



# Purely Koraz

Original Work · Not Rated · 12001 words

*by Arukir*

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Fandom: Original Work Rating: Not Rated Category: Multi  
Warnings: Creator chose not to add warnings, No content warnings apply  
Relationships: Original Character(s)/Original Character(s)  
Tags: Original Character(s), Not Beta Read  
Words: 12001 Chapters: 20 chapters Status: In progress Published: 2024-03-04

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Just Koraz, no crossovers, oneshots.

Eric explains in poem form what a secret message from Lyla means (because when he's utterly panicking, talking in rhyme calms him down)

## Chapter 1: Eric's Lament/Promise (Reuben Market)

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The day Eric went from really liking to utterly in love with Lyla was the day she truthfully said she trusted him. This is a really close second.

It was on the day that i nearly lost my head,  
For a tribe not my own wished me well and truly dead.  
A twist of fate, it sorta saved my young life,  
But left me with my fear, and overwhelming strife.  
For it was only a second before the ax took off my head,  
If not for inconsistent luck, i surely would be dead.  
To ease lingering fears and calm my troubled mind,  
I went to a nearby market, where i made a most peculiar find.  
A stall selling naught but reuben stalks by the bunch,  
Yet something wicked lurked there, according to my little hunch.  
So tricks i played and pranks i set, forgetting all my strife,  
Alas, i didn't know they were the very same to try to claim my life.  
So my execution nearly stood as was before,  
With me forced upon the ground, my body beat and sore.  
I closed my eyes and clenched my jaw, awaiting ax's pain,  
But to my shock, and grand delight, it never really came!  
My eyes opened in surprise, spotting blonde and white;  
I tell you now, never before nor since have i seen such a lovely sight!  
My dearest Lyla Leapord, her knives flashing like claws,  
Fought ever so fiercely, for they had given her just cause.

With her words and with her might, she kept my head twixt neck and hat.  
I long as I shall live, i will never - ever - forget that.

Her life and mine are entwined, saving each time and again,  
But this wasn't like those other times, as I shall now explain.  
For this time i didn't just not know a way to stay alive,  
I didn't consider it a remote possibility i would survive.

And so i swore, then and there,  
I protect her, no matter the fear.

Reuben Market became our code, our sign, our call.  
It's definition, well, I will try to explain it all:

It means "Help me, Eric, i need a grand rescue.  
Save me, come to me, i really, really need you.

I'm not sure how I'll escape this one if you do not hear my plea  
For once my dire trouble is caused by mine own folly."

It means "Come my clown, my everwilling fool.  
Come to me my jester, I've broken a big rule."

It means "I know you're out there, laughing and pulling pranks.  
For all you've ever done for me, you have my eternal thanks"

It means "I'm not sure what might happen, i could live or maybe even die..."  
In times most dire, stars forbid, it even means "Goodbye".

So what are we waiting for? For surely we must go!  
Now that I've explained it to you, surely you must know!

Lyla is my light, my song, my everlasting dance.  
She's my wisdom and my peace, and I'm her only chance.

## Chapter 2: Nightmares And Daydreams

For the first time in his life, Eric WANTS to spill a secret. Luckily, Oliver's just the Mad Scholar to help him...

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Oliver is my stoic little chaos baby.

Mischief and Eric feel whatever the other feels, physically and emotionally. This has led me to think way too much about what will happen when Eric develops a sex drive (his species develop it around 20)

Eric's more worried about being in the greenhouse during the day for two reasons:

- 1) He's a Shadow Elemental, darkness is calming to him.
- 2) Oliver and most of his creations are stronger in sunlight.

Eric hummed gently as he pried open the door of the Greenhouse. It really did have terrible security, probably because no one in their right minds would dare trespass.

No one except Eric, that was. He had actually been specifically banned from entering without permission, but kept doing so for the exact same reason he wasn't allowed; pranks!

Tonight, though, he had no intention of causing trouble (shocking, really). He had left his notebook behind when visiting a few days ago, and now that he remembered, he simply had to have it back right away. Sure, it has nothing important in it and he had plenty of others, but he wanted *that* one. And he wanted it now.

His train of thought got a bit derailed once he saw the state of the greenhouse, instantly knowing something was wrong. A lot of people thought that Oliver didn't have much fun, was practically emotionless, boring and 100% practical at all times. Nothing could be farther from the truth; he was a chaos-loving, obsessive, funny, big-hearted mad scientist. He just didn't make facial expressions.

The part of his brain that told him to smile or scowl or cry, it was very quiet because most of it was caught up in his unstable powers. Which was how Eric knew something was wrong, since nearly every plant he could see was covered in dark thorns and dripping colorful (most likely toxic) ooze.

The Greenhouse, on the inside, was the size of a small island. Fields and jungles and Flora creatures filled it with an ecosystem of its own, all with winding stone paths in between. Eric walked slowly, careful not to step on even the smallest blade of grass, which was admittedly very difficult. Oliver's 'Precious Ones' were dangerous at the best of times, though usually very friendly, and this could quickly end badly for him if they thought Eric was the source of their Creator's distress.

Things yipped and snapped and growled as Eric walked. It would be wise to turn back, but he had to check on Oliver. The other Mistblooms were gone, doing.... Well, actually, he didn't know what they were doing. He was the Assistant at the time, and had been too preoccupied helping them get ready for their trip to actually ask where they were going or why Oliver wasn't.

The Thief mentally cursed the Assistant's not-paranoid personality, continuing on his way. If Oliver was in danger, he'd only have-

He'd only have his Familiar and *an army of plant monsters* to help him. Okay, alright, maybe Eric was useless here. But he just had to be sure, even if it did end up with him writhing in the ground, a victim of some painful (but thankfully never lethal) toxin. He'd suffered worse for less worthy souls, and would do so again in the future. It was the price of the game.

"Olivebranch?" Eric whispered, going stone still when a particularly aggressive-looking monkey-fern-thing growled at him. It approached him, leaf-wings flaring as it hopped along the ground, a scar along its wooden jaw-

Oh no. He recognized that monkey, an unfortunate victim of a prank-gone-wrong. Eric had been tormented by that thing for a week as he helped take care of the greenhouse in penance. There wasn't any chance it was still mad at him, was there?

It was definitely still mad at him, Eric decides as he dropped to the ground, narrowly dodging a lunge at his face. He took off at a run, the screeching monkey behind him, the plants around him taking up the call to arms. Normally, the plants would've probably protected him, but they could feel Oliver's distress and, quite frankly, none of them were thinking straight.

Eric yelled as he was dragged into the air by a vine (or possibly a root, it was honestly hard to tell), his rough clothing thankfully protecting him from the poisonous (venomous?) thorns as they wrapped around his body. Something in the back of Eric's mind reminded him of his fear of being paralyzed, but he ignored it in favor of the horde of snarling creature-plants that had gathered around him.

It's official, he thought, as a crow that resembled purple lettuce started dive-bombing him, Florazology is my least favorite subject.

Just as he was about to give up and Summon Mischief -- sorry for the impending destruction, Olivebrains --, a roar shook the Greenhouse, causing his little mob to scatter.

As the monster that had been holding him up dropped him in its haste to escape, Eric slowly rolled over to look up at this new terror -- and up, and up, and up.

"H-hey, Bessie, girl. Long time no see, huh?" Eric gulped, looking at the long-necked 'reptile'. Small thorns covered her wooden body, the normally-green moss that covered and hung down from her back, neck, and head was a vibrant yellow with streaks of red. It was rather pretty, and he'd have to remember to paint it if he got out of here without a broken arm.

Bessie swung her mighty tail and stomped her four tree-trunk-like feet, but there was something gentle about the otherwise terrifying display. Her neck craned down, her head level with Eric. The green-purple sensory growths that were more-or-less eyes stared quietly into his own. He knew from the lectures Oliver gave, that he pretended not to listen to, those weren't her only 'eyes'. Merely the biggest.

