

When she awoke, she heard the sound of metal crashing into one awoke.

Cold bit into her skin with deep sharp teeth harsher than any beast she could imagine. She knew not how long it would take to adjust to such cold, yet she feared she would never grow akin to the chills that climbed her spine day and night. Akin to the way that each breeze that blew by her felt as if it were scratching sharpened nails across her pale skin, akin to the way that the cold had barred its fangs at her and seemed to smile in her misery. Would she ever become akin to the way that it sapped away her energy, sapped away what fight she had left.

Days blurred when sleep was all that you knew.

Sol no longer knew how long she had been there. It was the first red flag in her own mind. She had fought for so long that she no longer had such energy. She no longer remembered when she had lost the will to escape, when she had given into the cold and settled onto the floor of the caravan silently. She had judged them at first, those who just laid on the ground in silence, creatures that she pitied as they let all hope fade from their eyes. Yet now she understood. She understood the feeling that her bones would cave in on themselves if she didn't have something to eat, the feeling that her body would suffer hypothermia should they not give her a blanket. The feeling where you simply stop moving so that you conserve what little energy you have.

When she awoke again, the sound of chains clinking against one another startled her eyes open.

A tug forward forced her body upright, her dull gray eyes seeming lifeless as they lifted to make contact with that of one of the slavers. He was a gruff man with silvery barbed wire hair and a beer belly that seemed to make an appearance when he moved. "Oi, come on now." He tugged at her again, "Time to get up. Come on, look alive. No one will want a pretty thing like you if you're about to fall over." He pulled her to her feet by her wrist as if she were but a doll, placing her onto her feet and looking at her. "Stand." He demanded, his words offering no sympathy.

Sol was fae and that meant she was a rare find for them. She understood well that it would be the reason she was important to them. They would not let her die. She would fetch them a high price for her heritage. Her ancestors would be rolling in their graves. Fae had been a noble tribe of near godly creatures with magic beyond that of any within the realms. Yet they were outnumbered. The fae race had always been but a small race with seldom people and long lives that extended past that of any human. Yet while they lived long lives, it was rare of fae women to have more than 2 children due to birthing complications. Perhaps that was why they were such a small race, growing at a much slower pace than any others.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 12/12/2022 18:43

Power and beauty. Sol well understood that she was an item that any adventurer would want. With features that looked as if they were sculpted of ice itself, Sol had the appearance of a snow kissed girl. Not far from human looking, Sol had a lovely appearance with silver long hair that bushed down her back in a tundra of loose wispy waves. She had blue eyes colder than ice itself, ice that hadn't thawed in many a days and skin that lacked color save for the slight redness in her cheeks

that reminded one that she was alive. Furthermore, she had a lovely body. At the moment, they had dressed all of them in nothing more than rags, thin white dresses that had blood and dirt all over them, chains on their ankles and wrists, and leather collars that had been placed around their necks for their potential masters.

"Smile." The man whispered to her as he brought her into the tent. Warmth hit her like a welcomed kiss as they stepped inside the tent, her eyes softening as she allowed the warmth to embrace her, to rejuvenate her. The room was filled with people. Adventurers. Nobles. Scum bags. Nearly anyone you could imagine was there, each slave spread out along the edges of the room with a slaver by their side. Should someone step towards them, he would elbow them to look pretty and begin his pitch, hoping for a hefty sum for each of their prizes.

@Hades

Jonah Val

BOT

— 13/12/2022 00:50

Jonah stood among the crowd, uncomfortable, and suppressing an outburst. He had been drawn to this building, thinking all the milling about and shouting meant this was a tavern.

While this place had drinks...something, or someone, else was for sale.

The brought hr out from the back, and Jonah could see how she stood there limp, eyes dull as though one dead. Jonah had seen eyes like that on soldiers, those who had faced horrors too great for their minds and hearts.

The sight made him growl, but he kept himself rigid at attention.

As the slavers, scum, the lot of them, brought her to the center, he realized this woman was fae.

That explains the excitement, they're probably hoping to fetch themselves a 'high valued' slave He thought sourly to himself, as various men stepped forward to bid.

Seeing the pain in the woman's face tore at Jonah. Suddenly, he couldn't stand it any longer.

Something had to be done, and he would be the one to do it.

He listened to the bidding, and heard some impressive amounts of money being thrown around.

"One thousand gold coins!"

The slaver running the bidding smiled, and looked about the crowd.

"One thousand gold pieces...going once,"

Jonah made a fist, knuckles white, teeth grinding.

Too many people, I can't fight her out

"Going twice!"

Jonah looked down, there was nothing he...

He saw the sigil of House Val on his chest, a roaring gold lion, on a field of black, framed by a blue dragon, crowned, posed in a crescent, almost protective of the lion.

The slaver gave a dramatic pause, daring someone else to bid.

An idea struck him, and before he could talk himself out of it, he shoved his way through to the bidding circle, a raised.

The slaver looked at him, expectantly.

Oh, right, bidding

"I...am interested in bidding...to the tune of...300 diamond coins,"

Jonah Val

BOT

— 13/12/2022 02:32

The crowd gasped, this was a fortune an order of magnitude above a mere 500 gold.

Carandini is going to kill me He thought to himself, chagrined. He steeled himself. He had chosen this course, he would see it through.

"If," He added, "I can see the official writ of slavery for this product?"

The slaver had a good poker face, but Jonah spied sweat on the slaver's forehead. This was an absurd amount of money, but Jonah knew that fae were regularly kidnapped and sold illegally. He just needed to see the writ to be sure.

