

6

-Liwayway-

Eyes glazed, Liwayway slumped on the sand, feeling its roughness with her toes, on a lonely island, in the middle of open seas, while her mind flew miles away; soaring through endless forests and raging rivers, through craggy mountains and clear skies.

Then she knit her brows together. Her mind caught fire, burning so hot she grunted and groaned and laid flat on the sand, pounding it with her fists.

Magwayen's voice whispered. *Do you want to restore your land?*

"No!"

She rolled on the beach, trying to rid herself of her thoughts. Breathing the harsh breeze, she covered her face with her hands. The rough sand clung to her, glued by sweat.

She thought to herself, *was I wrong...? Is it my fault? I want to know. Is there a way?*

Liwayway sighed.

And...why can I do this?

She sat back up, cupping her hands together, and a tongue of flame lapped at her palms. A snuggling warmth against the cold. But she grimaced and frowned, closing her hands. It disappeared, bathing her in darkness. She looked up, *has the night already come?*

Surprise made her squint. Darkness had seized the moon in its jaws. She shut her eyes, rubbed them till spots of light blinked inside and opened them again.

It was still there. In the faint glow of the stars, a serpent of clouds and lightning snaked around the sky.

Her heart raced faster. A stray breeze wrapped around her shoulders. It hummed with a faint and unfamiliar power, calling to her. Another chance at a clue?

She stood up, turned into an eagle, and flew towards it.

Up close, she saw a pillar of storm clouds reaching towards the heavens. They coiled over an island barely visible in the thickness of the rain. It reminded her of the day she fell from the sky. Her feathers bristled as she circled around, trying to peer inside.

Then a gust carried a cry through to her.

She recognized the voice. Ngi-ngi. They were supposed to go to the *Harana*. *What happened?*

Only the wind's howling answered her. Liwayway shot through the storm, pushing aside the buffeting gale and the lashing rain. Corpses of boats, overturned and broken apart, littered the roiling seas.

The screams led her to Ngi-ngi, hanging on for life in a boat. Liwayway landed on the deck, and the child screamed at her arrival. She wrapped her in wings, talons sliding on the wooden floor.

Ngi-ngi stared at her with wide eyes, scrambling to get away. Liwayway morphed back, feathers disappearing into the storm, grasping at the air with her hands and wresting control of the wind. It stilled around them, gust against gust, the air shrieking as she concentrated on holding it back.

"It's alright!" Liwayway shouted. "It's me!"

Ngi-ng took her in, speechless.

"Where are the others?!"

She pointed to the shore. Liwayway grabbed her, ready to fly away, but stumbled as a wave slammed against the boat and she lost focus. The storm broke through, surging, hammering against her skin, the world tilting and bobbing.

Lightning blossomed, revealing a silhouette filling the entire world high above. Liwayway's hair rose on end. The darkness was a maw wide open, swallowing everything in its path.

The wind spun in a vortex, sucking in water and debris up towards the titanic figure. Screams rang out from everywhere. She grabbed the edge and watched as a huge wave hit the boat head on. The bow rose, pointing towards the sky.

Ngi-ngi screamed as she was pulled into the air.

"No!" Liwayway reached for her, but the boat shook and she missed.

She watched her disappear into the storm.

Like her father falling into the volcano.

"No!"

She turned into an eagle and shot upwards. Tumbling through spouts of water and streams of wind, at times she'd catch up, so close she'd almost reach her but she'd be pulled

away. Up and up they went on the chase. Thunder drummed in a beat; striking faster and faster as she went higher.

Lightning raced across silver scales and jagged teeth. A jaw revealed itself, wide enough to swallow the whole world.

The sight struck her frozen in place, shivering. The distance between them increased. Before she could swallow her fear, Ngi-ngi disappeared inside the creature.

Liwayway couldn't reach her.

"I'll save you," she growled.

Flames bloomed in all directions. Steam hissed. The wind howled in pain. The world creaked, the jaws slamming shut. The flow reversed, the waters falling down again. The gale smashed into her and blew her away. The creature turned back into the clouds.

And the storm disappeared as if nothing had happened.

Notes:

Also, spoilers

[Bakunawa - Wikipedia](#)