

**Hi there! You have found the transcript for Flying in the Face of Fate!**

**Just so you know, there may be one or two differences between the podcast and the transcript, purely due to me riffing a little while I record. I have tried to fix as many errors as I could, though let me know if you find any more!**

Lin never slept. It wasn't a sometimes slept, or rarely slept, like some people he knew. He never slept. It was probably the only reason he praised his genetics at all. He didn't need to sleep, simply meditate for about four hours a night, or spread across the course of the day, and he was fine. He couldn't even remember the last time he actually slept. It was definitely when he was a child, and probably much before it was strictly healthy to stop sleeping. But it hadn't seemed to have any long term effects, so he couldn't complain too much.

Of course, that meant that he was up far earlier than Caelan was, the half-elf fast asleep next to him, and probably would be for a while at least. His dirty blonde hair was covering his face, and Lin had to fight against himself not to lean over and brush it away. That was sure to wake him up. Their legs were still tangled together underneath the covers, and for a moment he couldn't bring himself to move at all. Maybe he should just lie down and keep himself busy for a while until he woke up...

He lasted maybe an hour before boredom overtook him. If he could just grab his bag then he could get a book to read, but that was across the other side of the room. It wasn't large, by any means, a small little inn room that he'd booked out long term, mostly light wood panelling and a few old soft furnishings. But it was still much further than he could reach without moving. He

even tried a couple of times, turning the top of his body and trying to will himself to reach further towards his bag without success.

In the end he had to inch his legs out from between Caelan's, watching the half-elf's face carefully as he pulled away. Thankfully he didn't stir even a little, and Lin let out a shaky breath in celebration. He was sore, as he stood up. The events of the night before had caught up with him more than he cared to ever admit. He made his way over to the other side of the room, avoiding the windows and their subpar curtains, grabbing his bag before heading back to bed.

Getting back into bed was just as precarious as getting out of it, slowly propping himself up against the wall without waking the man bedside him. He carefully placed his pillows behind his back, settling himself in for what he was sure for a long night of reading.

He didn't get far before his mind started wandering. It's not that the book was boring, it was anything but, it was just that there were more pressing matters at the forefront of his mind right now.

Like just how he had got here, reading naked in bed with a man he had only just met. It wasn't like it was an odd occasion, him getting into bed with men he really shouldn't after too short of a time knowing them, but he really wasn't expecting it to happen today, or to someone who was supposed to be protecting for a few days. In fact, when he had posted up the advert for a bodyguard he had assumed there would be a big burly man who would have zero interest in him. Definitely not this little half-elf who was barely much stronger than he was. Not that he'd

complain, of course, he was obviously very talented at what he did otherwise he wouldn't have applied. Well, Lin hoped that was the case, anyway.

Maybe the journey back home would be a lot more interesting than he originally thought then, too. From what little they had spoken, Lin found Caelan genuinely great to get along with, with more similarities than he ever would have thought possible. He'd had his own book in his bag, and they'd discussed a little about things that they had read before they fell asleep. All very easy topics, for sure, but he found friendships worked better if you started off with the easy things. He was glad, honestly. It would be a good few days journey home, and that was with taking a train through the mountains. Maybe he could buy them separate rooms on the three day ride, but they'd still be spending most of their time together and it would be nice to save the money.

... Who was he kidding? It would be nice to spend the most time with Caelan as he could. It wasn't like he would stay much longer than the journey, anyway, why would he? And maybe Lin *could* allow himself this little luxury, just this once. He surely deserved it after all, and he wasn't hurting anyone by pretending that this relationship was something more than it really was. Caelan could go along thinking he was just a normal bodyguard, and Lin could pretend...

He had to shake his head to stop his mind from running away from him. He must have been more lonely than he thought, if this is where it was taking him. A relationship like that wasn't needed, and it detracted away from the more important things in life, like work and his research. Sure, it might be nice one day when his work was all finished, but he didn't need to get swept up in it now.

Turning his eyes back to his book, it was easy to slip back into the theories and methods that lay within. Maybe it would have been better to bring a fictional book, but that would just be a waste of time that he was fast running out of.

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The sound of a door out in the hallway slamming was enough to pull him from his research, ears pinning back in shock as adrenaline flooded his veins instantly. It took a few seconds for him to start breathing more evenly, rationalising with himself that there was nothing coming after him. He looked out of the window, suddenly noticing the sunlight streaming in and after a few seconds he figured out that it was easily approaching lunchtime. Shit. He had meant to head off before now.

