

Today was not going to be a good day.

Mis'to had taken time to freshen up, get his hair trimmed. Properly clean up his coat and hat - even get his tail brushed until it gleamed. But there was a sombreness to it all; a certain military precision in how he went about it, clipped and emotionless. For now.

Rayne had made sure the preparations were set and got dressed in a deep green and black gown and a well polished piece of moonstone was hung around her neck. The outfit was simple and lacked much finery beyond that.

Morgana's silver robes were left to one side today; she opted to go for her simpler black, white and lavender drapings, held together by as little jewellery as possible. Her hair today was platted and held out of the way, a clip on the end of the one plait that still hung loose.

She walked over to Mis'to, a tiny smile on her face.

"It's a shame that I don't get to see you looking so sleek that often... Adventuring doesn't tend to allow it, huh?"

Mis'to managed a small smile. "...I know. And I'll have to brush out again when we get there. I...just..." He took a breath. "This matters."

"I know," she smiled.

Rayne was pacing at the Gates leading outside Gridania. She was worried and more than a little nervous about how things would go. If this ritual had ever been performed around outsiders, she didn't know about it... She hoped that the others had gotten everything right, she really wanted this to go along well.

Uncharacteristically, she held a staff to complete her outfit, it was a simple one, with a green gem affixed to the center.

Once he was happy he was ready - at least, in appearance - Mis'to made his way to Gridania, quiet and subdued. "Ah this will be hard," he said, wearily. "I never...really got to...mourn them, after all."

Morgana stayed close.

"I feel you." She squeezed his hand, and smiled to try and reassure him.

After quite some delay, Fionn finally joined up with the others. While having different clothing was a luxury he didn't quite have yet, he at least could change something in with his hair. Which was now in a long braid with a couple of lilies near his ear and a feather. "S...sorry. I wanted to

find more but time ran thin. I hope this is respectful enough." the Keeper said with his head down.

Mis'to smiled gently at Fionn, clearly touched. "...Thanks Fionn. I....realize you didn't have to come."

Fionn quickly shook his head. "No... I want to come. It would feel wrong not to..."

He smiled. "....Did I ever....tell you who they were?"

"You have not... As far as my memory goes." Fionn lifted up his head to look at Mis'to.

Mis'to nodded, closing his eyes slightly. "...Before Dalamud, I....had travelled with a clan. For..." He closed his eyes. "...I visited them a lot, for three years. They were the first clan that...never asked anything of me. Just wanted my company."

"... I can understand how... this must affect you." His ears drooped slightly. "They really must've meant a lot to you."

"...They did. They still do." He closed his eyes. "....But....aye. They all died...when...the Garleans found us."

Fionn stayed silent, not knowing exactly what to say to Mis'to. He smiled, looking up. "It's okay kid."

A few moments of silence before the older Miqo'te finally nodded. "All right." Mis'to looked back, waiting for Morgana. "We should be good to meet Rayne once she gets here..."

"To think I'd find you talking about me, of all people," Came a voice from behind, Rayne was there smiling, a flower in her own hair as she chuckled, "Joking of course, I thought it might be a good idea to come collect you all." Granted, the real reason was probably that she would've made a ditch in the earth if she had kept pacing like she had.

Mis'to beamed widely and went over to hug her. Not the usual confident bear hug she was used to from him, more...reserved. Heartfelt. "Hey Rayne. Glad to see you."

Morgana had never been far away. Her gaze had drifted to a nearby flower stall and she was unsure what would be appropriate to get, if anything.

Rayne returned the hug, holding onto the staff a bit awkwardly and smiled at the others, "Good to see you too, all of you... I should reassure you that you don't have to bring anything other than yourselves, but should you wish to bring something else, you're welcome to," She said, deliberately not looking at Morgana as she gazed at the flowers.

"Also, to prepare you, I should preface that this is a ritual that has been done by the Fahl clan for a long, long time, and it can be a bit emotionally intense. I wanted to make you aware of that ahead of time."