"Show me the money, and I'll show you the writ," the slaver answered

Jonah took a pouch from his pack, surprisingly light. The diamond coins were more durable, and lighter, than their metal counterparts.

The slaver examined and counted the coins. Finding them genuine, he went to the back for the writ. This next part would be tricky.

When the slaver returned with the writ, Jonah examined it closely. Soon, he found what he was looking for, a smile curling on his face.

"As I thought. This is a writ of slavery for a human slave, not fae. Therefore..." He turned towards the slaver, towering over him, menacingly, fierce green eyes boring into the slaver's skull, "...you are guilty of attempting to sell stolen Imperial property, on pain of death,"

He took a breath, letting the words sink in, "But, if you release her into my custody, I will escort her to House Val territory, and thus into Imperial custody. "

Hades — 13/12/2022 02:57

@? shae ? 3.°.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 14/12/2022 11:46

Hope was a luxury that Sol could not afford.

She had lost that privilege many days ago. It was why the light had seemed to dim in her eyes as she grew complacent with the fact that she was a slave and this was now her reality.

Reality.

It hardly felt real any longer, existence in it's own right felt fuzzy and faded with exhaustion. She couldn't remember the last time she had a drink of water, her lips chapped and tired from dehydration. She was thirsty. She paused and licked her lips, her mouth dry as she watched the scum who eagerly gawked at her like she was a prize.

In all rights, she was a prize to them.

A prize that could be purchased if they paid enough money, if they were willing to pay the cost that a rare find like her would fetch them. And their purchase would only further spur on the slavery that existed in such a world. This world that Fae kind had always attempted to isolate from for this reason. This world in which the fae kind knew was far too wicked for betterment. Yet now she was a part of this world, a part that had no say in the fact whether she remained or not.

She felt a pit sink in her stomach as she began to hear their voices. One thousand gold. It was sickening. She felt like she could keel over right there should they allow her. Yet were she to fall, she was sure to get whipped later that night. She had seen it happen to one other when they had failed to perform during such sessions. She paused and focused on her feet, bare and dirty, nearly blue from the cold. She shivered and looked up once more, her vision blurry as she swayed on her feet slightly, exhaustion making it's mark on her body.

Going twice

She felt the hand of the slaver on her wrist forcing her up as he held it into the air, almost allowing her to dangle from it.

300 diamond coins.

She felt ill. Heat that welcomed her body was unwelcomed by her body as she shivered from the cold, her eyes lifelessly shifting to the man who was beginning to prove himself true.

What did he want with a fae? Was she to be his pet? She knew not but anyone who had paid such a price was sure to be corrupt in her own mind. Her mind wandered for several minutes, her gaze falling as she struggled to remain to hold on. She felt tired. She wanted to sleep. Sleep that lured her in for hours as she attempted to save what little energy she had, starving and dehydrated.

When she regained her focus, she heard their voices growing rather serious. The slavers whispered in hushed tones to one another before shoving her into his arms rather roughly. "Fine, she's yours..." One muttered before leaning into his ear and whispering something about keeping this on the down low and reminding him that he had a family too.

@Hades

Jonah Val

BOT

— 14/12/2022 13:38

They swiftly made their exit, Jonah throwing his cloak over the woman to give her some measure of privacy.

He led her to his quarters near the docks, swiftly bolting the door behind him, before sitting down, gesturing for her to join him.

His eyes filled with pained compassion, he said, "You...have had a rough time of it. It is my intention to free you from slavery, and nurse you back to health. I have no intentions of heaping further abuse on your head. I only ask that you stay long enough for you to heal and grow strong."

He gestured to his bed in the corner, "That is your bed, for as long as you are here. Its too soft for me anyway, I tend to fall asleep on this couch most nights anyway."

As he talked, he rolled up his sleeves and began bustling about his small kitchen, containing a small range. He started warming some water over a fire, before bringing her a plate of bread, fruit, and cheese, along with a cup of cool water.

"If there's anything you'd like me to cook, let me know. I'm no chef, but my mother made sure I knew how to feed myself good food,"

Once the water was warm, he brought it and a sponge over to her.

"For you to wash yourself. There's a room in the back you can use for bathing,"

Hades — 14/12/2022 13:41

@ shae 3 3+.

Jonah Val

BOT

— 14/12/2022 13:43

"Oh, I forgot introductions! I am Jonah, heir to House Val, and knight in the orders of Athena and Freya. May I know your name, please,"

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 18/12/2022 20:53

Warmth hit her as he gently placed his cloak around her shoulder and escorted her out.

Warmth that she wasn't sure if would continue.

Her gaze followed him as she was ushered out at a speed that she was not yet used to, her breaths heavy from exhaustion. She didn't remember the last time she had eaten and water was seldom given. Keeping the slaves tired was important to the slavers, it provided them with the understanding that they would not have any energy with to fight back. Would she be treated with the same cruelty by this man? Sol's gaze followed him as he led her inside and bolted the door, swallowing anxiously as he sat. She knew not whether to trust him, her gaze uneasy as she moved towards him and took a seat silently, her pale blue eyes lingering on him as if to attempt to understand him.

Warmth.

