of magic, Whim. Almost faded but this wasn't fading. It was... We're not quite sure what it was, but it had to be Minerva's doing. Opal and I never dreamed that she would have the capabilities to do that. The fact that her power was enough to sustain herself and Silver for as long as she did... It would be impressive if my brother's child wasn't missing. Now it's just frightening.

GUILLERMO: We managed to pick up Silver's magic signature in small blips, but never fast enough to find them. And there's still no sign of Minevra at all. Opal thinks she might be what's moving Silver but... But that doesn't really help us since we don't have any access to where Minerva is or a way to shut her off. Sil's logs are finding their way to us, though. They remember, Whim. Stars above, they remember. But they don't remember how to get *home* and we can't get a reading on them and—

ALASDAIR: Breathe, brother. We're going to sort this out, I promise. I'm terribly sorry you got caught in the crossfire, Whim. We thought with your heartline you'd be able to find him but, well... We think that's part of why you fell to reality so hard. Minerva tampered with your heartline somehow, practically destroyed it. Marigold has been trying to figure out what happened, how Minerva could've done this, but she's coming up empty. There's still the faintest

traces, or at least that's what Mari said, but it wouldn't be enough to get Silver to you or you to Silver. Not anymore.

GUILLERMO: I know Mari is still doing research, but what about Opal? Have they learned anything else since we last spotted Silver?

ALASDAIR: Unfortunately not. It's a similar block to the one they had with the Valley. They're wondering if going into reality would help, but it's not like we have any solid leads on where Silver actually is. She was last seen in Melinoe's reality, right? Perhaps I could visit Greenwood and see if I can find any traces of her... (sigh) though I suppose I won't have any contacts in Greenwood given that Mel has been long gone for eons now, hasn't she? It's a lead, though, and that's better than what we've had.

GUILLERMO: I can go, Al. It would probably be better to have you stay with Whim anyway in case their magic levels start flailing again. I'll check with mom to see if there have been any updates before jumping down, you two sit tight.

(footsteps)

ALASDAIR: ...You'll have to forgive my brother if he seems a bit all over the place, Whim. Losing Silver was difficult enough as it was. Once we lost sign of you... He had so much hope that we could get you both home safely and now you're hurt and she's still missing. You should've seen his face when he first heard her logs, Whim, he almost lost it. We all did, honestly, hearing her voice after so long... Though I imagine you also understand that feeling. I'm glad you were able to see her, Whim. Magic knows she needed a friend, needed *you*. Still needs you, in fact, stars above she talks about you so much. Actually... You should give her logs a listen. Maybe you'll pick up on something we're not picking up on. The most recent one is already loaded in Guillermo's portable console, let me just... There we go! Are you up for this? ...She would say that too, wouldn't she? Silver... You know how much she means to us. Of course her little mannerisms would rub off on us and I'm rambling just like her now, aren't I? Give the log a listen, Whim. I'll be right here if you need me.

SILVER: (crashing sound) fuck me, that hurt. You'd think after getting dropped in reality like this a few times now I'd be used to it... Okay, Silver, breathe and take stock of what you know. There are... Trees. Lots of trees. Luckily I didn't land on one of those or this would've been a *much* rougher fall. What else, what else... I can feel magic surging through my skin, so we must be intersecting with the plane of magic! Maybe I can find that soft spot and get into the plane itself... I just have to move faster than whatever is moving me.

It hasn't worked so far, but when have I ever let that stop me?

There's got to be some kind of town or something around here... I'm always dropped near some sort of town. So we pick a direction and walk, right? Come on, Silver, we can do this. Work fast, work smart, get home. I'm gonna get home.

There's a lot of greenery in this place, really lush forest as far as the eye can see. And... And a town on the horizon! I can see a statue, maybe some kind of fountain? (running) Oh my stars... That's—

ORESTES: That's Melinoe. She brought the water back to this place. (pause) Sorry, I didn't mean to intrude, I just—

SILVER: No, no, it's fine! I thought I recognized her, I've— I've heard stories about her before.

