

The Ritual Trip
By Princess_Lil

“It’s just a target. Not even moving. Come on. You want to prove those humans wrong, don’t you? You bet your clothing on this, you don’t want to have to walk through a human town naked, do you?” Enoki whispered into her friend’s ear while brushing the other elf’s hair out of the way. “Don’t let me distract you. By all means, just keep concentrating. Look at that target. So far away~ Don’t let your mind wander and think of the humiliating walk directly through town. We won’t be going around it after all. I still have errands to run. A few in the town square, too.”

“Shut up.” Birch kept her eyes on the target. It was at least a kilometer away. A shot that would be impossible for a human, but one she could probably do. Maybe. Not that she’d ever attempted a shot like that.

The dark elf, Enoki, smiled and stepped back, finished with teasing her wood elf friend. Aside from their skin, they were both quite similar in appearance. They wore the same outfit – finely made black leather with elven script across it. They had figures befitting warriors – each was two meters tall, letting them tower over the men around them. But despite their size they didn’t lack elven grace.

“You gonna shoot?” a human man grinned. His gaze lingered on Birch’s rear. He was a gentleman of extraordinary tastes, and both of these elves fit those tastes. He just couldn’t wait to see a powerful, naked wood elf blushing and trying to cover herself. The grizzled, bald man with a long red beard looked over to Enoki, wishing he’d managed to bring her in on the bet too.

“Yeah! You’ve been aiming all day, just shoot already and miss! We know you’re stalling!” another said.

About ten humans started jeering. Birch clenched her jaw before releasing the tension with a deep breath. She was going to miss. No one could make a shot like this without some serious magic, and even then, she promised she wouldn’t use any. Just elven eyes and elven skill. And soon to be elven embarrassment.

“You can do it!” one voice piped up. Birch glanced back to see a green-haired half-elf with a big smile on her face. She didn’t share their warrior stature, but it was clear from the exposed midriff that the half-elf was fairly fit herself.

Well. At least someone stupid believed in her.

Birch took one deep breath before exhaling. She let the arrow fly. Time slowed down – she could almost see it. And see it fall dreadfully short. Not even half the distance.

It was harder for the humans to see where the arrow ended up, but all they needed to see was that the target was still standing.

“She missed!” one shouted.

“Hah! I wanna see what an elven pussy looks like!” another blurted out.

“How’d you talk an elf into such a stupid bet, Dane?” another asked while laughing.

Birch tried to hide her blush by turning away, but the humans had already seen her reddening cheeks. More of them started laughing.

Finally Dane stepped forward with the most shit eating grin he’d ever held in his life. “Well, we had a deal. You take off your clothes, and I keep hooting after elven ass, no punishment.”

Birch fumed. She couldn’t believe this was about to happen to her! Her, of all people! She was the best archer in the clan! Why did she have to make this stupid bet! There was no way she was going to win.

“Well, well,” Enoki chuckled. She appraised Birch with a cruel smile. Letting her go through with this might have some long lasting repercussions, but for now it was all fun and games.

“Double or nothing!” the chipper half-elf called out from behind the crowd.

“Eh?” Dane turned and inspected the half-elf. “You’re kinda short. Especially compared to these two. And what’s wrong with your ears...? They’re kinda pointed outward... Never seen an elf like you.”

Unlike the leather the wood elf and dark elf wore, the half-elf wore less battle ready clothes – a green breechcloth and a matching green chestwrap, both held together with braided vines that looked as fresh as if they were still growing.

“She’s a half elf,” Enoki corrected. “But a rather cute one. Maybe you should take her up on the offer. That green braid would look nice swaying over a naked butt, no?” Though her affections were cruel, Enoki liked the half-elf immediately. She always did have a thing for fools. It wasn’t like she would just abandon her, of course, once she failed, Enoki would keep her from anyone being too untoward.

“You are pretty cute. And I do like those muscles you got. But since you’re half-human, I’m gonna level with you: this shot is impossible. I’m an archer myself, and I’ve seen enough elven archers to know what they’re capable of. Even specimens as gorgeous as the wood elf there.”

“Yeah, but have you ever seen a half-elf archer!” The green-haired girl stepped up and took a bow off her back. The bow itself was rather ornate with elven script carved right into it along with a living vine wrapped around it with a pretty pink flower at the end of it.