She could see it in his eyes, in the way he spoke and in the way he graciously explained that he would be freeing her from slavery. "I..." She spoke softly, her voice sweet and quiet. "Thank you." She weakly smiled, her eyes glassy with exhaustion and emotion. She had been lucky. Luckier than she could ever have expected to be. Tears welled up in her eyes as he stood to move towards the kitchen. "Thank you." She muttered, wiping away the tears that she couldn't seem to help from rolling down her cheeks. Sol didn't know why she had been blessed with such kindness but she was entirely positive that she couldn't let it go to waste.

As he brought the food to her, she eagerly ate it, not hesitating to begin eating. In the moment, she ignored such manners and ate heartily, almost choking and having to drink some water. She paused when he spoke about cooking, shaking her head. "N-No... this is entirely fine." She paused, her cheeks red with embarrassment at her own manners. "I... don't remember the last time they let me have such food...thank you, again." She said gratefully, her blue eyes lifting to him as he returned to her side with the bucket of water and a sp

onge. Her cheeks seemed to redden at the thought that she must smell poorly, nodding and standing up as he said she should wash herself. "Y-Yes Sir.. I will--" She paused, her eyes widening as he introduced himself, even being a noble and a knight at that. She bowed her head slightly, her silvery hair slipping in her eyes. "Sol." She said quietly, biting her lip as she looked at him. "Sol of the Beijou clan." She offered a wry smile and looked towards the back room. "I'll go clean myself Sir." She noted before hurrying towards the back room to clean off.

@Hades

Jonah Val

BOT

— 19/12/2022 00:55

"Sol, that's a beautiful name," He answered. While she washed herself, Jonah busied himself readying her room (he no longer considered it his). He wondered what Sol meant, and decided to ask her when she was finished washing. He winced at the spartan room, wishing it was more plush for her.

He fluffed pillows, layering blanket after blanket over the bed.

Oh shit, does she need clothes?

He got the smallest shirt and trousers he could find, laying them out on the bed.

Once done, he went to the kitchen and poured himself a glass of wine, pouring one for Sol as well, should she want one.

I leaned back in a chair, wine sweet on my lips, eyes closed. *

Oh, wait, I should tell her about the clothes

He went to the washroom, knocking loudly.

"Hey, there's clothes waiting for you on your bed, do you like wine? I have a glass for you in the kitchen if you want it,"

Hades — 19/12/2022 00:59

@ shae ʘ ʘ.°.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 19/12/2022 01:12

Beautiful.

Her heart fluttered as she looked up into the man's eyes, her gaze softening.

Fae were very human looking in appearance, yet their most striking feature were their paleness. It truly did look as if most color was swept from her, her hair of a silvery color that most human beings wouldn't get until a very old age, and her eyes of a paleness unlike human blue eyes. She was lovely in her own right, a striking beauty that many men would like to have bought at the slave show even.

She was silent as she washed herself, the warm water feeling refreshing on her sore body. She let out a soft sigh and ran it along her skin, glad to be clean once more. She never would have allowed herself to come to such an unsightly state previously. She paused as she heard him know. "O-oh uhm..." She hesitated, biting her lip before speaking. "Yes please."

It was several moments later before she exited the bathroom, having cleaned up any remnants of a mess she had made. She clung the towel to her body as she walked out towards the bed, attempting to be quiet as if he wouldn't see her. After all, she couldn't help but not want him to see her when she was vulnerable like this, even a little shy that her shoulders were exposed as she picked up the clothing and hurried back to the room to put them on.

After changing, she peeked out and found her way over to the bed, taking a seat. "Thank you for the clothing, Sir." She said softly, her gaze shifting back to him. She certainly seemed to shine a little brighter now that she was both fed and cleaned, though she wasn't back to new yet. She still had a lot of healing to do before getting to that point and that was clear.

@Hades

Jonah Val

BOT

— 19/12/2022 01:50

He smiled, hearing her pad, nearly silent, despite the creaky boards.

Her balance must be incredible. I wonder if she's a dancer, or maybe a duelist?

He heard her enter, and was touched by her thanks, her voice like music in the bare quarters.

He opened his eyes and...gods be good....

Before, he had seen a young woman, half starved, numb from trauma.

Now, after a quick bath, and a meager lunch...she was radiant.

He gasped audibly, tears welling, awestruck by the shard of beauty before him.

"I, um...you're welcome, of course! I am, in some way, responsible for your well being, so it's the least I could do, and, um..."

He blushed, embarrassed. He took a breath, taking a moment to recover his composure.

"But, you are free now! What can I do to help you further?"

Hades — 19/12/2022 01:55

@ shae 3+.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 19/12/2022 12:54

Silence.

It was something she learned early on as a fae. While fae had once been prosperous, it had been many years since then. She had been but a child, told to run as fast as she could and to not look back. That was the last time she had seen the Beijou clan which she so desperately clung to the name of. Attacked by mankind, their homes set alight so that flames filled the forest with the tint of red. It was the first time she knew the horror that their hatred could cause, the horror that they would cause to other living beings without any hesitation.

They had wanted power. She heard that they had created tools to sap the magic from fae's very being. Tools that they could use to defeat the average man or beast. Sol quickly learned that her own silence would become her greatest asset, keeping to the tree tops where she could dart from branch to branch where none would see her. Many of fae-kind had once used the tree tops to travel, teaching their young to travel unseen for they were an isolated race that avoided much contact with mankind. That was where Sol had learned to walk silently, silently enough that most would not notice her if she could avoid it. Unfortunately she had been on the hunt on the ground, leaving her more susceptible towards man's weapons when she was hunted herself.