ORESTES: Stories of her from outside of Greenwood? I didn't realize her legend had spread so far.

SILVER: Yes! I had heard about her before, though I can't remember where for the life of me. It's like there's a little glimmer of her story in my brain, though. There wasn't enough water in the town and then...

ORESTES: No one really knows how she came to discover the spell that brought water back to Greenwood. She claims that someone wandered into her life and taught her the magic while her husband was mining for materials, but it's widely believed to just be modesty on her part. She was a fantastic caster when it came to water magic— surprising given her propensity for metal work, but she was brilliant at it. She taught her husband, Adam, and her son—

SILVER: Alasdair.

ORESTES: Yeah! Good to see he's made his way into legend as well. Their whole family deserves to be immortalized for what they'd done for this town, but Alasdair was a powerhouse when it came to magic.

SILVER: I... Thank you. For sharing. I actually need to be heading off—

ORESTES: Are you sure? You look a little peaky—

(running)

Stay safe out there!

SILVER: Alasdair. How did I forget Alasdair? And Greenwood– Melinoe and this entire town are steeped in Alasdair’s files, how could I forget? Focus, Silver. Focus on what you know. Greenwood runs along the plane of magic through the woods outside of town. But which way did Alasdair say the connection fell? And which woods? There are so many trees and I just...

I can do this. I can. Just gotta feel for the magic and follow, right? I can do this.

...I wish Alasdair were here. They could find this path *so easily*, could remind me of how to find it myself. I know the information is in here somewhere but I just... They’re like a memory of a memory, too blurry around the edges, so mixed with the memories Minerva put in my head and I just can’t–

Breathe. I need to breathe. He would tell me to breathe. Magic is in me, it’s around me, it *is* me. I just need to reach out and feel for it. Come on, Silver, really feel for it. ...There. That way. I can feel it, I can feel *him*. Uncle Alasdair, who taught me to cast my first spell, who waded through the plane of magic with me, who read me stories about dragons, who is *real* and not the fabrication that Minerva placed in my head. I can feel the magic, feel him through the magic. It’s stronger, *I’m* stronger. I’m faster. I’m going to make it home, to my real home, the home with dad and Alasdair and MaMa and Gran and Opal and Mari and not just these fake memories of people who don’t care for me. There’s magic here, so much magic, seeping through just ahead of me. I can see it now. I can see the gold of magic flowing like water into this place, right there! (running) Home, on the Fringes, with my family, I can remember it, I can feel it calling to me. I’m so close, I just–

ALASDAIR: ...Minerva must’ve moved them right as they were about to find the plane of magic. I... You’ve been asleep for a while, Whim. And there are many of these logs. Usually he doesn’t get so close, doesn’t remember in so much detail. This... I suppose I should explain some of what we’ve discovered, shouldn’t I? Gods, perhaps I should’ve waited until Guillermo was back to play you the log. But I didn’t know, hadn’t listened to this one, I just... I’m sorry, Whim.

Let’s start with what we know. Or, at least, what we assume. We’re fairly sure that Minerva is what’s moving Silver between the realities. I know we mentioned this before, but it’s the easiest place to start. I say fairly sure as we haven’t fully proven this just yet, but Minerva is the only thing in this universe other than us who would be able to move Silver like that. And given that we aren’t causing Silver to reality jump, it makes the most sense that it would be Minerva.

As you’ve probably gathered, we’re never sure where he ends up or why, just that eventually we get a hit on his magic reading and have to locate him before it moves again; Opal and I think that

Minerva is having to do the same thing. Sometimes it feels like Silver is only there for a moment before she's zapped off somewhere else and sometimes it feels like she's just within our grasp when she's moved. I think Minerva doesn't have a tracer on them as much as she's getting Silver moved and then having to use her systems to find Silver all over again like we are. From what we've gathered, Minerva must be fairly weak for having existed off of the plane of magic directly for a while now. Her systems aren't fully functional, meaning she's just as lost in this mess she's created as we are.