"Pretty sure I'm prepared for emotional." Mis'to smiled wearily.

Fionn smiled wearily. "It being emotional... I... figured as much, considering what happened to them."

Her mind on her own peoples' rituals for funerals, Morgana heads over to the stall and begins looking through the wares, thoughtful and instinctual in her choices. The stallkeep, a dark haired elezen woman, watched closely as Morgana pondered over the flowers. Carefully the hyur began to draw out some stems. Brightroses, Azeyma roses, moon daisies, carnations, all in a range of colours, as well as a few pure white lilies, and some small blue flowers, clustered on the same stem.

"Pardon my asking, Miss, but are you heading to a funeral of some kind?"

Morgana looked somewhat shocked at this. "Yes, actually, how did you know?"

"Your choices," she replied with a slight smile. "Though a few of them are known well as good choices for funerals, such as roses, there are some others you have chosen that are less common to choose, like the Chrysanthemum, at least here in Gridania. Carnations, though popular, have a variety of meanings. depending on the colour. For example, in white they mean good luck and purity, but in this particular shade of dark pink they mean tenderness and fondness."

Morgana blinked, somewhat surprised, but that look faded when she remembered something else.

"Perhaps this one would do you well?" The stall owner offered her a rather peculiar flower from behind her. Morgana took a moment to look at it closely. It's petals were curiously shaped and were coloured with a strange mix of white, pink and purple, with a little bit of yellow in the centre.

"It's beautiful." The hyur's two-toned eyes sparkled somberly.

"An orchid. We seldom come into them, but they are said to mean 'I will always love you', especially when given at such a time."

Morgana's eyes widened for a moment, then shifted to something sombre.

"I thing that Nophica had her bounty come this way to find its way to you."

Not my hands.... Mis'to's hands...

"I'll take it. And all of these."

And with that, the gil was exchanged.

"Thank you... miss?" Morgana said with a weak smile.

"Tanie, and you are always very welcome."

With that, Morgana headed back over to the group, the rather large bouquet of flowers laying delicately in her arms.

Fionn, ever sensitive to others, was quick to look her way, his eyes drawn to the flowers, looking rather impressed by them. "They look wonderful."

Rayne smiled at the flowers and nodded, "The site is going to be very floral with all of those. And well... I don't want to ruin the surprise. I'll take you there now." She says turning, taking a moment to steady herself, standing up straight.

Mis'to beamed. "...Thank you Rayne. This...this means a lot to me..." He threw a look too at Morgana and her flowers, clearly struggling with being overwhelmed.

Morgana smiled at him. "There should be enough here for everyone to lay a few if they want to. Shall we get moving?"

"Let's," Mis'to nodded to Rayne.

Rayne nodded and began leading them out of Gridania.

It was a path that Mis'to likely knew, a path that he told Rayne that the clan had used. She followed it into their old territories. The trees soon began to get thicker, and slowly civilization was left behind where. It was there at the fork of a trail, was a smooth cut, purposefully placed stone.

"Well Mis'to... This is your first task. You will need to create a pass phrase to reveal the paths to the memorial."

"...A pass phrase?" He tilted his head. "Like a....ward?"

"Something like that... It is a phrase one would say that would allow them to pass... Otherwise." She gestures around to the woods, "If they do not, they will find themselves back at the

entrance, eventually. We always hide them behind such things, so only those who are allowed to visit, can."

"...I understand." Mis'to smiled faintly, looking to the place. He was quiet a moment, frowning, before replying in the old tongue. "...Na ro'ir aa k'orra noct, i'salysen voi." *For even in the darkest night, a new dawn comes.*

Morgana stayed close as they walked, since she was not overly familiar with the paths they trod. Her eyes darted around as she took in as many details as she could, marvelling at the natural beauty. When they came to a stop, and Mis'to spoke his chosen passphrase, she could not help but smile. So very, very fitting.