The other men started laughing. “Yeah! Have you? Look at her! Let’s get a real good look at her, eh? She’s more than pretty enough, sure the whole town will enjoy seeing her.”

Dane raised his hands to settle the crowd. “Alright, I hear you all. If she’s fine with the bet, then I’m fine with it too. Double or nothing. You land the shot she missed, and neither of you have to remove your clothes. Fair’s fair?”

“Fair!” the half-elf chirped. “Oh wait! I forgot something super important!” she blurted out. “I just—I’m supposed to introduce myself before I make a deal! Hi! I’m Lilah!” she said with a curtsy.

“Ah... right. Yeah. I’m Dane,” the man said awkwardly. “Let’s get you shooting. That the bow you gonna use? It looks a little... dainty.”

“It’s a great bow!” Lilah said. “Well, not a greatbow, but a great bow, you know? It’s actually just recurve bow.”

Dane laughed. “I like you. You’re funny. But you’re not getting out of the deal, so get that butt up there and shoot. But I wanna make sure – that bow ain’t magic, is it?”

“No, the bow isn’t magic,” Lilah held up the bow. “It’s homegrown!”

“Ah, good enough! Get up there.”

“Right!” Lilah said. She looked up to the smiling and winking Enoki then over to Birch. Birch covered her face behind both hands, not able to watch.

Lilah stepped up to the line, nocked an arrow, tilted her head once to make sure her sights were set, and, with a big smile on her face, loosed the arrow. It was like a bolt of lightning. Even Enoki and Birch didn’t see it. In the blink of an eye, the target at an impossible range to hit was flung back like it was hit by a ballista bolt.

Everyone, elves and humans, looked at the short half-elf with amazement and complete confusion.

“H-how did you?” Dane was the first to ask.

“You said no magic bow,” Lilah smiled. The answer was obvious – at least to Dane. Everyone else just stared, befuddled.

“A-ah... I see,” Dane shook his head before he laughed. “I feel like I just got played! My fault for not wording the rules of the game better. You little cheat!” He reached over and gently placed a hand on Lilah’s shoulder.

“Sure is your fault!” Lilah giggled. “I totally cheated!”

“Oh, I see. A magic arrow,” Enoki finally clued everyone else in. “He only told her no magic bow.”

Dane and Lilah laughed together while the crowd dispersed. They all got a show, but not the one they hoped for.

Birch finally managed to pick her jaw off the floor and stepped forward, wrapping the little half-elf in a big hug and lifting her off the ground. “You saved me! You little trickster, I’m so glad you saved me!”

“Aye, guess she did,” Dane laughed. “Suppose it was worth it to see that shot. Never actually seen a magic arrow before. How many do you have?”

Lilah dangled from Birch’s arms. She sort of half wrapped an arm around her to hug back, but given she was pressed tightly against Birch’s breasts, she wasn’t sure what she was supposed to do! “Just the one, a bit of a silly use thinking about it...”

“Silly use?! You saved my pride! I’m going to take you home and show you exactly how much I appreciate it. You’re so cute I might never let you go though~” Birch gently sat the half-elf down and ruffled her hair. “So young and so cute! I just want to dote on you. But really, you do deserve a reward, and I think I have something in mind.”

“She gets this way with people she likes,” Enoki laughed.

“Uh, right,” Lilah looked up to the two smiling elves. “So, what kind of reward?” she asked. “You don’t need to pay me back for the arrow.”

“Just come with us,” Birch giggled. She slipped behind Lilah and put a hand on her back, urging her forward toward the forest.

“Oh no you don’t. I still have other errands. Let her go collect her things, then we will meet her at the town entrance,” Enoki lectured.

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“Is your village really only this deep in the forest?” Lilah asked. “The elven village I came from was really, really deep in the forest, and they didn’t like people much. That you two go into town is really weird! My clan only did that when something big was happening.”

The trio walked through a well traversed path. Lilah was sandwiched between the bigger elves. Birch kept a hand on Lilah at all times, doting over the small, at least in comparison, half-elf.