Stars only know what would happen if her systems were fully functional.

(footsteps)

GUILLERMO: No sign of her, Alasdair. Any trace of her magic has been washed away from those woods. I can't... (long pause) You played them the recording, didn't you?

ALASDAIR: I hadn't known—

GUILLERMO: No, I suppose you hadn't. I should've told you, or made you listen before they woke up... It doesn't matter now, I suppose. We were gonna have to get you up to speed eventually, kid, let you know what we've been working with. How far have you gotten, AI?

ALASDAIR: As far as Minerva working with basically the same information as us. Her systems are malfunctioning but still slightly faster than we can be due to the error any person would make over an artificial intelligence.

GUILLERMO: I will say this, Whim: We're not sure if Minerva is trying to get them back to that little station or not. The movements that she's making Silver take are sporadic, clearly unplanned, but we're not sure that the end goal is to trap Silver back in that box. Maybe she's looking to trap him in a new box or maybe... Maybe she's just going to bounce him around as revenge for leaving. All we know is that Minerva is acting illogically and cruelly and we need to find Silver before she does so we can get them back home.

Their logs are being recorded still, which means that Minerva is getting the exact same information that we're getting after Silver crashes somewhere new. She's just the slightest bit faster than us, but it's enough to make a difference. We've thought about—

ALASDAIR: Memo, are you sure we should—

GUILLERMO: No, I'm not sure we should tell them but it's too late to back down. We've thought about changing course to try and find Minerva directly. If we can find that space that she

kept Silver in, we can shut her down. Destroy her. (pause) Don't look at me like that, kid, I know it's... They wouldn't want that, I know, but they also wouldn't want to be lost for eternity either. Minerva is difficult to track given the fact that she's not in reality or on the Fringes fully, but she's more trackable than Silver right now. We were getting closer and closer when we were looking for you, maybe we can refine our search and pin her down.

ALASDAIR: It took us ages to even realize she was in the space between, Guillermo. I doubt she'll go so easily now, especially now that Silver has left that space. We have a good system for looking for Silver and we get faster every day. One of these days—

GUILLERMO: I haven't seen my kid in *years*, Al! We don't have the luxury of 'one of these days', we never did but especially not now that we're so close to finding Minerva.

...I'm sorry, Alasdair. I didn't mean—

ALASDAIR: I know, brother. I know. We can diversify our search, some looking for Minerva, some looking for Silver, and some staying with Whim. Yes, you. We can't just leave you to recover on your own, Whim, you need company and for someone to be able to take care of you. There are six of us and three tasks at hand; easy enough to rotate teams through.

GUILLERMO: Don't look so guilty, kid. You're our family too, you know. And you deserve to be brought up to speed each day even if you're not well enough to aid in the search effort now. It can be... Tough to hear her voice in the recordings, but maybe you'll be able to pick up on something we're not. Or maybe you'll feel better just hearing her like the rest of us did, no matter how tough what she's saying is. Usually they're a bit longer than what Al had today, I think— Maybe I shouldn't say.

ALASDAIR: ...You think that memories of here are making him easier for Minerva to find, don't you?

GUILLERMO: He shines like a beacon when he's starting to remember and that split second between my speed and Minerva's is just enough for him to get moved. Of course I want him to remember, I *hate* that Minerva has taken us from him, it just... It poses a risk. Not remembering also poses a risk, don't get me wrong, there's just no winning here. Not until we can get him home.

ALASDAIR: And we will.

GUILLERMO: ...Yeah. Yeah we will. They're gonna come back to us. They just have to.

We should let you get a bit more rest, kiddo. You've had an emotionally charged first day back to consciousness I'm sure. I'll... I'll leave the magic pad here if you want to take a listen to any of the other recordings. Try to rest up, okay?

(footsteps)

(light tapping)

SILVER: I have no idea where I am or where I'm going, all I know is that I need to get home. I'm coming home, I promise. Wait for me, Whim? Please?

(clattering plastic)