Bessie turned her head, and Eric blinked in surprise. He'd ridden the giant before, but he hadn't expected such an offer while she was being affected by Oliver's powers. Was it even safe, with the thorns..? Oh well, Eric quickly pulled his gloves out of his pocket, slipping them on and hopping onto Bessie's head.

Eric whooped as he was lifted high into the air, Bessie surprisingly being her normal, gentle self. He suppose it made sense, Oliver's emotional powers didn't effect the more intelligent plants as strongly, and Bessie had always been more intelligent than a simple riding beast. Eric grinned, watching the world below in fascination as Bessie took him somewhere, presumably to Oliver.

The Lantern Brothers were fast asleep in their field, somehow having slept through everything. That damned scarecrow was running around its field as well, squawking and flapping, but thankfully unable to fly. Oliver's more dangerous pets, the ones that had to be locked up at night, were rattling their kennels with enough ferocity to make Eric press himself closer to Bessie. The Greenhouse was beautiful, no doubt about it, but it was terrifying all the same.

At least it was dark. If Eric had to go through this while it was light out? Now *that* would have been scary.

Eric caught sight of Oliver's pet Cerberus Flytrap, and knew he'd found his friend. That things three heads were too fiercely protective to do anything but guard Oliver. As he touched down to ground, he thanked his fortunes that they as well knew him well enough to let him pass, albeit with some warning growls.

Eric entered a small area that was encased by trees, finding one of Oliver's 'nests', as he like to call them. Scrolls, ancient times, sketches, and history papers littered the floor. It was the sort of organized chaos that only an addle-brained genius like the Mad Scholar could achieve. When Eric caught sight of the pile of blankets in the middle of it, he barely managed to hold down a laugh of disbelief, relief, and slight annoyance (as well amusement, but he always felt that).

Oliver wasn't in any danger, he was just having a nightmare! His pink overstimulation headphones firmly over his ears (which explained why he didn't wake up from all the noise), Oliver was flailing around, punching and kicking at some unseen foe. Despite this obviously distressed state, his face still had that flat, almost judging look on it. It was creepy, really.

Lily was easing to find, the Flowering Tree Frog dozing in a bowl of what looked like water but smelled a little like -- oh no, they were testing sleep potions again?!

That explained why both Lily and Wand were remaining unresponsive to Oliver's plight. Which left Eric to deal with it, but he didn't really know how. When his sister had nightmares, he woke her up and took her stargazing. But with someone like Krissi, getting close to her when having bad dreams could be hazardous to your health, and he had to rely on soothing music instead.

Making a mental note to ask Oliver's sisters how best to help the historian, Eric inched closer. Patches of the other boy's skin had turned rough brown or soft green, and his hair was slightly longer than usual with a pink tinge, both signs of his powers overwhelming him. Mindful of the vines that Oliver could still subconsciously control despite Wand's unconscious state, Eric slowly eased off the headphones.

"Olivebranch? Buddy, wake up, you're having a bad dream." Eric gently pushed Oliver, scowling when he just flailed more. That would've been more than enough to send Eric jumping out of bed, though he had admittedly been traumatized to that point, and while he loved his life he really couldn't wish for Oliver to be like him.

"Come on, He Who Makes Monsters!" Eric groaned, the nickname slipping out without him noticing. He shoved Oliver, rougher this time. "Dandelion Tamer, wake up!" Now the other was making distressed noises, but still wasn't waking up.

It occurred to Eric that Oliver might've gotten the sleeping potion dosage wrong, and Wand might not be the only one affected by it. Ignoring his worries of accidentally invading others' personal space, Eric climbed onto Oliver's chest and held down his flailing arms, at this point legitimately worried the boy was going to injure himself.

"Calm on, Mad Scholar, I have things to do tonight." He tried to take on a rude tone, the one he knew reached that arrogant Mage part of Oliver's mind and demanded retribution, but he wasn't entirely sure he got there. Worried and without a conscious audience, Eric's acting abilities weren't his usual standard.

Still nothing. Now Eric was really worried. For all his genius and precision, Oliver was notoriously bad at magic. If he had been testing a magical sleeping potion, instead of a normal one, who knew what it could do to him? "Come on, dude. Just wake up already."

Eric slumped onto Oliver, trying to more effectively pin down his arms. He laughed. "You know, you're surprisingly strong, Chickpea. I thought you had muscle damage? Oh well, maybe it's your magic trying to protect you or something. Do you think I could recognize the antidote if I went searching through your stuff?" He didn't expect Oliver to answer, he was just rambling in the hopes he could annoy the boy into waking up, as well as 'rubber ducking' his way to a solution.

"Maybe I should call for help. I don't have my Songstone on me, though, didn't want any alarms going off, clever Weed. I don't think I could get out of here without a fight, and I'd hate to hurt any of your little babies or pets. Your pets less so, they're absolute beasts to anyone but you and surprisingly Ames. That makes sense, though, everyone loves Amelia. Would cold water wake you up? You're probably used to that cause of your sister, huh? And what if it damages you, you're a plant after all! Or part plant, or whatever. Mutant nerd."

Eric paused, getting no response, but he wasn't really expecting one. "Could I slap you awake? I've seen that work, and you could even slap me back if you wanted to. Only once, though, after that I retaliate harshly. Lyla asked me to make sure I don't get hurt without a really good reason, but helping a friend's a really good reason, right? Oh! You're asleep, I can tell you a secret! This'll be fun."

Worry pushed aside for a second, amusement taking its place, the Jester presses his face close to the sleeping (still trying to flail) boy's. "Lyla and I are dating! Shhhh, it's a secret." Eric winked. "Not that we're ashamed or anything, it's just, well... Lyla thought it'd be funny. Can you imagine? Hiding our relationship as a prank! That's why she's my dream girl. My parents know, of course, as do Mischief and Beem, but no one el-

Eric stopped, sitting up while still holding Oliver's arms down. He got quieter. "Actually, Charmer knows, as does an old friend who I can't really tell even a sleeping you about. But enemies and masters don't count." He shook his head, clearing his suddenly bad mood. "Anyways, I bet you figure it out first. Well, maybe my sister or one of the

Fasttechs will be first, but you won't be too far behind. You're smart, Schollie Ollie, a genius. You want to hear how we got together?"

Oliver said nothing, just made some more distressed noises that sounded slightly closer to awake than before, which Eric took to mean yes. "Well, I overheard Peter warning Lyla that she shouldn't trust me and that he even though he loves me like family he wasn't sure if I actually cared about him or if I was pulling a years long con and would someday betray him for nothing but my own amusement."

Here, Eric shrugged. "I really do love him, it's like he's a cousin who's like a brother. I'm so glad he cares about her enough to warn her, even though he thought of it as a betrayal. I don't blame him, I'm a hundred percent capable of what he fears, even if I'd never willingly do something like that. It makes me sad, and a little angry, but I'm glad those I care about are smart enough to not trust me. It means that when the Boss finally forces me to betray you all, you might see it coming. Maybe."

Eric sighed. Oliver had gone a bit quieter. Maybe the nightmare would end without him waking up? "Anyways, Lyla knew I was there, but she wasn't mad that I was eavesdropping. I made a little bit of a speech to Peter, basically the same thing I just told you with a little more, then walked off. Lyla followed me, I ranted that Peter was right and that there was no way for her to ever fully trust me, and no one can ever trust me, and even though I want to believe her when she says she does, I just really can't. And I've been told I'm being an idiot before, and I've been shut up in a lot of interesting sometimes-painful ways, but a kiss was certainly a new way of doing both."

Eric trailed off, lost briefly in his own memories of that shocking moment. He cleared his throat, getting back on track. "After she'd realized what she'd done, my darling leopard apologized and ran off. I don't know if you know this, but that unfortunately wasn't my first kiss. Some girls don't know how to take no for an answer, let's just say. I've always broken character and retaliated in a panic before it went too far, but those instances have left their mark on me, and Lyla knows it. Being kissed by surprise certainly got my adrenaline going, and it brought up those not-so-great memories, but..."