As she paused and looked at him, she felt her gaze fall down, a sort of exhaustion still numbing her mind as he claimed he was responsible for her well being. She swallowed and sat on the bed, a deep breath escaping her lips. She was tired. "N-No...you have done so much for me already." She said softly, biting at her lip. "I have nothing which to repay you...I cannot accept your kindness." She looked at him, wishing she had something of worth that she could offer her savior.

@Hades

Jonah Val

BOT

— 19/12/2022 19:11

Her words, softly spoken, her eyes downcast, cut through to his heart like a hot knife, calling to mind the words of his mother, "Woe to the heart that can't accept kindness, because it can only ever accept the darkness of the world, rejecting the light,"

He remembered lessons his parents taught him, through example and lecture, to use what strength he possessed to make the world around him...if not right, at least better than they were.

He remembered traveling the caravan circuit with his aunt, learning smithy work from her. She had challenged him to learn one new thing from every town or city they visited. That might be a story, a skill, or even the layout of the town.

In every town he visited...he found the marginalized. They were always on the fringes, under the thin veil of prosperity, crushed under Imperial 'justice' and power.

The injustices he saw burned into his heart and memory, and it fueled him to become who he was today.

After Jonah managed to expose a rogue noble's smuggling operation, Lord Carandini of House Val not only knighted Jonah, but named him Heir. Now, Jonah had more power and wealth than ever before, but he was cautious to use it. His father had always cautioned him, "When you push a stone, you can't see what else it will push when you're done looking,"

But now, after all that, this woman called him 'savior'. He knelt before her, offering his hands to clasp hers, and said, solemnly, eyes on hers,

"Sol, I want you to know, there is no debt between us. I couldn't have lived with myself if I had left you in that cesspit, and I would rather gouge out my own eye than take advantage of you. I want to help you, but I don't want to chain you to me. You are precious, and beautiful, and I would like to help take care of you, as long as you'll let me,"

Hades — 19/12/2022 19:11

@ shae 3 3+°.

Jonah Val

BOT

— 20/12/2022 18:37

Declaration made, he set about pulling leaves of paper out of his desk.

"I am here in town on my way to this city over here," He pointed it out on a map, realizing he didn't know if Sol could read. Question for later.

"You may travel with me as long as you like, though you may want to be equipped for a fight. I have some spares that might suit you, but I can get anything you might need. I'll be happy to escort you anywhere you like, and will, um, part with you whenever you wish,"

He lead her to a closet in the back of his room, where some equipment was displayed, smelling of oil, all well maintained.

In the closet was a small display, a medal that seemed to be made from blue dragonscale, the plaque bore an engraving, "To Jonah Reaper, for services to the Empire above and beyond the call of citizenry,"

Hades — 20/12/2022 19:17

@ shae 𐄂 𐄂+°.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 21/12/2022 14:42

Woe to the heart that cannot accept kindness for it has only ever known the darkness.

Like the tuberose flower, Sol had grown in the darkness. Been raised by it.

It was clear from the look in her eyes that she had seldom known kindness, her gaze far unused to accepting such warmth. Like the tuberose flower, Sol had bloomed in a world that was unkind to her, been borne to a world where men were harsh and cruel. She hadn't yet known how to accept the kindness of one who she expected nothing from.

"I..." Her voice came softly, her eyebrows furrowed. "I do not understand..." She admitted, her cool blue eyes lifting to his as he claimed that she owed now debt to him. Men always had a debt, they never did anything without expecting something in return. That was what she had been taught as a child. She frowned and looked at him, caught off guard by the fact that he seemingly wanted nothing from her but to free her. "I...don't understand." She repeated, shaking her head, "I... I thought all men were...cold." She looked at him, "I...I am not human, Sir." She noted to him with a frown, "Why do you extend your kindness to one who is not of your kind?"

Sol had not known that any human would offer such kindness to one who did not bring anything to their gain. She looked down, her body rigid as he planted the paper onto his desk and noted the map that he was pointing to. She leaned towards it, unfortunately not recognizing the terrain depicted on the map nor the language. She had been taken across many miles and was quite far from her home, far from the world she had once lived in.

"I cannot use a spear..." She noted, shaking her head. It was impractical to say the least, for one of her body type to use such an unwieldy weapon. "Though... I do know how to use a bow and arrow..." She looked at him, wondering if she would be of any assistance. She was quite adept with long ranged weapons like such, finding them far more suited to her nimble and small frame.

<@696167684

685168660>

@Hades

Hades — 25/12/2022 15:23

Jonah reached and pulled out a short bow and a quiver filled with various arrows, as well as a pouch full of bow strings.

"This was my old hunting bow, when I was a boy. "

He handed them over to her, reverent for his old weapon.

"I don't have much use for it anymore. Consider it a gift, from a friend,"

So done, he sat back in a chair, deep in thought.

"In answer to your question, why would I help someone not human?"

He leaned forward, brows furrowed in thought

"Well...I suppose I don't see that it matters that you're not human. You're alive, you are a person. My elders taught me, all living things find their root in the One who is All. So, in truth, we are all expressions of the same Being. We like to say, "The God in me sees the God in you,"

Jonah shrugged

"Who knows if its true. Maybe there is no One, and we are all actually living on the back of a turtle swimming through a black sea. Regardless, I feel this is the best way to live my life, to treat others as though they are mine own divine self - beautiful and glorious, worth of praise,"

"So, dear Sol, it is my wish to tend to you and protect you, as long as you wish.

(part 1)

Jonah Val

BOT

— 26/12/2022 21:17

That said, he started inquiring after her dietary preferences and needs, making notes, despite her increasing bewilderment.