He was just as careful getting out of bed this time, carefully slipping his book back into his bag before folding the clothes from the night before. Caelan looked fast asleep still, not even bothered by Lin moving and the elf wondered just how you could be an effective bodyguard if you were that deep a sleeper. Maybe he hadn't actually been in a real life or death situation which forced you into being aware of your surroundings at all times. He found people rarely had.

It was a question he pondered as he got dressed, pulling the braid out of his hair to brush through it carefully. It was more of a chore than he really cared for, having to work through it all section by section to avoid it pulling. It was straight enough, sure, but he'd inherited just enough

of his mother's frizz to cause it to tangle easily if he didn't take care of it perfectly every single day.

Lin had assumed that Caelan would wake up at some point when he was getting ready, now that it was most definitely past noon, but the man was still fast asleep on the bed. He sighed, torn between just leaving him there and getting him up to get ready to head back downstairs. He supposed if he left it *too* much longer, then they'd have to stay here another night and whereas it was definitely tempting, it would also waste a lot of both of their time.

The bed creaked a little as he knelt on it, crawling across to lean down and press a quick kiss to Caelan's lips. He'd have definitely enjoyed being woken up like that, anyway, and he hoped that the same thing extended to the half-elf still curled up in the blankets.

"Hey" he whispered, trying to be as gentle as he could. "It's time to get up."

He allowed himself to flop back down on the bed, ignoring how it would start to wrinkle his suit, and snaked a hand around Caelan's waist before moving over to kiss him again.

His reaction was... unexpected. Caelan batted at his face, not enough to hurt but definitely enough to push him away. Lin shot back in shock, sitting up in the bed as Caelan turned away from him and groaned loudly.

"Go away. Gimme ten more minutes." he mumbled, before his breathing appeared to even out again almost immediately.

Lin could do nothing but stare at him, a strange mix of anger and sadness rising up in his chest. Sure, he was more than used to being used by men to get their kicks before leaving in the morning but... he didn't know. He thought Caelan was different. He'd stayed overnight. He'd pulled him into an embrace before they slept. He actually seemed like he *cared*.

Showed him for being naive.

He took a deep breath, standing up to go and collect his bag as he kept to shove his emotions in check. This was unreasonable. He shouldn't react like this.

That didn't stop the door from slamming slightly louder than necessary on his way out of the room, though.

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The slamming of the door brought Caelan fully to consciousness rudely. He shot up in bed, brain running at a hundred miles an hour as he tried to figure out what it was, glancing about the room to see if he was in danger. Even a cursory glance told him everything was fine, though, and the fact Lin had left with his bag and all of his clothes was a good sign. Not to mention the vague half-asleep memory that he had of the man trying to wake him up. He wasn't in danger, and his charged hadn't got kidnapped. Apparently he just had a bit of a temper on him.

He groaned, rolling about on the bed for a moment as he tried to debate whether or not he could justify just... not getting out of bed yet. If it hadn't been a paying job it would have been much easier to convince himself, but in the end he realised he probably should get up. No matter how warm the blankets were, the promise of another fifty gold at the other end of this journey was better. He could always rest up after he got to Hyrendell. Fifty gold would be more than enough to cover the best hotel room in the city.

The amount of sunlight streaming through the window told him it was more likely than not past noon and, yeah, maybe that was why Lin was mad he wasn't getting up quick enough. In his defence, he had asked him yesterday to get him up when they needed to leave. Although perhaps he should have warned him that he was more often than not incredibly grumpy in the morning. Still, he sat up, throwing his legs off the side of the bed to start doing his morning stretches.

They weren't much, nowhere near the intensity his father did morning exercise, but they were enough to get the blood pumping and leave his muscles supple. He got enough practise out and about in day to day life to leave his body muscled without being too over the top. He'd always been told he had a swimmers body, which was ironic as he'd never actually learnt to swim. Instead he used it for some of the more... nefarious aspects of his job. Hand to hand fights, getting out of the way when he needed to. And most importantly, getting into places that he shouldn't be.

The small adjoining bathroom in the room was nice, too. It looked relatively new, as if someone had added it on in the last couple of months. It was fairly well stocked, as well, with soaps and

hair products he knew were Lin's as soon as he used them. The bottle's weren't full, sure, but they were far from empty. Did he usually just leave his toiletries whenever he left somewhere? Was he planning on coming back? Just how long had he been here, anyway? A part of him wished that he had actually asked around the occupants of the inn downstairs for more information. Oh well. It was too late to ask now.

He sped through getting dressed and packing up his things, not that he had much to pack up. A few minutes and he was heading down the stairs to the main portion of the inn.

There were much less people in there today, being in the middle of the day. It was too late for the breakfast crowd, and slightly too early for lunch, so the only people in there were those retired old men who were borderline alcoholics. They didn't pay him any mind, simply nursing their drinks and reminiscing about the old days.