Eric grinned, softly, the sort of smile that was never genuine before he met Lyla. "It was nice. I'd wanted to do that for so long, and yeah, she should've asked or at least given some warning. But I really wouldn't mind more surprise kisses from Lyla. They're exciting in the way that playing chase or planning a trick is, but with that safe feeling she always brings me. Is that how it is for you and Jackie? No, it wouldn't be, we're too different. But I've seen the way you lose control of your powers when you aren't expecting one of his kisses. You and the half-elf really are adorable, Oliver."

Oliver's eyes twitched, and Eric stilled. He'd been trying different nicknames in the hopes that pure annoyance would wake Oliver up, since he both loved and hated his various nicknames, but maybe that had been the wrong direction.

"Hey, Oliver," he was rewarded with another twitch, making him grin "wanna know what happened after that? I followed Lyla and told her all of those things. Then I told her that I'm physically incapable of fully trusting anyone besides Mischief, but as much as I'm capable of trusting anyone I trust her. She didn't need to go under a truth spell or any other if her insane suggestions to prove that she trusted me, I'd believe them less than I believed her anyways. I trust her as much as much as I do my own family, moreso in some cases."

Eric bit his bottom lip, a subconscious act more than a real habit, but indicative of his feelings all the same. It wasn't too often that he felt guilt, but he did about that. He supposed it was because he and Lyla had a relationship forged in fire, but that didn't make him feel any less bad that he'd believe her word over his own family's. He'd still choose his family over her, save his sister before he saved Lyla, and she knew that. She was okay with that, and he loved her all the more for it.

Oliver had stopped flailing, so Eric rolled off him and laid next to him instead, sighing. "I'm in a bad situation, friend. A really bad one. Lyla knows, she's helping me get out of it. Entering into a relationship was maybe not the best idea, and we talked about it, but... I'm so happy. And I think this might be the hardest non-forced secret I've ever kept. I want to shout from the rooftops how much I love her, let the world see how vulnerable I am, and it goes against every instinct I've ever had. She gets me and helps me find who I really am, under the acts and mindsets. I love her. If we had never gotten together, both grown up and married different people, I'd still stay by her side as her best friend. If we break up I'll still do my best to be by her side, and you know how weird that is for my people."

Oliver was breathing calmer now, the plants around him curling gently, his nightmare officially over. Eric smiled, getting up. "See you later, Greenbean. That was a nice chat, thank you." And with that, he left, whistling as he strolled through the now-peaceful greenhouse. He even played with a few of the beasts as he neared the door.

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People tend to think Oliver is bad at lying. He's obsessed with accurate records, and will give up even embarrassing personal information without the slightest attempt at hiding it. He is honest, bluntly so. But that's a choice, not a necessity. In truth, he was as good a liar as Eric. Having to actively learn and think about your facial expressions and body language tended to do that to a person.

Oliver sat up, putting his glasses on. The plants around him changed to bright colors, curling and softening. "So, the Trickster and the Captain finally got together?" He mused quietly to the sleeping plants. He'd woken up partway through Eric's explanation. Enough to get the gist of what it was about. He could feel enough remnants of his powers, and see the shrinking patches on his skin, to guess he'd had a nightmare.

Eric Stargem, Thief and Trickster, had soothed him from a bad dream. Probably risking harm to do so. Oliver was clever enough to know that Lyla was the only one outside his family that could really trust Eric, he'd lie to and trick anyone else with glee. But he was clever enough to know that Eric would always protect those he cares about, even from themselves.

He'd have to get the full story out of both Eric and Lyla, of course, but maybe he'd do something nice for them first. Make a special new plant species to celebrate their relationship, perhaps? Or study the history of Soulbinds entering monogamous relationships, help Eric and Mischief deal with the possibility that Eric and Lyla would eventually become intimate?

He'd figure it out after the Sunbeasts' lovely rays were visible, he needed rest for now. As his eyes fluttered shut, he could feel the sleep potion working its way through his veins. He *really* needed to stop testing his experiments on himself...

## Chapter 3: Glo Lantern' Halloween Fun

A pumpkin monster who's not technically a Destiny Freaks decides to have a little fun on All Hallows Eve.

---

Oliver and the Lantern Brothers have gone through some changes since I wrote this, but it's still a fun piece.

Glo Lantern was a creature like few had seen, crafted by a wizard who did poorly in spellwork but miraculously when creating life.

His head was a pumpkin, carved eyes and mouth moving and blinking as easily as any. His arms were two vines, leaves for hands. Two more vines still twisted to form his thin torso and long legs. A brown stem leaned to left on his head, in a parody of hair or maybe a hat.

His two twin brothers were different only in the exact carve of their faces and tilt of their stems. In their fire song, even when their flames were doused, he saw joy and wonder. They rarely shared his guilt or shame.

The Lanterns had been mischievous as younger ones, playing tricks that were not quite cruel but nearly so. They had never sought another's harm, but nor did they think to ensure against it. They had changed their ways, the few pranks they still played harmless, their thoughts turned always to helping another. But still his guilt remained.

Every year, a week after the anniversary of what passed for his birth, his guilt found reason to grow. All Hallows Eve, known as the Day Of Nights amongst magic kind, was the day he had been made for. A day he'd taken joy in ruining for his first handful of years.

And his poor father, wandering amongst his many other children, yet still a child himself. He never should've had to put up with such trouble, but he'd never had a hateful word nor an unkind touch for his wayward sons. He had gently guided them away from destruction, even as others whispered he'd set them towards it.

One day, Glo decided he would do something to soothe his memories of a worse time. He would atone for his sins on the very night he represented. His brothers and sisters, all with leaves and roots and blooms, agreed to help him. The other two Lanterns did not share his guilt, but they heard it in his fire song, so stood by his side.

As the moon lowered and guests gathered in mask and disguise, a rumbling shook the ground. Magic folk are much too used to battle, and weapons were drawn, only to be lowered at the wizard's pleas.

Under moonlight, his children gathered, their power spreading through the land. Those that truly knew the wizard smiled before the spell was done, those that didn't looked in wonder or confusion, and those that had heard of his creations' troubles prepared for battle once more.

But their spell brought blossoms and fires, decorations that writhed with their own life, voices screeching from branches and roots. On the Day Of Nights, pumpkins

screamed and danced, thorn bushes lit the ground with blossoms of flame, moss-covered beasts roamed the earth.

Glo took his father's hand, hoping his face could convey what his wordless song could not, waiting quietly for praise or rebuke. The wizard laughed and ran with his creations, surprised yet delighted at their presence, his own soul song joining theirs.

It was a long Halloween, but it was a glorious one. At its end, all agreed -- whether they thought him wicked or witty, gentle or cruel -- the wizard and his creations had made the night better.

As the sun climbed and the pumpkins settled back into their patch for rest, Glo felt his creator's hand on his head. His smile filled his dreams as his carved eyes fell shut, his flames flickering out in sleep. His father and his father's creations would never have a good reputation, but his guilt was still eased.

And if he felt joy the next morning popping up with a screech to spook those that walked along the garden path, well... As it's been said, his guilt was long eased. ;)

## Chapter 4: Grin As Sharp As Knives (And Playful As A Feather In Wind)

Paige and Eric in trouble

---

Eric is kind hearted, but he as well grew up with the Spirit Of Tricks.

Paige stopped picking the lock on her cage, looking over to where Eric was chained in a kneeling position. He had started grinning.

The persona that Eric had chosen for this little adventure - sweet but shy, weak, and servile - did not grin. Especially not that grin. It was the one that spelled misery for enemies and a lesson for friends. It was one that meant he couldn't or wouldn't restrain his inner Trickster, and whatever trick he was planning was going to be very unpleasant for whoever had managed to piss him off.