"Oh, and, I learned a number of massage techniques to encourage healing, if you would be comfortable with that?" He asked, looking up from his list. He had donned a pair of reading glasses for the purpose.

He continued on like that, fussing and worrying after her like a mother hen. He even found himself standing with his hands on his hips the way his mother used to.

"There's also another matter I would like to discuss with you, at your leisure. It's regarding my mission,"

By this point they sat in the kitchen, some dinner in front of them.

"It is dangerous to be associated with me, you might get hurt. I understand if you don't want to be in danger,"

@ shae ʘ ʘ.°.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 26/12/2022 21:40

Overwhelming.

If this man was good at doing anything, he certainly was effective at overwhelming her. She looked down at the bow in her hands and let her fingers run along the string, wondering if this was her new life. Mankind was hard to handle. They didn't speak like her kin did, nor did they seem to understand emotions in the way that fae-kind did.

Emotions were like colors to her.

If she had to describe the feelings she was understanding from this man, she would depict it as a rainbow. He was sporadic in a way that she certainly didn't know how to handle. He moved at a rate far faster than most she had met as if he were flicking through topics like a picture book that was far too boring to focus on. She frowned and returned to the bed, sitting down and placing the bow next to her.

"I do not believe in mankind's Gods." She said coldly, her gaze shifting towards the fire. Fae believed much more in nature than Gods. They were well known for their strong ties to the world around them, respecting nature and the Earth as if they had grown from the roots themselves. She sighed and shook her head, honestly disliking the way that mankind had always come to assume the existence of one above. If there was one above, would they really be worth respecting? For if that one above was stronger than all and had an effect on all that happened, why would they chose to let the evils be done within their world.

Sol couldn't understand this man.

She was sure she would never understand his disoriented thoughts nor would he make an effort to understand her. His useless ramblings tired her nonetheless. She frowned and looked to the side, exhaustion still curling in her bones despite having been given food. After all, she hadn't rested and she still was far from healthy, starvation can't be fought with just one piece of bread.

"I doubt your massages can heal me." She muttered, forgetting her earlier gratefulness as exhaustion bit into her and resentment nipped at her. "Or do

you simply want an excuse to touch my body?" She mused under her breath, unsure if he would hear her.

She was growing angry. The longer he talked at her the more she was finding herself feeling frustrated from the lack of rest that she had gotten, tired and without the energy to fight back. She sighed and fell back into the bed as he decided he wanted to continue rambling at her.

"Mmmmmhmmm..." She said softly, humming as she put her arm over her eyes in attempt to rest for all of 2 seconds. "Dangerous?" She rolled her eyes and stood up, sighing as he placed food onto the table. "It is dangerous for me to exist." She noted softly, taking a seat at the table quietly. "Do you think I am not used to the dangers of the world?" Her gaze was cold, eyes just as cold as a frozen

lake. "Believe me... I have seen and felt much worse than you... faced more dangers. I do not fear whatever trivial dangers that a nobleman faces."

@Hades

Jonah Val

BOT

— 01/01/2023 20:55

Her words cut into him like shards of broken glass. Her words exposed his presumption, his arrogance, and shoved them in his face. He couldn't dispute her words, her anger, her frustration.

He raised his hands, palms out in a gesture of surrender, his expression pained, and determined.

"I...owe you an apology. You are right, I overstep, and hastily at that. How about call it a day, and head to sleep? We can talk more in the morning, at your leisure."

He took a piece of paper from his desk, and penned out a statement freeing her from her enslavement

"There, you are free to do as you please, I hope to see you tomorrow but, if not...

He met her eyes,

"I hope you find what you're looking for,"

Hades — 01/01/2023 20:55

@ shae ʘ ʘ+°.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 03/01/2023 00:28

Trigger Warning: Vomit

Twisted.

Her emotions felt twisted in a way that Sol certainly could not explain.

While she wanted to trust the man who sat in front of her, she certainly could not understand him. Furthermore, she knew not whether to trust him for all she had trusted before had brought her to danger. Even if they smiled temporarily they all eventually lost sight of their judgement. Her emotions felt as if they were a twisted ball of yarn and she was far too tired to unravel it.

As he apologized softly, her gaze shifted. Her eyes looked tired. Tired in a way that he couldn't possibly understand unless he knew what she had been through. She wanted to believe him, to say it was okay and that she had spoken rashly. Yet she couldn't help it. The knot in her throat was too tight to speak.

His words cut.

I hope you find what you're looking for.

She paused and looked down, her fingers shifting into fists as he returned to his rest. Was she meant to stay or go? She did not know. Was he dismissing her? She bit her lip anxiously, nodding before laying down once more. Sleep urged her in faster than she had known, a strange heat overcoming her head as she fell deeper and deeper into sleep.

It was the middle of the night when she first awoke.

Her body ached in pain and her head felt hot. She was covered in sweat, her body shivering despite the fact that she had a blanket. Her stomach twisted and turned in a way she hadn't felt in so long. Sol let out a shaky breath and pushed her body up, forcing herself to the bathroom where she fell on the floor with a rather sudden crash. She didn't feel well and she certainly didn't want to wake him, her hair stuck to the back of her neck with sweat as she curled up and tried to ignore the way that her stomach felt as if it were being tightened into a tiny ball. Sol had known that her health was teetering on a fine line. Starvation. Cold. It was a miracle she hadn't gotten sick sooner. Yet now as she laid on the bathr

oom floor she knew something was wrong. She shivered and pushed herself up as she felt her stomach hurl forward, tears dripping down her cheeks as she began to vomit. An unfortunate truth to starvation is that while the body needs food, it doesn't always accept it.

