

SORREL

So you're a transformer I guess, that's cool... Carter, talk to me.

CARTER

(stuttering really badly)

I can't.

SORREL

I uh... Do you want to? I can't look at you when you're nodding, I'm driving. I don't know dude, this is just... It's a lot. I'm sorry about all of it, about what I said. You're not hard to get along with, I know I'm an asshole. Um, what're you doin... taking out of your... Your phone? Do you want me to keep talking?

AAC

Yes.

SORREL

What's that?

AAC

Called Augmented and Alternative Communication. Accessibility.

SORREL

Cool.

AAC

Keep talking.

SORREL

Um, I don't know what to say. I uh... Um? Anything I can think of? Um, I thought you were going to die and that's probably not what you wanna hear but um... I just... You scared me, Carter. And I thought... You once said you didn't want this to be the story I died in... You didn't know me and at the time I had this really bad thought. That I didn't really care if it was the story you died in. And like... I care. A lot. I never want you to die.

You could've died and I'd have been the reason, Carter, you shouldn't be in this. You know that, right? This is not your moment, I mean you don't know Emery. You don't know me. Didn't. But you shouldn't die here. On the side of the road in Missouri because a horrible thing hit you.

Um...

Okay, this conversation is bad. New one.

Okay, so based on my small circle of fae friends, your wings are average sized. Uh, most wings come in as like a second puberty - though, I guess in your case third puberty. So I've seen wingspans stretch up to eighteen feet, and some stretch four feet. Most fae who grow in the fae realm develop really light bones so it just makes it easy to have smaller wings and be smaller. Yours are like? Almost ten feet? So you're like an average wingspan. I think that's cool.

Also, everyone I know has wings that come in and just... Fit them? They kind of chameleon with you, so if you suddenly get cured of depression they might show that.

I think your wings are pretty. I mean, giant, giant wings. I love that. Um, and you can flap them. Uh, do you want to see if you do magic?

AAC
Do I fly?

SORREL
Theoretically?

I can't teach you how to fly, I don't have wings. Which is why I'm not a good person for this conversation! I'm gonna call Rowen when I can get off the road, they'd really be able to help, like... It's just... It's easier to talk to someone who gets it. Which is not, uh, the best mindset all the time I guess, but Rowen's good people. They like you. And they want to help you out. I mean, before because you were the normiest of us, but now just... You're so nice! It's impossible to hate someone as nice as you, you know?

Which is annoying, sometimes. I mean, why does the person I have to travel with have to have be nice but also have such an intense sense of right and wrong it's debilitating to travel with sometimes? Things aren't so easy? Have you ever tried to draw a circle? It's near impossible to draw a perfect circle. Even if you get close, there is imperfection. You might tell me, well a computer can generate a perfect circle but when you get down, the pixels aren't a circle. It's impossible to draw a perfect circle.

So when you make decisions, when you tell me, they need to be perfectly right or wrong, sometimes it makes me want to shake you. I am trying my best. I've come so far in my life and this is the best I've ever done. I used to be so stuck in my own ways, stuck in my own justice.

I just...

I say that but I'm making this about me. I'm a very big part of my life though, and I can't think of a lot to talk about that won't stop me from driving.

More about fae, you should be near impossible to kill, which is good. I mean, I told Sock I'm hard to kill, but I'm just a little cockroach thing. Fae, are pretty hard to kill. Just, with all the shit

going on with you. I can write down what will kill you. Um, but maybe don't die. Like, avoid everything I say.

I souped up your car. I mean, sorta, let me talk about that. Um, so like I said, my magic is destructive. It's all insurance plans. So the gas cap won't open if someone else tries to open it. It shoots out gas at them, like a spray gun. I put chains on the tires, because we're north enough we can get ice storms. I also rigged the windshield, which is why it's cracked. It won't crack anymore though - I did it wrong the first time.

I bought a new transmission while you were out. Paid some kid at the Autozone to fix it. I did manage to fuck up the power steering though, so we're not using the highway. Which is why it's taking so long to get there.

I feel like I've been rambling for days.

I don't know the first thing about cars.

Driving terrifies me. I don't like not drive because I'm lazy, I don't drive because I'm afraid. The road is huge and like driving on it, with all these bastards is just...

I'm also just a terrible driver. Which is not the best way to tell you. Since you are forced to ride with me. But I am being incredibly careful. Driving makes me sick. And uh, talking is kind of helping. I see why you talk all the time.

I had to take my driver test 7 times. The first one I failed because I was going the wrong way down a one way.

You know how I got my license? I went to Brenham. I didn't even tour the Blue Bell Ice Cream Factory. I went to Brenham because they wouldn't fail me.

And they almost did! I was so bad. I was speeding and she asked what the speed limit was. I almost lied. But I didn't. I said I was going too fast and trying to slow down. She said she would've failed me if I lied. I've been thinking about that; I mean with all we're doing, it just...

The road's been on my mind. That was my start. Well, no my start was uh... I was fifteen when I started driving. I wanted to learn immediately. I wanted to be good at it. I wasn't. Still not.

As a kid, the great wide ocean didn't appeal to me. You want what you can't have, I guess. I wanted the road. I had this dream that me and my friends would graduate high school and do a road trip across the country and I don't know. We'd be like in a movie.

I graduated high school in silence though. I didn't really have friends. Didn't try to make any, but didn't have them nonetheless. I was weird, and sullen. I wanted this bad bitch poet vibe but I

think I just had a basement incel vibe. Well, no. Basement loudly queer vibe. I made that abundantly clear, even when I didn't date anyone in high school.

