

The Last Dance: Titania

I pay my respects to elders past, present and future as we walk Mother Earth in Peace

Midwinter 1807:

I weep as I run. Our tribe is forced to leave our homelands. My birthplace, my beloved sanctuary. Never did I think to spend my sixteenth winter in a strange land, or if I would celebrate it at all.

I am Arana of the moonlight. Tears streak my cheeks. Is it wise to leave? Is it brave? I see resolve in my eldest brother's face. Akama is both wise and brave, more than myself. He carries his spear with such conviction, yet I know he will never use it in anger, not even against the white folk.

I turn to look behind. The last time I will see our sacred hollow by the dancing waterfall. She runs strong with recent rains. I deeply admire her strength, her age old wisdom. An anguished cry escapes - never again to dance with her - I cannot bear the pain.

We are of the wind this starlit night. We move through the forest, treading trails made ages past by the Rainbow Serpent. This is the last time we will see the trees, the last time we hear these waters, the final time we will tread this sacred path.

Our tribe is leaving our Dreamlands. I stare into the dark sky, so peaceful, the moonlight serene. Unlike my namesake, I am agitated, my thoughts a tempest, foreboding clouds of doubt. An ill wind blows through me, a chill reminder of the coming storm.

In silence, I walk behind my family. My gentle mother, Orana looks reserved. Adoni, my proud father embraces her. He takes my small hand into his rough one, his eyes showing sorrow. I feel pride rise in my lanky body to have such a man as my father. Unafraid to show compassion and fear, moving through it, holding his family strong.

One last time, I walk to the glen, and chant to the Spirits of the Land for guidance and protection. I feel a gentle hand upon my shoulder. Before

she speaks, I know her spirit. Ellin, an Elder Woman of our tribe, the one who moves.

‘Do not weep, little one. Celebrate the love, peace and kinship our tribe shares. Our home is not rock, tree or place. It is within our spirits.’

No tears water her wise eyes, only pain at such senseless violence against our people and the land. She turns and moves silent through the forest.