Paige leaned back on her feet, assuming a simple crouch-squat as their captor caught sight of the grin and went over to investigate. Eric's look wasn't as dangerous as it could have been, it wasn't his 'you hurt someone I care about' look, nor was it his 'I haven't done anything remotely troublemaking in days and you happened to make me angry' look.

The captor and the thief began to talk, too quietly for her to hear. She would've been capable of eavesdropping if she had her proper ears, but she just had to get caught in her birth form, didn't she?

Then Eric began to chuckle, and she had no trouble hearing as it broke into full-on cackling. The pixie found herself torn between pressing herself to the back of her cage for safety, or scooching forward for a better view.

She heard a click, and turned to see the last bits of a black smoke puff on the lock of her cage, the door slowly creaking outward. She walked out, transforming and flying the moment she was out of its magic-blockers.

She settled herself on a rocky ledge in the cave, having decided on 'good seat', and watched the chaos unfold as Eric and Mischief began their games. Pies and whoopie cushions and hand buzzers weren't Paige's style, and she was ever glad to not be on either side on that grin, but she had to admit....

It was a lot of fun to watch.

## Chapter 5: Counting (Can I Count On You?)

Jackie and Lyla don't always get along...

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Jackie is Oliver's Halfling boyfriend, Kira is Jackie's Caracal Familiar.

Lyla means well, but is too busy dealing with the Destiny Freaks' quirks to handle noncombatants trying to help in fights. Luckily for her, Jackie's not as weak as he seems.

"Jackie, you are not coming." Lyla insisted, crossing her arms. "You're barely combat trained, it's too dangerous."

"And how exactly will you stop me?" Jackie asked, staring her down. Kira smirked at Beem.

Lyla pulled a large ziploc bag out of her satchel, causing Jackie to tense. Good, he knows what this is. "Don't make me do this, Jack."

Jackie frowned, eyes narrowed. "You wouldn't."

Lyla opened the bag, spilling thousands of rice grains on the floor. Jackie growled, shaking for a few seconds, then dropped into a crouch.

"One, two, three, four, five..." He muttered, eyes locked on the rice.

"Sorry, Jackie." Beem whispered, hopping up to Lyla's shoulder.

\*\*\*

Lyla fell to ground, a large gash in her arm beginning to lose too much blood for her tastes. An armored warrior stood above her, sword at the ready, with little hope for her to escape. Beem lay unconscious a few feet from her, they were surrounded by the enemy, this was it...

Flute music filled the air. The warriors screamed as nature itself turned against them, vines carrying them into the air. Jackie grinned, playing an elvish healing song that sealed her arm and caused Beem to stir.

"You forgot, Human, that I'm only half wood elf." He helped her to her feet.

"So you don't have to count them." She sighed, annoyed and relieved that she didn't remember his Magish father.

"What? No, that's insane." He shook his head. "I estimated how many grains there were, then gathered them up to count later."

"Your boyfriend eats fertilizer and has to be reminded to make facial expressions, and yet you're weirder." Lyla rolled her eyes, picking up Beem.

"Hey! I just saved your life." Jackie whined. "Muma's right, you humans don't have a sense of gratitude at all."

"Thanks for saving us, Jackie, Kira." Beem said sleepily.

"Thanks, but you still disobeyed my orders." Lyla pointed out, looking over the warriors' vine-bindings with a certain begrudging respect.

"I'm not on your crew, I don't have to listen to you." Jackie argued.

"You're dating someone from my crew." Lyla smirked. She nodded her head towards their prisoners. "Good job, elf, for a noncombatant. You have a Songstone?"

"Uh, yeah." Jackie blinked at the non-sequitur. "Why?"

"Mine got busted and I need to call the Fasttechs to contain the prisoners." Lyla cradled Beem in one arm and made a grabby motion with her free hand. "Gimme. Please." She added, remembering that, friend or no, Jackie was still an elf.

Jackie unlocked his Songstone and threw it to her. She caught it and dialed, grinning. "So you can listen. Add some more combat training, and we'll make a Freak out of you yet."

## Chapter 6: Hatter's Lament

Eric's response to why he isn't busy making hats to replace the stock he accidentally destroyed.

---

Not so much a story, really, just Eric showing a little more of his Mad Hatter side.

"Hats, hats, hats! And yet another hat.

You take a little of this, add some of that.

Buttons, ribbons, feathers, jewels!

I was good, followed the rules.

But fear for my health Ms Mistbloom did say,

And now no more hat-making, tis an 'off day'!"

Followed by an overdone pout.

## Chapter 7: Endearing Larva

Oliver loves the Fasttech Sisters, he just doesn't always know how to show it

---

They end up blowing things up, barely escaping noxious gas, and having to recapture one of Oliver's pets before Lyla finds out he's been experimenting with specimens on the 'Forbidden Plants' list again.

Calm Oliver and sweet Amelia are agents of chaos, and they have a very fun day together.

"He Who Makes Monsters!" A screech sounded behind Oliver, causing him to nearly drop the highly-dangerous chemicals he was working with. Had it been nearly anyone else, he would have been very angry indeed.

But it just had to be Amelia Fasttech, didn't it?

"Hello, Little Warrior." Oliver said, calm as ever, accepting her hug warmly. Wand gave a happy growl, lifting the squealing girl into the air.

I wonder what she needs? Lily asked, hopping onto Amelia's head, greeted by happy noises from the young Speargem.

"Hey, Oliver." Eric grinned, waving.

"What assistance do you require, Troublemaker?" Oliver asked, hugging the other boy.

"What makes you think I need anything?" Eric asked, purring before reluctantly breaking the hug. He was still grinning.

"You called him Oliver." Amelia interrupted before Oliver himself could. "Normally you call him a nickname, like Olivebranch or Mad Scholar, or something." She turned to Oliver, beaming. "That's the reason, right?"

"Very astute, Little Warrior." Oliver nodded. He didn't normally call people by nicknames, but Amelia and Eric were among a handful of exceptions.

"Alright, you're correct, since I'm sooo predictable." Eric rolled his eyes, as if he hadn't given such a hint entirely in purpose. He giggled, then twisted his hands together, suddenly nervous. Or acting as such, anyways. "So, uh, I'm watching Ames today. But I've got to do a sudden thing, and I promise I'll tell you about it later with minimal lying, but I don't have time to take her home. Krisi's in training, so I can't contact her, but she's said she trusts you to watch Amelia before..."

"I'll watch her, it's no problem." Oliver nodded. He had some important experiments today, but Amelia was more important.

"I don't need watching." Amelia pouted, crossing her arms. "I'm a Speargem Warrior."

"Kiddo, we've talked about this. Warrior or not, you're twelve." Eric sighed fondly, ruffling Amelia's hair, earning a squeaking laugh. "Love you, kiddo. I'll see you tonight, probably 19:30-ish? Bye, She Who Fixes What Was Never Broken."

"Bye, He Who Steals With A Laugh." Amelia waved as Eric left. Then, she turned to Oliver, still sitting on Wand and patting Lily. "You think I'm a fierce warrior, right?"

"The fiercest." Oliver answered, patting her head a few times before setting her on his worktable. He put a plant in front of her. "Watch this."

With a few chemicals, the plant was glowing and changing colors, petals floating around around it. Amelia squealed happily, watching the spectacle, and Oliver returned to his experiment.

"Endearing Spiripan Larva successfully distracted." Oliver said into a recorder. "Resuming experiment."

It was a couple minutes before he realized that Amelia was staring at him. "Is there a problem, Little Warrior?"

"Did you call me a Larva?" Amelia asked flatly.

"An Endearing Larva." Oliver corrected.

"... You're weird." Amelia laughed. "But I think you're endearing as well, even if you are an obsessive weed."

"Thank you?" Oliver shrugged, going back to his experiment.

"Watcha working on?" Amelia asked.