Jonah awoke to the sounds of horrid wretching down the hall way. He grimaced in sympathy, realizing Sol was sick. Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, he rose quickly, going to the kitchen to retrieve a bucket. He moved, swift and silent as a shadow, and was at her side in moment.

He knelt next to her, setting the bucket in front of her.

"Here," He said softly, "Let it out in this. I have a string here, to tie your hair back,"

He was careful not to touch her. She had made clear she didn't trust him, and he didn't want to widen the gap between them any further.

"Is there anything I can get you?" He asked, hoping he wasn't being too overwhelming.

His stomach twisted in a knot of anxiety. He realized, he had no idea who this woman was, or what she wanted. He didn't even know what she could eat, let alone know what was good for her.

Jonah Val

BOT

— 07/01/2023 03:15

"Hey, it's gonna be alright, you can get through this."

He sat there, feeling useless, and terrified of touching her without permission. But as he watched her retches wrack her emaciated body, he realized...he just had to risk it.

He took her hair and tied it into a simply pony tail, protecting it from errant bile.

He rested his palm on her back.

Gods, her back...

Her skin was cool under her clothes, and he could feel her bones easily through the cloth.

The poor thing had been sapped of all life, all joy...he had to help bring it back.

"Hey, I'm going to get you a blanket, and I'll be right back,"

He padded off, barefoot, silently, quickly returning with blanket, and a cool, damp cloth. He wrapped the blanket around her shoulders, supporting her as she retched.

Hades — 07/01/2023 03:16

@ shae 3 3+°.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 08/01/2023 20:21

Her heart was pounding.

Loud, at that.

It was like her entire body was pounding.

She couldn't hear a thing, not even the noises that she was making. Her vision was fuzzy and everything felt as if it were covered in a blur. She shivered as he approached, her gaze lifting as he spoke words that she could hardly hear. She knew he was talking but she couldn't make out the words. She shivered again, a cold breeze caressing at her back as if it were dragging it's claws up her skin.

Her stomach twisted again as he placed the bucket in front of her, her body curling as she coughed yet was seemingly done with vomiting. She felt numb. Numb in a way so different from the numb that had washed over her while she was in slavery. Numb as in that she could no longer focus on all the pain that her body was in. As he offered to get her something else, her gaze held down and she did not respond, not because she did not want to but because she did not hear him. No. She didn't hear him at all, her ears feeling as if they were overwhelmed by the pounding sound of her heart.

Her eyes lit up ever so slightly as he gently leaned towards her and lifted the hair out of her face. She let out a shaky breath and lifted her hands to rub at her eyes softly. "I--" She stumbled over her words, her voice only coming out in a soft whisper. "Thank you..."

She shivered as his hand settled on her thin back, his hand having a warmth that she hadn't felt in so long. She let out a soft sigh and sat up a bit more, ignoring the wave of dizziness that washed over her. When he returned she seemed almost paler than before, her gaze lifting as she looked up at him. She looked as if she were nothing but a ghost, her pale hair almost glimmering in the slight moonlight given off from the window. Her lips parted as he leaned down and wrapped the blanket around her shoulders and supported her. Yet she seemed to be finished vomiting, her gaze soft and tired as she looked at him. "I'm... sorry for earlier." She

muttered softly, "I...don't want to die like this." She whimpered, her silvery eyes lifting to his, welling up with tired tears of exhaustion. "I don't want to die...I...I want to live."

@Hades

Jonah Val

BOT

— 11/01/2023 19:42

Her words on such a weak voice from such a frail body caused his heart physical pain.

"Hey, it's alright, I've got you. You're not gonna die, you're gonna live, live a long time,"

He spoke like he would to a wounded soldier, trying to keep their attention, keep them talking. Sometimes it helped distract from the pain.

As he spoke, he helped her to her feet, offering his arm for support, leading her back to the bed, getting her tucked in.

"Wait here, I'll be right back with something for you,"

Moving quickly, he cleaned the bucket, taking it to the room, before going to the kitchen and brewing her a tea with ginger root.

While a small flame warmed the kettle, he returned periodically to check on her, using the back of his hand to check her temperature, bringing her cool water to sip and rehydrate.

"Hey, listen...I wanted to apologize for earlier as well, for my presumption. You're right, I don't really know you, or what you need. But, whatever you need, I'll be there to help,"

The kettle shrieked from the kitchen, so I went to get you a cup, blowing on it as I brought it back to you,

"Its black tea with ground ginger root and a bit of honey, it should help calm your stomach,"

He glanced between the cup of water and the tea.

"I'm...not overwhelming you again, am I?" He asked, looking chagrined

Hades — 11/01/2023 19:42

@ shae ʘ ʘ+°.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 12/01/2023 14:30

You're gonna live, live a long time.

His words sounded as if they were coming from the far end of a tunnel. Muffled, a little fuzzy around the edges, and yet they lifted her heart in a way that she didn't necessarily know that she needed. She shivered into his embrace, her gaze softening as tears dripped down her cheeks. She looked broken. Broken yet she didn't want to admit it. A wounded doll that had been fighting for far too long. Yet despite her pain she had been pushing forward for so long, forcing herself to remain of some strength when she didn't have an ounce of energy in her body. She knew not how to rely on someone and yet for the first time in forever, she had no other choice.