I just wasn't interested in dating; which sounds wild, considering where we are. I've only dated like three people? Leanna Kades, Ophelia Creasher and Emery. Leanna moved to Maine, which I'm pretty sure means she grew into her wealth, Ophelia and I broke up because she made a deal with a fae and well... This is Emery.

AAC
Fae?

SORREL

The faeries are most of the time malicious. Not malevolent but like... mischievous I guess. We will, at some point, if you're okay with it, use that as a get out of jail free card.

Most of the folks who hate me are afraid of the fae.

Not that you're scary. You're not, which I hope isn't the vibe you try to give off. I don't know, I try to give off scary but like... I'm not great at it. But like, you give off... I don't know. Like a gentle vibe. Like you'd put someone who's drunk to bed with a water bottle.

Um, just that the fae are not to be fucked with though. So that's a bad ass thing. If you want to be badass.

I'm not good at this shit. Comforting people. So, sorry, this is as good as it gets. Just me rambling about how little I can help you.

What you read about fae though? That's the truth.

I mean, not the "getting small" stuff. You can get smaller, but most people don't and I don't know how. I've never seen Rowen do it but like, I've seen some others.

Let's talk weaknesses. Iron. Don't touch it. Ever. It won't kill you but rashes? Oh boy, the rashes.

Well it will kill you. You're susceptible to iron poisoning. So don't get stabbed. Steel is made of iron. Iron supplements give some fae explosive diarrhea. So, don't take those.

There's a lot of deals you can trick people into. I'll ask for some help with those but I don't know about them. I know how to avoid fae magic, so I'll tell you those rules.

Don't trust lawyers. They're probably fae.

Don't trust actors. They're probably fae.

Always answer “may I have your name” with “No, but you may call me...”

Never accept anything, including a compliment.

Do not make deals of any kind.

Always stay in their favor or they’ll make it bad for you.

Fae are trick to talk to. You’re not, but like, the rules of time bend for the faerie world. The rules of logic bend. The rules are different for fae.

AAC

Talk about something else!

SORREL

Um... Okay. Um... What?

AAC

How do you know Sock?

SORREL

I really like Sock. I don’t know, don’t talk to me about it later but um, I just like her. A lot. I used to really want to date Sock, before I was with Emery. She uh... She treated me really well. You ever meet someone and now they are gonna change your life?

Is this helping?

AAC

Yes.

Sock walked up to me and said “Hi, my name is Sock, not like the garment, but like the friend. I wanna be your friend Sock!” So, she just was. We had this little DND party. Sock was the first one to say “what does the party need?”

I feel like you’re that kind of DND player sometimes. But “what does the part need” became, “do you guys need anything?” That’s how she ended her calls. “Hey, before I go, do you guys need anything?” I missed it.

ACC

Did you ask her out?

SORREL

I didn’t think I deserved to? Which sounds so absolutely embarrassing, I guess.

Um, what about you? Do you want to talk?

AAC

No. I want to listen.

SORREL

I don't think I ever would've been a good partner for her - I don't know. I thought Emery was the best I would get. Maybe that's self defeating. Emery was everything I thought I was worth at that point.

With my parents, things were always about how I wasn't doing enough for the family. With Emery, things were about how everyone else had hurt us. We were two broken things. When you feel like a fracture, any little bit will make you whole.

Emery didn't make me whole. They just made me sad.

I tried my best to give this person my best. But you can't give someone this hollowness inside you; I mean. Emery said "we're both hollow and life sucks."

Sock said "you do not waste away because your mind is attacking you." Sock thinks in these big romantic feelings. I just like it. But I screwed that up pretty bad.

I guess I didn't. The smartest thing I ever did was make friends with people who are nice just cause they can be. I have a real specific set of friends. People who all just feel rejected.

I guess that ain't so specific though. I guess, everyone feels rejected.

But Sock, Horatio and Rowen; they all are my friends because they want to take care of one another. We're a little squad of somehow found out magic users. Emery was in that squad but Emery is like... Like if you took someone who was lonely and made them angry about it. Emery said we don't deserve to be this miserable, they do.

It's... I felt that way. We weren't even like, cast aside for being magic. We were just weird. We've always been weird; I mean, you ever just, lie face down in your bed, listening to Paramore thinking, why won't we all admit we feel this way? Emery at least said it wasn't fair. And that's not a good thing, kind of. I mean, no it was a good thing, to like, acknowledge it. But they treated it like the reason to do anything.

Carter, I'm afraid of the road. I'm afraid of you dying. I'm even a little afraid of me dying. But I am most afraid of that mindset. Because Emery said it, and for a long time, I felt it. I felt like we deserved someone else's suffering. And like...

You probably think that's terrible. With your circular justice.

AAC

Your suffering is not a reason to celebrate.

SORREL

Nah, guess not.

I don't think that anymore. I think suffering just is that. Suffering. No one needs to die, I guess. Hurt leads right back to hurt.

What I'm saying, I guess. Uh, thank you. You had a lot of chances to give up on me. I told you to give up on me. And you didn't. And I've been given more chances in my life than I know what to do with, but this one?

This one means something. I've been given a chance to not give up. I've gotta go after it. So, we're going to your mom's house, we're going to figure out what you need to know about you.

And then we're gonna save all my friends. It's time to prove what you guys already seem to know.

I'm not worth giving up on.