"What are you working on?'" Oliver corrected absently. "I am working on combining Archipelago Seaweed with Salt Pond Fronds."

"Aren't those both incredibly dangerous?"

"Yes."

"Won't Lyla be mad?" Amelia questioned, tilting her head. "She doesn't like it when you work with dangerous things."

"No, she doesn't." Oliver agreed, adjusting a bunsen burner. "My experiments do have quite the habit of causing destruction, so it's understandable. Which is why I'm trying to finish this experiment before Captain Flashclaw finds out."

"Oh." Amelia quietly kicked her legs off the side of the table for a few minutes. "Can I help?"

Oliver paused, thinking. On one hand, she was a talented researcher who often worked with dangerous materials. On the other hand, she was a young child who's safety had been placed in his care.

On the other vine...

## Chapter 8: Mayhem

Jokes, language, holidays, and mayhem.

---

Oliver is such a snarky guy.

Eric and Oliver, sitting at a table drinking tea.

Oliver: Why did you say I was 'gay as Christmas'? What's specifically gay about the Winter Festivals?

Eric: It's a linguistics joke, and kind of a history one as well.

Oliver, eyebrows slightly raised: Go on.

Eric: Well, in the English dialect of Humantongue, gay used to mean joyful, care-free, bright and showy. But now it means homosexual. It's basically saying that someone is as happy as Christmas, with the implication that being too happy and flamboyant equals gay. Which is funny, because your favorite Holiday is Christmas.

Both: Besides Halloween.

Eric: Yes, yes, I know, but that doesn't count. You're a Mage, all Mages love Halloween. Which reminds me, why???

Oliver: To what are you referring?

Eric: Why are Mages so obsessed with Halloween? I mean, Peter's a whole three weeks older than me, I've been around Magi since the day of my birth, and I still just can't understand it.

Oliver: It's an enjoyable holiday that features parties and goofing around, while as well planning careful strategies to maximize candy procurement; what's not to like?

Eric: I understand that, but... Okay, Peter likes it cause he's the center of attention, gets to be loud, dresses as colorfully as he wants, and is allowed to stay out all night singing. The twins like it because they get to show off their art, and jumpscare, those girls love jumpscare. I just don't get why, say, a quiet daydweller like your boyfriend likes it best, or why your sisters like it best beyond making costumes. Why not Christmas, or April Fool's, or The Seven Suns?

Oliver: Well, it's my favorite because-

Eric: Because you love monsters, chaos, and causing trouble without repercussion. Again, you don't count.

People around them, stare at the calm, flat expression of Junior Scholar Oliver Mistbloom.

Oliver, stares back and raises fist in air, completely deadpan: Long live mayhem. Woووو.

Eric, continues ranting.

Oliver, calmly sips tea while mentally planning the creation of the next member of his secret plant army.

## Chapter 9: Koraz 'Quotes'

Just some fun

---

I love when my characters goof off.

Eric's mom: It's always 'Lyla told me to' with you! If Lyla told you to jump into a volcano, would you do it?

Eric: \*Laughs hysterically\*

Eric's mom: What's so funny?

Eric, confused: Well, I mean... That actually happened.

Eric's mom:... What.

Eric: Zap, I knew I forgot to mention something.

\*\*\*

Eric: Heeeey! You're back.

Krissi: Very observant. Stop blocking the door.

Eric: Remember this morning, when I said I was bored and asked you to play with me, but you were too busy?

Krissi: Yes?

\*Alarm blares\*

Eric, running away: In my defence, you should really know me better by now!

\*\*\*

Eric: What's the magic word?

Amelia: Umm.... Incriminating photos?

Eric: Ames, that's not-

Amelia: From Halloween?

Eric:...

Eric, laughing: I taught you way too well. Good girl, here's a smoothie.

Krissi: Eric!

Eric: But, um, never do that again.

Amelia, walking away and sipping her smoothie: No promises. And thank you very much for the smoothie, Eric.

Eric: Good job remembering your manners. I'm such a good teacher.

Krissi: \*facepalms.\*

\*\*\*

Lyla: What's plural and singular at the same time?

Eric: Sheep?

Lyla: Well, yes, but I meant Jack-in-a-Boxes.

Eric: \*pauses for a second, then laughs\*

Lyla: \*walks off, proud of herself\*

Eric: \*looks at her as if she personally hung the stars in the sky\*

-----

Oliver: If I put experimental serum in Troublemaker's food, are you gonna get revenge?

Strike: No, I'm still mad at him for replacing my blankets with hot sand.

Lyla: Because hot sand makes glass, like a lightbulb, right? Funny. \*Walks off\*

Mischief: Is she the first one to get that joke?

Eric: \*staring wistfully after Lyla, whispers\* Clever, clever girl...

(Alt ending, Lyla doesn't walk off ---

Mischief: Congratulations! You're the first one to get that joke.

Eric: \*squeals happily\* You really get me..!)

---

\*there is always a light at the end of the tunnel\*

\*It's darkest right before the dawn\*

\*You should look on the bright side of life\*

Eric: What horrible nonsense is this? How pessimistic can you be???

Lyla: ...you know, sometimes I forget you're a shadow, and then you say things like that.

Eric: Wha- oh, wait [realizes actual meaning of phrases]

Eric: Whoops.

## Chapter 10: A Riddle

Eric, while under a truth spell, about Lyla

---

Before Lyla and Eric started dating, but after he'd realized how much he was in love with her.

"She stole something incredibly precious from me, and I didn't even notice at first. Once I did, I was very impressed, enough that I let her keep it.

Of course, she doesn't even know she has it, and even if she did she couldn't give it back. I can't just take it, either, not without a lot of work.

If I ever got it back, I'd be absolutely miserable, and I hope to steal hers someday in turn. Can you figure out what she stole? Why this particular theft has given her my loyalty?"

Answer -- His (metaphorical) heart.

## Chapter 11: The Tale Of The Stormsdaughter

A poem I wrote years ago about my character Strike 'Daughter Of The Storm' Stargem. A defective/superpowered clone, raised as a weapon, who turned against her creators, became a freedom fighter, and rejoined her family.

---

I'd almost forgotten about this...  
Strike is a Lightning, Air, and Water Elemental  
(as well as Life, but that's true across her species, so it doesn't really count)

The water flows

The child grows  
Soft spoken,  
Sweet as a rose  
The child grows.

*(The child grows)*

The years pass  
The cage is broken  
No longer so  
Soft spoken  
The child grows.

*(The child grows)*

Spirits soar  
Lightning flashes  
Longing for more  
Thunder crashes  
The child grows.

*(The child grows)*

Made of three  
Finally free  
Water, lightning, air  
Blue eyes, black hair  
The child grows.

*(The child grows)*

Thought an enemy  
Now a friend  
Finally found  
Anger put to an end  
The child grows.

*(The child grows)*

Struggles  
Acceptance  
Must pay  
Their penance  
The child grows.

*(The child grows)*

Well spoken  
Chains broken  
Spirits set free  
By one of three  
The child grows.

*(The child grows)*

Place and Purpose  
Found at last  
Happiness grows  
As the years pass  
The Stormsdaughter grows!

*(The Stormsdaughter grows!)*

## Chapter 12: Let's Call Me Yours: How Peter And Maggie Finally Got Together

Two of my characters are singers/dancers/musicians/racers (on brooms) who fell in love. This is to celebrate that.

---

Peter has shoulder-length sandy/light brown hair and green-brown eyes. He wears a robe made of red-green-blue parrot feathers.

Maggie has slightly brown skin, long dark brown hair, and brown eyes. She wears a robe made mostly of purple feathers, with some blue and a small amount of green.

They're both Song/Animal Mages, though Peter's as well Knowledge (and possibly Fire). They're both possibly Air as well, now I think about it.