She felt a wave of dizziness as he helped her up, her feet wobbling like that of a young fawn as she clung onto his arm for support. It was a miracle that she had made it to the bathroom in the first place without having fallen. She swallowed and settled into the bed, enveloped by warmth as he pulled the blankets over her once more. "Mhm..." She took a deep breath and let the warm caress her lovingly as she settled into the comfort for once.

It was several moments before he returned, almost startling her when he placed his cool hand on her forehead, feeling the warmth of her body. Her eyes fluttered open once more, tiredly shifting to him as he held water to her lips so that she would hydrate and eat something in her system. She swallowed and looked at him tiredly, shaking her head. "It was my fault...I...I forgot how to lean on someone..." She said softly, closing her eyes for a moment. "I got used to having to remain on edge, having to keep everyone at arm's length... I'm going to trust you now." She paused softly and settled back into the bed as the kettle screeched loudly in the other room.

When he returned, she had managed to prop the pillows up ever so slightly, though curled the blankets around her supposedly to keep her warmer. She paused and nodded, taking the cup of tea despite her shaking hands and lifting it to her lips. Upon her first sip, she winced, "Hot..." She muttered, having burned her tongue but smiling ever so slightly at it before shaking her head, "No... you're not..."

@Hades

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 19/01/2023 00:15

@Hades I hope you're doing okay frennnnn)

Jonah Val

BOT

— 19/01/2023 18:35

I'm going to trust you now

The words sank home, a warm pain, cutting to his heart. With her words from before, he realized how much that much have meant for her to say.

"I...thank you, for your trust. It means a lot, coming from you. I'll do my best to be worthy of it,"

Thankful he wasn't repeating earlier mistakes, he handed her a small plank of wood to set the tea on while it cooled.

"It isn't much, I try to travel as spartan as I can, but I do like to kip up in here with a hot drink and a good book some nights,"

He gestured to the small end table next to the bed, which housed a number of books on its bottom shelf, a luxury that stood out against the rather barren living quarters.

"You're welcome to them, while you rest," He offered.

Jonah Val

BOT

— 19/01/2023 18:43

He looked sturdy, but tired, and disheveled, in his brown tunic, with deep shadows under his eyes. His hands were gentle, but callused with work and scars. He had the air of a man with too many worries in his head, and his shoulders slumped with a great burden. But his eyes were a bright, fierce green.

He saw her frailty, how small she was, contrasted sharply with her demeanor before, when she had lost her patience with him.

A yawn took him by surprise, and he remembered it was still the middle of the night, and there was much he had to do the next day, both for his work, and for Sol.

"Do you want me to keep watch for you?" He asked, internally trying to shake off the mental cobwebs of incomplete sleep.

Hades — 19/01/2023 18:43

@ shae ୩୫୦.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 20/01/2023 12:44

Trust.

For Sol, trust was a deep thing to give.

It wasn't something that could just be taken lightly nor could it be treated with fickle hands.

Her trust meant something and it was clear that she had rarely allowed herself to trust anyone at all. As a fae, Sol had isolated herself from everyone since she was a mere child. She had watched her people die, watched their village be taken over by men who wanted to use their powers for themselves. Men who didn't care for their feelings nor didn't care to build their trust or relationships. Men wielding faerie iron much like that which had bound her into slavery had marched in until they had caught nearly all of them. Sol had only been safe due to a spell her mother had cast with her last energy. She had put all of her effort into hiding Sol away, not hesitating to give her life for her.

Sol hadn't trusted anyone since.

There was no one that she could trust if it were not her own family and people.

That was what she had convinced herself of and yet now she had finally found someone she believed she could open up to. She paused and looked up at him, smiling weakly as he thanked her for her trust. Apparently it meant more to him than she had assumed it would. Mankind gave trust so easily that she assumed he wouldn't think much on it. Yet he seemed to recognize what it meant for her to admit that she wanted to rely on him.

Placing her tea down, Sol enjoyed the way that the warmth of the tea seemed to spread over her body. She closed her eyes for a moment and shook her head at his comments about books. "I... cannot." She noted softly, her gaze tying away. It was embarrassing to admit such a thing. "Our words are not like yours." She explained, the only thing allowing her to even communicate with him being her magic. After all, fae had magic that allowed them to understand nearly all languages by ear. Yet that didn't allow them to read or understand the words that were written by another race.

"Though... I appreciate t

he offer." She let out a soft breath, her gaze softening.

"You should rest..." She reminded him, noticing the bags under his eyes. Were she in better shape she would lend him some of her magic. Yet she was not in any shape to be offering healing when she was not in condition herself. She swallowed and laid down, shaking her head. "No... I will be alright.

You.. go sleep." She nodded, recognizing that he was still exhausted and had much to do while she had to rest more to get to a stable condition for his travels.

@Hades

Jonah Val

BOT

— 24/01/2023 20:18

Jonah awoke in the early dark of the next morning. Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, he mentally brought himself back to the present, reviewing the previous day's events in his mind. As he did, his body went through his morning routine automatically - washing and grooming himself briefly, before donning a tunic and trousers. He checked on Sol, enough to confirm she was alive and sleeping soundly.

Satisfied, he went up a set of stairs to the roof of his dwelling. The floor was flat, free of furniture or other obstructions, with a stone wall shielding it from view, open to the starry morning above. A wooden longsword, its handle well-worn, rested against the wall, where he has left it.

