

Sundryal lowers the scroll.

EXT. ELVISH FOREST - NIGHT

Tafkut speaks with ANDROMEDA, elvish royalty. Andromeda is a tall gorgeous elf who stands with elegance. Her black hair is styled into a buzzcut and she wears a long white dress.

Tafkut is rushed and out of breath.

TAFKUT

...Please, tell me. Is magic related to the stars at all possible?

ANDROMEDA

I suppose it could be. Because the stars have such a tie with fate, it would be quite the inconvenience. The user would most likely have the chance to change the path of the stars. And, of course, in turn, change the path of fate.

TAFKUT

How much would fate change?

ANDROMEDA

Follow me.

INT. ELVISH LIBRARY - NIGHT

Andromeda walks up to a shelf and pulls out a map. She kneels down and unravels it on the marble floor.

INSERT - MAP

It's a detailed map of the stars labeled in runes.

BACK TO SCENE

ANDROMEDA

Here. This is a map of what all of the stars in our night sky look like through all of the seasons of our world. If a celestial magic user were to use their power, the stars would most likely shift to follow their need or wants.

TAFKUT

I see. Would that work if they... wrote a story? If the user wrote a story, is there a chance it would come true?

ANDROMEDA

That question is extremely specific, my dear. I suppose it could. But with the way we observe the stars and fate, it would be forbidden. Especially if it were to cause harm.

Tafkut quakes in fear.

Andromeda takes the map and carries it over to a spot on the floor where the moonlight shines directly onto the marble through a hole the shape of a crescent moon in the ceiling.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

See here. The stars on this map look different from those in the sky. They aren't right at all. That is fate magic. Does it perhaps have something to do with you?

TAFKUT

That's what I'm trying to figure out.

ANDROMEDA

Changing fate... it is dangerous. It adds and changes aspects of life it shouldn't. If you do end up entangled in this mess... I urge you to stay safe and away from all of it.

TAFKUT

But-

ANDROMEDA

Tafkut. The stars align to guide our paths with their light. If that light is changed, we could become lost.

Andromeda places her hand gently on the side of Tafkut's face in reassurance.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

Don't lose the light in front of you, whatever you choose to do.

TAFKUT

I... I understand. Thank you so much, Andromeda.

ANDROMEDA

Of course. You are always welcome here.

INT. SUNDRYAL AND TAFKUT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sundryal holds an unfurled SCROLL in their hands.

SUNDRYAL

She wrote this. Didn't she?

PAPRIKA

Meow!

SUNDRYAL

I suppose I've always been very focused on my work. But perhaps I've been focused a little too much.

Paprika's ears flatten.

SUNDRYAL (CONT'D)

Focused a LOT too much.

PAPRIKA

Meow!

Sundryal rolls the scroll back up and puts it in the pocket of their cloak.

SUNDRYAL

I HAVE to apologize to her.

Sundryal buries their face in their hands and crouches on the ground.

Paprika sits at Sundryal's feet and rubs against their leg gently.

SUNDRYAL (CONT'D)

...But she left. And I had the chance to go with her. I did not take it. She must be so ashamed of me!

PAPRIKA

Meow.

Sundryal hops to their feet.

SUNDRYAL

Today, we fix this. For good. Never again will I overlook her! She will always be the shining star-

There's three loud KNOCKS on the door.

Sundryal rushes over and opens the door.

It's Argyle.

ARGYLE

Sundryal-!

Sundryal shuts the door. Now they speak from opposite sides of the door.

ARGYLE (CONT'D)

-Open this door right this instant!

Sundryal presses their back against the door to keep it shut, and hides below the peephole.

ARGYLE/SUNDRYAL

SUNDRYAL

A foul fiend such as yourself brings the winds of the-!

ARGYLE

Stop your nonsensical rambling! I've had it with you and your stories!

SUNDRYAL

How are they even bothering you?! It's paper! And ink!

ARGYLE

Did you write about a hero today? One that saves a town using earth magic?

Argyle tries to break open the door. It shakes. Sundryal keeps it closed.

ARGYLE (CONT'D)

Your HERO destroyed a building today! People were killed! And by a HERO?

SUNDRYAL

Uh, well-

ARGYLE

And a few weeks ago! You wrote a story where villains raided a town and set it aflame!

Sundryal sees the metal key to the door lying on the floor.

ARGYLE (CONT'D)

Your monster of a creation destroyed an entire building! My home! My family almost died, Sundryal!

Sundryal reacts.

SUNDRYAL

...That's not possible.

ARGYLE

Your bizarre power to bring life to your pages is dangerous and vile! No one person should have such power!

Sundryal reaches with their foot to grab the key to the door. They slide it towards their hand, grab it, and lock the door from the inside.

SUNDRYAL

Errghh! He's bothered me long enough!

Paprika backs away from the door and hides behind Sundryal.

PAPRIKA

Hiss!

Sundryal spots a small rectangular stained glass window at the top of one of their scroll shelves.

Sundryal climbs the shelf and escapes the house from the window. They fall into a clump of bushes and land on their head.

Argyle stands over Sundryal and crosses his arms. Sundryal smiles nervously.

Paprika peeks out through the window. She hops down and runs off.

EXT. ELVISH FOREST - NIGHT

Paprika runs up to Tafkut and Andromeda and paces at their feet.

TAFKUT  
Paprika! What are you doing here?  
Where is Sundryal?

PAPRIKA  
Meow! Meow!

TAFKUT  
She sounds frightened! Something's  
happened!

ANDROMEDA  
Hurry home then. And remember: you  
are always welcome here.

TAFKUT  
Thank you so much!

Tafkut picks Paprika up and leaves.

INT. SUNDRYAL'S JAIL CELL - DAY

Sundryal lies face down on the floor.

SUNDRYAL  
I'm such a failure of an author!  
Such shame!

Tafkut slips in. She stands on the other side of the bars  
from Sundryal and holds Paprika in her arms.

SUNDRYAL (CONT'D)  
Tafkut!

Sundryal hops to their feet. They run over to the bars.

TAFKUT  
Are you alright? What happened? Why  
are you in here?

SUNDRYAL  
That guard! Argyle! He accused me  
of 'messing with fate', or  
something!

TAFKUT  
Oh, dear...