**Maggie:** Call me baby, call me honey, oooh just call me yours

**Peter (twirls Maggie):** Imagine it, darling, a life of open doors

**Maggie (twirls into Peter and looks up):** Who could ever ask for more?

**Both, alternating:** Ohhh, baby, honey, sweetie, darling, my dear

**Both:** Just call me yours. I'll call me yours. Let's call me yours.

**Peter:** One day I heard you sing

**Maggie:** One day you heard me sing!

**Peter:** And I just got to say, I was impressed

**Maggie, speaking:** And a little intimidated?

**Peter, speaking:** You know it, baby. You're the best

**Peter, singing:** I ever heard! My darling little bird

**Maggie, singing:** You matched me in every way

**Peter:** We've been soulmates since that day

**Maggie:** You match my need-

**Peter:** For airborne speed?

**Maggie, speaking:** Yes, but don't interrupt baby.

**Peter, speaking:** Sorry, dear. Now where were we? Oh yes...

**Peter, singing:** You're magic, pure and fine.

**Maggie, singing:** Oh, baby, just be mine

**Peter:** We fight, argue, compete

**Maggie:** And it makes me complete!

**Both:** So call me baby, my dear, my darling. Call me your singer, your rival, your partner. Call me buddy, call me pal

**Maggie:** If you'll be my guy

**Peter:** If you'll be my gal

**Both:** If you'll be my dancer, my rival, my partner. My sweetie, my baby, my darling.

**Maggie:** Just call me yours, and I'll call you mine.

**Peter:** Just call me yours, we'll be just fine.

**Maggie:** My singer

**Peter:** My dancer

**Maggie:** My player, my partner

**Peter:** My rival, my darling

**Maggie:** Let's call me

**Peter:** Let's call me

**Maggie:** Let's call me

**Peter:** Let's call me

**Both:** Yours

They're dancing throughout this, kissing softly at the end.

## Chapter 13: Shattered

A little character study of my character Amelia Fastek, and the Spirit she created, Song.

There once was a little girl, with hair black as ravens' wings and eyes like lilacs in bloom.

She loved many things, like old stories, or riddling talk, or tea parties. What she loved most of all, besides her own kin, was making things.

In body she was frail and sickly, but in mind she was nimble and strong, inheriting intelligence from her mother and a love of challenges from her father -- but she learned perseverance from her sister.

And that last, more than any other, kept her alive when her body seemed determined for it not to be. She kept her weak body going with a mind and soul stronger than most others.

So strong that they could not fully split, even when she shattered herself apart. When she felt hopeless and weak, all she cared about in mortal peril, she called upon the powers of her people.

These powers were lost in her sister, and never belonged to her parents or grandparents, all of strongest body and mind. But it took a strong soul to wield, and she had that.

Through the bracelet on her wrist -- hers since her conception -- her Soul flowed and splintered, responding to her great need and desire. It should have split entirely, healing stronger as the separate piece formed a new life, a protector.

But her soul had spent a very long time trying not to shatter, and not even the powers that were rightfully hers could change that. Her enemy mocked her for the tiny creature that came out of her soul, a weak thing that could fight less than she herself.

But her Spirit was not meant to fight alone. A soul rejoined is the stuff of myths, utterly improbable in a land where nearly anything was possible.

Girl and Spirit, side by side, spoke without words, knew without guide. One split into two, two back to one.

One soul two minds, they combined, their form twisted and grew, filled with a power that neither knew.

They defeated their foes and saved the girl's loved ones, splitting back into separate forms. But they could never fully separate, even if their true power was only theirs for short bursts of time.

The girl's mind shattered, yet her body grew, no sign of what once was so wrong. The Spirit's voice she alone could hear, as she herself began to disappear.

But like her soul, her mind would not be broken. The girl and her Spirit learned how to share, two minds in two bodies, but freely able to switch between.

It was unnerving for those around them, to be talking to the girl's body (for the Spirit's spoke not), yet unknowing which one they were truly conversing with.

And the girl changed so much, sparring with body and words much more than before, dismissive and distracted in ways unseen in her. But she still was herself, in a new way.

She loved old stories, and riddling talk, and tea parties where her Spirit possessed her dishware.

She loved jumping from rooftops, soaring above them as one with her Spirit.

She loved pretty dresses, and carnivals, and flowering plants.

But what she loved most of all, besides her kin, was inventing things. She Who Fixes What Was Never Broken and She Who Walks Always With Another were what her people called her.

They Who Create As One, was she what called herself.

## Chapter 14: They Work Together

A character study about the friendship between my characters Krisî Fastek and Oliver Mistbloom.

My Koraz stories are the one thing I don't want anyone else to write. Any other fic, feel free to change, add to, or be inspired by! ☺

Everything was too slow. It was why she liked bullets, and tornados, and explosions -- they were *almost* fast.

It was why she rode Blur, and fought Spîdî, and watched 20x speed recordings -- she just needed things that weren't so zapping slow.

He was the opposite. He noticed everything, saw everything, and it was too much sometimes -- his brain wasn't fast enough to process it.

For him, the world was too busy. For her, it was too slow. But both had to focus their entire lives, keep themselves under control in a world they were a little out of sync with -- maybe it wasn't the best thing to base a friendship on, but they made it work.

She's angry, always is, wants to feel her enemies break. He calls plants, makes them grow, and he really doesn't mean to. They both destroy, and they can't help it, but they try.

He talks, showing dozens of scrolls at once, and she is silent. He goes fast, and she doesn't give him new stimulus. He calms her, she listens to him, and both are almost at peace.

It isn't love, and yet it is. He cares not for breasts and curved hip, she can't feel attracted to one who doesn't hear the drums of war humming in their blood. But it's still a sort of love, their own special type, built on fights and stories and tea.

The world is slow and busy, too much and not enough. He craves the noise, writes it down, and hides away when it overwhelms. She forces herself to stillness, to strength, and goes to abandoned places to unleash the rage it causes. They don't work like everyone else, and they don't work like each other, but they understand.

And, somehow, they work together.

## Chapter 15: Control

A character study of the Mistbloom siblings.

I found a bunch of old character studies of the Destiny Freaks that I wrote before I had a fanfic account...

Brooke, Paige, Oliver.

Gifted with power they had no hope to control, they fought it and hid it and hoped others would see past it.

Water rushed to protect her, but rarely could tell friend from foe. She drowned, sinking further, wrapped in stone. She accepted her demon, let it raise her up, and stood by its side. It stands by her side.

Magic burst from from her, changing the world to fit her soul, but not always her desires. She jumped, and it gave her wings. She'll never fully control herself, but she's okay with it. She thrives in the chaos.

His emotions controlled plants, at expense of his body, at the expense of his spells. He didn't care, he had better things to learn, he accepted himself. He controls what he feels, and lets go when he needs to. He lives with his powers.

They still aren't exactly under control, still struggle to keep a lid on their powers, still bring destruction without intent. But they're happy, they know themselves, and accept each other.

They're happy.

## Chapter 16: Just One More Time

Oliver Mistbloom decided to try to learn a Spell because his boyfriend thought it would be pretty. Of course, that's not really his only reason anymore.

A moment I've had in my head for a long time and decided to finally write on the 18th September 2024.

---

Lily's a frog, btw

Oliver stands at the greenhouse sink, scrubbing at his face. He carefully cleans his new burn, watching his reflection in fascination as the skin (not just red, not like past burns, now it's almost rainbow with his mutated blood) begins to heal itself, the skin around it softly glowing green.

As much as he hates the increasing uselessness of his limbs, he has to admit the healing is a worthy tradeoff. He remembers sitting in front of mirrors or one of his sisters years ago, trying to twist his expression into something that would show his pain without getting him dragged to the emergency wing, glad he never has to go through that again.

The burn slowly recedes from around his eye, giving him back his full vision. Or as much vision as he ever has, he thinks wryly as he adjusts his glasses. Experimentally, he twitches his lips, giving his reflection a smile that almost manages to be wry.