Rayne closed her eyes and concentrated, the stone glowed with a magical light for a moment before fading. As the phrase was chosen and spoken, a path opened in the middle of the fork as she nodded to them. The forest was quiet and gentle, and soon, they'd hear the sound of running water.

The area itself was very open, save for the small rockface in the back from which a small stream ran through. The area itself in somewhat of a U shape, with the group at the entrance. Rocks had been moved and placed around the natural stream and allowed time for moss to creep over them. And trees hid the location from view, along with the protective illusions in place.

In the middle was a large pillar of carved moonstone. Lining the perimeter were incenses to be burned when it was time. Some flowers had already been placed around as Rayne turned and smiled. Letting them soak in the environment.

The Memorial stone itself simply read.

In Loving Memory of Clan Salysen... And the rest was blank, for the moment.

Morgana took it all in, still holding the flowers. She smiled, feeling that her chosen blooms would compliment what was already there nicely.

"Ah-" Mis'to was overcome with emotion a moment, sucking in his breath. "...It's.....yes. Yes I think they'd have loved this."

"Well, not everything is done yet... There will be two more things I'll need from you... One of which, what all would you wish to be written? Names are a certain, but I could do birthdays, depends on how much information you want."

"I.." He swallowed slightly. "....I can do that, yes..." He suddenly realized she was asking him. "...Names...birthdays...yeah. Yeah I remember them all."

Rayne smiled at him, "Just... Remember them, and I can take care of the rest."

He nodded softly. "...I'm sorry I...what would I want to be written..." He closed his eyes. "...A name, a birthday...a word or two, remembering who they were...I don't want...those people to be forgotten."

Eyes growing wide as they found the place and entered it. At first, Fionn wanted to say something. But he then decided to keep himself silent, in respect towards the ones that have fallen and for the ritual.

Morgana smiled, unsurprised that Mis'to held so much detail in his memory. She waited patiently to be asked to do something.

Rayne took a steadying breath and nodded, turning to face the moonstone and in the center. The wind stilled as she held up the staff and made a small circle around herself, lazy wisps of silver beginning to form around her.

"The Land Remembers..." She muttered to herself again before she started. Mis'to sucked in his breath, knowing this was going to be hard.

"Alone for a while, I've been searching through the dark
For traces of the love you left inside my lonely heart
To weave by picking up the pieces that remain
Melodies of life, love's lost refrain"

The last note carried through the wood and there was a thrum of magic as recalled the memories of the land, guided by Mis'to's own memories.

"Our paths they did cross, though I cannot say just why
We met, we laughed, we held on fast, and then we said goodbye
And who'll hear the echoes of stories never told?
Let them ring out loud 'til they unfold"

The magic of the ritual pulled up more rising emotions, silver motes of flame began to dance around the memorial as the area began to brighten with a silver light as she continued the song.

Slowly, there began to be figures that seemed to surround the area. The chatter of happy clan life, the earth remembering the paths they walked, the wind, remembering the sound of their voices. All beginning to build and rebuild off of itself to recreate the happy lives of the Salysen Clan.

Mis'to managed to keep it together at first, ears moving slightly as he listened to the song. But it was when the motes came together, to coalesce into the image of that clan that he'd once known that he gave a sudden sob.

The Salysen were a river folk, following the paths of the endless creeks and streams that ran through Gridania, those vibrant spirits carrying nets and fishing spears. Mostly women and children, some young gangly men not yet old enough to leave amongst them. In particular two stood out; two sisters with pale peach coloured hair and soft amber eyes.

It was the latter one that caused tears to roll down his face.

"...Vahi-" he said, softly, a hand briefly reaching out. "I...I'm so sorry. I..."

Morgana looked around in silent awe at the figures slowly forming, studying them, smiling as she observed who they were. An unwelcome knot found its way into her stomach when she heard that name, followed by a pang of anger at herself. Vahi was gone...and yet seeing his love for her....