While he avoided the normal trappings of nobility, both out of habit and due to the nature of his mission, he did make sure his living space had room for him to train properly.

He took some time to stretch out his muscles in a familiar routine, moving through several stances designed to invigorate the body.

He took the training sword, and stepped to the center of the roof, taking a combat stance, planting his feet wide, the tip pointing at an imaginary enemy's throat. He went through several katas, predetermined strikes and blocks, first practicing individual sword forms, then blending them together in complex patterns.

He stepped silently, paranoid about disturbing Sol's sleep.

By the time he had finished, the sun crept over the horizon, blotting out the stars above.

(Part 1)

Jonah Val

BOT

— 26/01/2023 02:47

Once done, feeling the deep ache of worthwhile training, and invigorated, ready for the day. He checked on Sol, confirming she still slept soundly. He quickly boiled a quick breakfast of oatmeal, with some brown sugar and dried fruit for flavor. He had himself a bowl, but left the rest for Sol. He considered leaving her a note, but remember she couldn't read his language. He resolved to go to his dead drops quickly, and return home before she awoke.

Dressing himself in a nondescript tunic and cloak, he left his dwelling, locking the door behind him, carrying only a wooden staff for protection, before making his way down the dusty road.

Before arriving, he had sent out spies looking for a cult tied to a number of gruesome ritual sacrifices. Each dead drop, inconspicuous locations his spies left information. By the time he got back home, he had a number of letters hidden inside a pouch in his tunic. He unlocked the door and entered, locking the door behind him.

After checking on Sol, he laid out all the papers on a table, organizing them by content. He pursed his lips, deep in thought.

The cult, called the Children of Inthrotep, had been sighted here, but their meeting places were irregular, and varied. No odd deaths or disappearances, but there was little hint of where they would meet next.

I could really use a second opinion here. Should...I ask Sol? She indicated she had oived a long time, maybe she knows something?

He went to the room, kneeling next to the bed, he touched her shoulder gently.

"Sol? Its morning, you hungry?" He asked

Once she had stirred awake, he said, "I've got some food ready, if you're hungry.

And, if you are willing to help, I have some information on a cult I am hunting, and I would like your opinion on it, if you are willing?"

His tone made it clear this was a request, not an order.

Hades — 26/01/2023 02:47

@ shae 3+.

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 26/01/2023 13:44

Sleep drifted into her eyes after a while.

Sometimes Sol hated sleep.

Sleep wasn't always the kindest of suitors after all.

Sometimes sleep brought forth that numbness that Sol had grown to know all too well. The numbness that she had felt herself dragged deep down into as she ignored all sense of pain within her body. She had grown far too accustomed to sleep during her time in slavery. Accustomed to the way that when you were asleep you weren't always forced to face the reality that you truly lived. She slept the days away back then, let sleep bless her eyes until she couldn't think about the dark world that she was being forced to live within.

Yet sleep sometimes forced those thoughts right back into your head.

Sleep made them feel just as realistic as the last time you experienced it. It brought back the same color and warmth to your body, tricking your senses to believe that you just might be back in hell. Sol never wanted to return to that hell. She hated the way her wrists had grown so heavy that she felt as if she couldn't lift them. She hated the collar that stung at her neck, the cold metal hanging on her neck and making it feel heavy. She hated it all. Yet often her dreams dragged back the reality as if she had never even escaped.

This night, sleep was peaceful. More peaceful than she had known.

Perhaps it was due to the tea.

She wasn't sure, but her rest was peaceful. She was in the forest of the Elders once more. Her parents were there... but she couldn't remember their faces. They seemed happy nonetheless, urging her to participate in their festival as they celebrated their people. Celebrated their fae. It was as if her people had never been attacked. As if she hadn't spent half of her life on her own, as if she hadn't been raised entirely on her own. She wondered if this is what her life would have been like should the humans should not have bothered them.

She wanted to remain in this dream, to relive this paradise that was the fae villages.

The elder forest had never looked so beautiful, a canopy of beautiful glowing tree tops protecting them from the world around them. No one would find them in this safe haven that the fae had created for themselves. Bridges drooped from tree to tree, connecting those too far to travel between. Homes were carved into the tree tops of the largest Laurel trees that had been grown even larger with their mana. It was a haven, a haven only made possible by those who cooperated both with the mana within them but also the nature that bloomed within the earth.

When he returned, Sol remained lost in her dream world.

Her breaths were soft and her eyes remained closed as she rested. It was clear that she needed the rest, her body needing a lot of healing. It was not clear how long they had starved her for, how long they had refused her food or water or left her in the darkness. Her body had been a victim to such harshness that it seemed it would take many days for her to fully heal. She needed rest, rest and care.

She only woke when she heard his voice, her eyebrows furrowing slightly as she let out a tired whimper. "mmm..." She shifted, her eyes fluttering open tiredly as he placed his hand on her shoulder. "Jonah?" She looked at him with a half asleep gaze, the look on her face almost cute as she looked at him sleepily. "Mhm..." She sat up, stretching her arms above her head. Her body creaked as she stretched it, crackling like that of a fire. After a moment, she stood up and walked over to the table with him.

"I don't know how much I will be of help... but I will try my best." She smiled softly, wanting to be of some sort of help if she could. After all, he was putting so much energy into being of assistance to her. It was the least she could do if she could be of any sort of assistance to him.

@Hades wonderful post! You're really improving! Good job!)

Sol Beijou

BOT

— 02/02/2023 13:07

@Hades am hope you're doing well!)