He stopped caring about mastering facial expressions years ago, but he still practices every once in a while. To stop entirely feels too much like giving up on something that interests him, like admitting he can't learn, and that isn't something he likes the idea of. Not giving up on things he wants feels too inherent to his being, something that makes him more than the weird kid who never smiles, for him to do anything less.

To that end, he stretches and turns towards the door, intent on resuming his practice of the Flare Spell.

*(which shouldn't blow up he was a plant mage why the zap did it keep exploding why couldn't he just get it already-).*

Unfortunately, his progress is hindered by a sharp tug on his right arm, making him lose his balance and fall into the dirt of the greenhouse floor.

Oliver has never been graceful, quite the opposite, so he's used enough to falling to instinctively prevent his own injury despite not currently having use of his right arm.

He tilts his head back to see Wand's vines gripping the sink, her roots squeezing his arm tighter than usual.

He wonders, not for the first time, how his shoulder hasn't been pulled from his socket after all the times he'd been pulled sharply by it. Maybe the few roots that reached that high hold it in place? It doesn't particularly matter to him right now, so he places the thought aside for the moment, one eyebrow raised as he continues to look at his wand.

She responds by growling and tugging him towards her. Oliver passively lets himself be pulled across the ground, getting a few tiny scratches but mostly enjoying the feel of the dirt where it touches his skin, the nutrients in the soil speeding up the re-growth process.

"We only have a few more hours until dinner." Oliver states once he's laying partially under the sink. "We should fit in as much practice as possible until then."

Wand growls again, letting go of the sink to cross her vines, the glowing orbs within her petals that somewhat pass for eyes narrowing. Oliver keeps eye contact with her instead of reaching into his backpack for the unmoving safety of his notebook's runes. He isn't as overwhelmed as usual, which is one upside of getting so much magic out via explosion, he supposes.

*Perhaps that's enough for today.* Lily hops up to Wand's bud, looking down at him, her tone suggesting the statement is not really a question.

The plants around him sharpen. He knows she's just worried, but he can't help a bit of disbelief, some anger that she would try to cut practice short. Wand, sure, but *her*? She, of all people, knows why this is important...

---

He remembers standing with his so-called siblings, the Flowerborn that had bloomed the same day as him. They didn't have wands yet, wouldn't get them until years after most types of Magi did, but they were still taught the Flare Spell. Most Magi would learn three basic spells much younger than them: *Flare*, *Shield*, and *Light*. Wand-less spells were harder, so they only learned one, and they learned it older.

He remembers watching as the others' Rune Marks lit up with the effort of their first spell, light traveling across their skin in patterns from their left eyes to the their wrists, only to shoot into the air in glowing symbols. The symbols were so simple back then, but they'd grow more complicated as the Witches and Wizards grew.

It took dozens of tries for most of them, but of course his sisters were ahead of the curve. Brooke had it perfected within three attempts, while Paige... Well, hers lit up the sky in swirling, sparkling purple on her first try. She grinned and preened under the praise of their 'peers', but he'd seen the small signs of stress she'd already been so good at hiding (she'd always had more precision and control than anyone else, but still never quite *enough*), and he'd known she'd be crying later over whatever magical disaster she'd barely managed to avoid.

If he'd known what was about to happen, maybe a part of him would've wished she'd lost control, let his turn be skipped or forgotten entirely as the resulting chaos was dealt with. But he knows now that it's better when he's the one to screw up, knows it doesn't affect him nearly as much as it does his sisters. Still, though...

He remembers his magic — pure green back then instead of the dual green and pink Wand had made it — glowing in his hands, remembers how it felt to call it on purpose instead of by accident. He'd had a lot of accidents, everytime he came in contact with any sort of flora or fertile soil; he'd already been forced to wear shoes by that point, though his hands had been blissfully free of gloves.

He remembers the moment he realized why he always felt so restless, so full of unleashed energy that everything became a little too much. As that energy finally broke from his skin, he finally understood that his magic was simply too bottled up.

Unfortunately, the resulting explosion barely a second later had shown him why that energy needed to be bottled up. He'd gone to the Healer's Ward of the Flowerborn Compound, hardly for the first time, but with injuries much more serious than bruises or scrapes from his constant tripping. He remembers being more relieved that Lily was safe in his pocket than upset that he was hurt, in the moments he was conscious enough to think that clearly.

Fire, Lightning, Light — those were the sorts of Elements that tended to explode when they backfired. Knowledge and Plant, his Elements, were known for far different affects when things went wrong. It didn't matter, it never would, because his magic didn't work like that.

Paige's magic is chaos and imagination, destruction and creation, uncontrollable and unpredictable. But a little of that chaos lives in him and Brooke, a little of that something that ignores the rules and makes it so hard to properly learn a Spell.

And that's why this is so important to him. He doesn't care much for Spells, is happy with his books and potions, but he's still a *Mage*. One Spell, that's all he wants, to be

able to channel his magic to his will in the way he's meant to for one Spell. He knows himself well enough to know that will be enough, that will ease this ache in his soul, that will give him a better vent than his plant powers do.

He doesn't control how fast his plants grow, how they change, but he could control this if he succeeds. And is it so wrong that he wants that just once? To actually be in control of his powers in a way other than keeping them in? Just once?

---

"Just one more try, Lilith." He stands up, using the sink for support, not asking any more than she was. It's a fair compromise, he thinks, even as he knows he's putting too much into this. He's never practiced this hard, certainly not after Wand destabilized his magic, his breaking body probably can't really handle it.

But that's never stopped him before. The danger, the fruitlessness, hasn't stopped his attempts at a proper growth potion. He has a thousand experiments growing and hissing and oozing around his lab, many of them sharp and toxic and so pretty, to prove that he's never cared about the impossible.

One more try, then he'll rest. One more try, then he's done until tomorrow. One more try, then he'll go back to his books. One more failure, then he'll be ready to focus on more successful enterprises for a little while. *One more time.*

He stumbles on the familiar path outside his greenhouse, too tired from all the magical attempts and injuries of the day to think about the little rocks that always sticks out, but Wand catches him. He lets her carry him to the stony area where he practices, far enough away to not risk his precious plants but close enough to get medical assistance in an emergency.

The dark stones, so common this close to the Stormlands, are covered in scorch marks from previous mistakes. This lifeless area can't be hurt by those mistakes, and can't grow out of control trying to protect him, unlike the forest on the other side of the greenhouse.

Wand puts him down, grumbling but going along with this, and Lily jumps onto his hair. Neither approves, he knows they partly think he's just doing this to impress Jackie (*he wouldn't put himself through this for a cute boy... Well, not just for a cute boy*), but he doesn't care. He forces his lips to quirk up and his eyes to crinkle, briefly mimicking a smile to try to show how much he appreciates both their concern and the fact they're helping him anyways, despite the fact they could stop him so very easily.

He looks up at the sky, the sunlight bright right up to the point it hits the everlasting storm clouds, and visualizes a bright green rune. A Mage is supposed to visualize their name until they know what their symbol looks like, but he always visualizes his favorite ancient Liskan rune instead, a pretty one that doesn't have a Magish counterpart but looks a little like a flower in bloom.

Wand shrinks and coils under his sleeve and in his hand, going still enough for him to almost pretend she's a regular wand. He breaths deeply, trying not to worry about whether working with another mind will interfere with the Spell or not, feeling a small trickle of energy flowing from Lily to him...

He fires straight into the air, braced for the explosion, ready to catch himself before he slams into the rocks. But the faint glimmer of green and pink manages to fly high above him, spreading out into the image of a scroll rolled up in the center of a rose, and.

And he.

And he just.

He did it. He stands, frozen, staring as the image begins to fade. Wand and Lily stare with him for that short eternity, and he dimly wonders if their minds are as sluggish as his own.