Gritting her teeth as she dealt with that green demon she looked to Rayne and Mis'to, wondering when would be appropriate for her to do anything. This was an unfamiliar ritual, and she did not want to disrupt it.

Rayne continued to sing, feeling her heart clench as she went on to the next part of the song, bringing the staff up and down, putting more aether into the ritual.

"In my dearest memories, I see you reaching out to me
Though you're gone, I still believe that you can call out my name~"

At that the images become more visible, their forms seeming more solid, though still transparent. They walked, talked and chatted, laughed and went about their lives. That's when some would see a familiar figure.

"A voice from the past, joining yours and mine
Adding up the layers of harmony
And so it goes on and on
Melodies of life to the sky beyond the flying birds
Forever and beyond"

The familiar figure would be a younger looking Mis'to, as he came to visit the clan, being greeted and welcomed warmly. Memories of the land would play out. Fragments of happier moments slowing down. Each clan member was clear as the ritual continued.

At that, Mis'to smiled fondly, seeing his older self, even managing a laugh through the tears.
"...Still handsome, eh..."

Rayne seemed to move to some kind of music and if one listened close enough, they could hear a tune as well. A small, subtle musical accompaniment. But the song was only part of the whole. The rest was the clan around them.

"So far and away, see the bird as it flies by
Gliding through the shadows of the clouds up in the sky
I've laid my memories and dreams upon those wings
Leave them now and see what tomorrow brings"

"In your dearest memories, do you remember loving me?
Was it fate that brought us close and now leaves me behind?"

As she carried that last word, many of the figures began to break from their tasks and move over to the stone. It began to glow as names began to etch themselves along the surface with a silver light. There was a faint little smile on Mis'to's face, even as tears refused to cease. Some of those Keepers had never been able to write. To see their names written down meant a great deal, in many ways. Taboo it was for his people...Mis'to knew that otherwise their names would be lost to time.

Tears were slowly starting to form in the corner of Morgana's eyes. The ritual was beautiful; it had been wonderful to see even the tiniest of glimpses into the lives lost. As it became clear the chorus would end the ceremony she stepped closer to Mis'to, hand extended with a single bloom. "An orchid tells someone that you will always love them." The part of her fringe still hanging loose obscured her eyes from Mis'to's view. "And Nophica saw fit to have her bounty reach your hand this day." Her voice fought to remain steady; she was trying so, so hard to be kind, when, in reality, an unwanted green stone was cutting emotional wounds in her chest. Mentally, she prayed, with every fiber of her being.

Now is not the time for me to feel such things... please... please don't let him see this selfish pain...

But the fingers clasping the other flowers held on a little tighter than intended; though the hard stems stayed sturdy, her knuckles were turning white.

"For Vahi..."

Mis'to looked up, a little caught off guard. Both hands closed over hers, giving her a gentle squeeze. "...For Vahi." He smiled. "...And for Mordred. A promise that they were loved, and are not forgotten, even as we move on."

She looked up, almost unable to believe what she heard. A few moments of stunned silence passed and two large tears rolled down her cheeks unbidden. Then she blinked and nodded.

"A voice from the past, joining yours and mine
Adding up the layers of harmony
And so it goes on and on
Melodies of life

To the sky beyond the flying birds
Forever and on."

A second voice joined that of Rayne's; and as they turned to look back at the stone the pillar was now brightly glowing doorway, with the whole clan standing near it. Some smiling, others waving...saying goodbye...

It was Vahi's voice that seemed to intermingle with Rayne's.

"If I should leave this lonely world behind
Your voice will still remember our melody
Now I know we'll carry on
Melodies of life
Come circle round and grow deep in our hearts
As long as we remember."

And with that last held note, they walked backwards through the doorway, it slowly closed behind them. The stone returned to normal as the last of the names, birthdays, and small additions to who they were, were added to the stone.

The Salysen had finally been laid to rest.