Lin was sat at one of the tables next to the window, hair tied back into another loose braid like the night before. His suit was obviously different from the one he had worn yesterday, a slightly different cut, but it was still the same dull black. He looked up when Caelan walked in, ears ticking back in what he knew was annoyance, but he still stood up and pulled a chair out for him. Caelan nodded in appreciation, taking the seat and the menu when it was offered to him.

"Get whatever you want. I didn't know what you'd like." Lin offered, taking a sip out of what looked like some juice. His voice didn't *sound* like he was pissed off, but Elven ears rarely lied.

He took a moment to glance over the menu, ended up settling on a sandwich and a smoothie, and gave Lin his order before sitting back. The elf stood up, walked over to the bar and ordered



in that same unknown language from the night before. Caelan simply watched, taking in his surroundings before looking down at Lin's bag. It looked like a simple messenger bag, an over-the-shoulder affair that didn't look like it had a chance of carrying everything he had seen in the room last night. He shook his head quickly. The guy was rich enough, even though a magical bag was something far too luxurious for Caelan, Lin must not have batted an eyelid at carrying one around for day to day business.

Lin finally came back over, passing him his smoothie with a nod. He went to open his mouth, but before he could talk Caelan leant forward and rested his elbows on the table.

"So. What did I do to piss you off?"

He didn't expect the reaction that came from that. Lin's ears ticked back for a second as his eyes widened in utter fear. He stuttered a few times, ears twitching before he coughed and finally regained some sort of composure.

"I... what? Um. I didn't think you had noticed." came the response, and Caelan really did believe him. He seemed to be incredibly put out by being called out like this.

"You slammed the door, *and* I saw that little pissed off wiggle your ears did. We're going to be together for the next week or so, I need to know if I did something wrong." Caelan responded, and just got the same almost terrified stare back. He felt a little bad, just a little, but he didn't want this hanging over them the whole time.

“I...” Lin stammered again, before taking a sip from his juice and tapping his hands nervously on the table. “I’m sorry. That one was on me. I was doing some work in the night while you slept and it got me all worked up. It wasn’t fair I took it out on you. I apologise. It won’t happen again.”

Caelan stared at him a little longer, but he seemed to be telling the truth. His ears had ticked down ever so slightly in what he took to be an apologetic fashion and he really seemed to be sorry.

“Well then. All water under the bridge.” Caelan responded, happy to let it lie, even if he would make sure to remember what he’d done. After a few sips of his drink he leant down to grab his bag, rummaging through it before pulling out his map and laying it flat on the table, using some glasses to weigh the corners down.

“Okay, Hyrendell. It’ll be a week, maybe two. How did you feel about cutting through the Hartiz Ridge?” he pointed to Eastborne on the map, the small industrial city where the Hartiz Underpass started.

Lin nodded, leaning forward to look at the map. “I don’t mind taking the underpass. I’ll get us a nice cabin or two in first class. I would... I would prefer taking some of the back roads though. The open roads can be a bit... dangerous.”

Caelan stopped himself from raising an eyebrow, but only just. Travelling in first class on a train was definitely high-key, but he wanted to stick to the back roads? He supposed, in a way, it

made sense. There must have been a much increased security force in first class. Lin hadn't finished talking, though.

"I was thinking we take the back road towards Winterdrift." He traced the road, a smaller dirt road, if Caelan remembered correctly. "I have access to a place there we can stay for the night, stock up on supplies and spend the night in a decent bed."

Caelan nodded, thinking to himself and trying to remember any problems taking the back roads may cause.

"It may take slightly longer. More chance of bandits, too. But if you want to take the back roads, I can most probably take them." he mused, reaching up to get his sandwich when it arrived and placing it on the map where he wouldn't need to read it. Lin did the same, taking a bite and chewing on it as he thought.

"Back roads would be better. I have... a bounty on my head. People would assume I was taking the main road here and try and intercept me."

Caelan looked up quizzically, finishing his mouthful and taking a quick drink before speaking up.

"Oh? What did you do? Anything I should know about?"

Lin shook his head, seeming somewhat non-plussed despite the revelation he had just made.

“I’m not talking about reputable bounties. I don’t have any law enforcement after me, if that’s what you’re asking. All the bounties on me are from criminals. Mostly want to ransom me back to anyone who cares about me.” He spoke casually, which seemed strange for what he was saying, but thinking it through Caelan kind of understood. There was obviously something about being rich that made you a target for the less respected members of society.

“Alright.” Caelan spoke, sitting back and eating his sandwich slowly. “We’ll take the scenic route. Finish up, and we’ll head out.”