As the last of the image disappears into a faint shimmer, the trio explodes in a whole new way. Wand's twirling him around like when she break dances, he's giggling more maniacally than he has in his life, Lily's hopping between them, and *after all these zapping years he's done it! He's actually done it...*

It doesn't matter that his expression is real for once, doesn't matter that he's already used so much energy, his body still calls to the plants around him. They shoot from deep under the ground, shattering the rock, just to celebrate with him. In his greenhouse and kilometers into the forest beyond it, flora of all sorts twist and glow and shift their colors — his emotion made visual.

It's going to be a lot of work and a lot of explaining, he might even get in trouble if the plants cause chaos, but he doesn't care in the slightest. He's laughing, he's dancing, it doesn't even matter that he's still exhausted.

Because for the first time in his life, it worked. He did it. He cast a spell *and it worked.*

Too bad Jack didn't see it. Lily muses, after the celebration has wound down a bit.

"I suppose we'll just have to do it again and show him." Oliver nods, his rare true smirk gone but his joy remaining. He gets excited grins from the others, not a hint of reluctance between them, and he can't help but wonder if they'll even be able to do it again.

Surely they could manage it just *one* more time..?

## Chapter 17: Lyla's Song

Lyla's song about her love for Eric

Alternative Titles:

- \* Lyla's Defense
- \* His Heart Is Not His Own
- \* This Is The Man You/I Love

- This is the man you love? They ask,
  - As if they have any right,
  - A man who treads in shadows,
  - And steals away in the night?
  
- This is the man you love? They ask,
  - One whose heart is not his own?
- This is the man you love? They ask,
  - Despite the danger he has known?
  
- This is the man I love, because
  - He always makes me laugh
  - It isn't always easy, but
  - My heart is up to the task
  
- This is the man you love? They ask,
  - A thief, a cheat, a liar (it's true)
  - But he never does to me, dear,
  - What I'd love to see him do to **you**
  
- He always calls me beautiful,
  - Even when I think I'm really not
  - And when someone says otherwise,
  - His gaze pierces them like a shot
  
- This is the man you love? They ask,
  - With pitiful shakes of each head
  - A man with whom, for half a decade more,
  - You won't even share a bed?
  
- This is the man you love? They ask,
  - One who, at times, will leave you all alone?
- This is the man you love? They ask,
  - One whose heart is not his own?

- This is the man I love, even if
- I can't love him in his own
- This is the man I love, because
- He always feels like home.

## Chapter 18: Hush, Little Warrior (Eric's Lullaby)

After they barely escape some baddies and are riding away, Eric sings a lullaby to an exhausted Amelia who doesn't feel safe enough to sleep.

Young Spiripa are called Spiripups. Because it's cute.

Hush, Little Warrior,  
Who watched her enemies' blood spill  
Hush, Little Warrior,  
Who stopped just short of the kill

Hush, Little Warrior,  
There's no need for you to fight  
Hush, Little Warrior,  
You're guarded by the sacred night

Hush, Little Warrior,  
Hush, Little Pup,  
Just because you close your eyes,  
Doesn't mean you give up

Sleep, my dearest little one  
Worry not for what's at stake  
Dream of things much more fun  
I'll be right here, when you awake

Sleep, Little Warrior, your battle's done  
Darkness guards you, my dear  
Rest your head with the setting sun  
Let my shadows block your fear

The stars come out, and I perk up  
The light is gone, you close your eyes  
Sleep well, my dearest little Pup  
And in your dreams, grow strong and wise

## Chapter 19: The Spirit Who Feared The Truth

A poetic retelling of something that happens in the larger Koraz stories.

Edit: Oops, forgot to mention that ChatGPT helped me out with this one. I told it the story, then had it turn it into a myth and simplify it several times, then did some editing. It came up with the name, tho

Before the first mountain felt the first wind, before rivers carved their place in stone, there was Knowledge.

He walked beside others of his kind — Life, War, Destiny — and bore witness to their triumphs and sorrows.

Among them were two born as mirrors: Honesty and Deception. Truth, and its shadow.

At first, they were gentle, rivals though they were. They played games across the waking world. Deception spun tales, and Honesty untwisted them. But on many things they disagreed, and their arguments grew more frequent. Their words turned sharper as time wore on. Honesty's truths cut deep. Deception's lies drew blood.

Life, busy with the making of worlds, paid them little mind. They were young, he thought. They would learn.

War laughed. Twin voices echoed as mortals suffered beneath clarity too heavy and trickery too cruel.

Knowledge, bound to his realm, could only watch. He saw what was coming, dimly. And he could not stop it.

Time saw clearly, as they always do. They wept, even as they allowed it to happen. Destiny must unfold.

And so it did.

Honesty and Deception destroyed each other. Their brilliance shattered.

Then, at last, Life cried out for the children he had ignored. War fell silent as their peers' light dimmed. Knowledge turned from his work and wept.

Still, the world turned.

From the root of trickery and laughter, a new Deception was born — not in fire nor storm, but in giggles under tables, pranks hidden in cupboards. Young. Curious. Alive.

She was born to a family Knowledge knew well. He watched her grow. He held her when she cried. He smiled when she laughed.

And he remembered what had happened to the one before her. What he could never allow again.

So Knowledge chose a lie.

He buried the books. He rewrote the stories. He pleaded and threatened and silenced those who remembered. He broke his own laws. He hid the truth.

He never told her of Honesty, nor what became of the one whose legacy she bore.

And, for a time, she did not think to ask.

But truth always finds a way.

A new Honesty was born at the same time as Deception. Where she was loud and wild, he was gentle and quiet.

When they met, by chance and Destiny's own will, the most ancient held their breath; they remembered well their brethren's end.

Time did not share the shock the others felt, having a hand — as they always do — in what would come to pass. Behind knowing smirks, they hid tears and hope alike.

Deception's lies poured out, easy and unthinking.

Honesty smiled as he heard them.

There was no scolding. No spite. No fury.

Only laughter.

Where the old ones saw rivals, the young saw something else.

A dance. A game. A friendship. Perhaps more.

No hatred — only wonder.

Knowledge watched from afar, torn in heart and mind. Despite his best efforts, he was helpless once more to change their fate. He warned. He waited.

He hoped.

Even Spirits fall into patterns.

But sometimes — just sometimes — patterns break.

## Chapter 20: The Spirits Of Storytelling, Hope, And Spite

A piece on Kamedì & Trajedi

While ChatGPT helped me clean it up, this is almost entirely my own words, and entirely my own concept. I hope you enjoy 😊

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Basically Kamedì is Superman and Trajedi is Batman (but, like, their least depressed versions)

### Kamedì & Trajedi

#### The Spirits of Storytelling

##### **Kamedì is hope.**

He is the hero's speech that rallies a weary village, the promise that joy is just around the corner.

He is the laughter of festivals, the warmth in a lover's kiss, the smile at the sight of a newborn child.

He is the belief that good can never truly be stamped out.

He is the *happily ever after* — and the courage to believe you'll reach it.

##### **Trajedi is spite.**

He is the hero who knows he won't win and rises anyway, if only to stand in the villain's way.

He is the grit that drives you forward even as you know danger looms ahead.

He is the strength to bear pain without letting it break you.

He is the laughter in your darkest hour, the bond forged in battle, the birth of a child in the middle of war.

He is not defeat — he is *defiance*.

**Kamedì is the moment you slip into sleep, dreaming of the music you'll dance to in the morning.**

**Trajedi is the moment you collapse into your pillow, grateful you made it through the day.**

One is the joy of what's possible.

The other is the pride of survival.

Together, they are **resolution and conflict**, the peaceful times you long for and the storms you endure.

They are the smiles *because of*, and the smiles *in spite of*.

They are every story you've ever known — and the ones that live in your dreams.

The fear you didn't realize you overcame.  
The joy that made it possible.

They are **Kamedi** and **Trajedi**.  
The **two sides** to **every story**.

— end of "Purely Koraz" —