“Really? Was your village that secretive? Our clan is fairly open,” Enoki said. “We protect the forest, act as guides for travelers, sometimes as mercenaries, and we occasionally celebrate with humans. Most human men in particular stay away from us, but some do have a particular taste as you’ve seen.”

“Yeah, they never really left the forest. Sometimes they’d bring someone to the city, and sometimes one of the elves would leave the forest, but it wasn’t super common.”

“Then how about you? Did you stay in the forests?”

“No, I’ve been to a bunch of places and met lots of people!”

“I can’t get over how cute you are,” Birch squealed. “I’ve never seen a half-elf in person. Are they all as cute as you?”

“I dunno! I guess I’ve never met one. Do you really think I’m that cute? Everyone in my clan makes fun of me for being stubby. Really, they were kinda mean.”

“Fools,” Enoki sighed. “You might not have the same elven grace as us, but *stubby*? What, do they think of you as a gnome? No. You’re beautiful, and no one should make you feel anything less for a moment.”

“Oooh, even Enoki is feeling protective of you! She’s usually such a hard sell!” Birch nudged Lilah with her elbow.

“Enough. I can see our home in the distance. Why don’t you go ahead and explain the situation to the others, I want a word alone with Lilah.”

“Oh, yeah, sure thing?” Birch raised an eyebrow but shook it off. “I’ll let the others know not to get too excited.”

Enoki waited for Birch to get far enough away, not wanting to risk Birch’s elven ears listening in. “Half-elves are rare. Even with a clan as friendly with humans as us, none want to risk carrying a half-elf. But our clan has a tradition of teaching any half-elves we come across an important lesson – one that often gets quite intimate.”

“Uhm... okay...?” Lilah didn’t know how to react. She hadn’t met many other elvish clans – maybe only hers saw her as a burden. “How intimate, I guess? Is this going to be a sex thing? You and Birch are really pretty, and I’d love to and all, but–”

Enoki laughed and placed her hand on the top of Lilah’s head. “What I mean to say, Lilah, is can you trust us with your safety?”

“Oh! Yeah, sure! I mean, at least with you. I don’t think Birch makes good decisions.”

Enoki placed her hand on Lilah's back. "Agreed. Let's see if she made a good one in how she talked about you."

As they walked further into the forest, Lilah saw the clan's village. It wasn't all that different from her own; what amounted to a bunch of tree houses connected by rope bridge and larger platforms. Aside from the bridges, all the material was simple groomed trees. Giant, alive, and now acting as home for the elves.

"You don't seem impressed." Enoki chuckled.

"Oh, sorry! Yeah, it's super neat! It's all, uhm... it's all...!" She searched for something nice she could say without lying. "It's definitely sturdier looking than my village!" They could really use some more flowers...

"Don't get a headache." Enoki walked toward a tree and grabbed a rope that was hanging from a platform. "You don't need help, do you? I can carry you up if you like."

"Oh, no, I'm good!" Lilah grabbed another nearby rope and started scaling the tree with it. She hefted herself up onto the platform without too much trouble.

"Good job," Enoki called out. "Entertain yourself with the women, there's one last thing I need to check on."

"...the women?" Lilah turned to look at the village proper. There didn't seem to be anyone around. She wandered higher up the tree village, finally hearing a bit of life coming from just a little higher up.

"I'm telling you, a real half-elf!" Birch shouted. "And she's adorable! We have to do the ceremony!"

"You seem pretty taken with her," a low and melodious voice replied.

"You will be too, she always has the dumbest little smile on her face. She's just so adorable, and I think she'll be perfect for the ceremony."

"I wanna see her! Why didn't you bring her?" another elf said.

Lilah tiptoed up the stairs, peeking her head just high enough to see what was going on. A group of at least fifteen elven women, all as fit as Enoki and Birch, stood around a more mature looking elf that Lilah could guess was the elder. Even she was quite strong looking. These elves were so strange! So big and tall and pretty...

The elder looked over toward Lilah, and their gazes met for a split second. The elder was a gorgeous woman, though it was clear she didn't get nearly as much exercise as the rest. She was as tall as the rest, though Lilah couldn't help but notice just how curvy she was. Her fall leaf red hair fell in curls and teased across her tan skin. Lilah didn't want to risk her gaze lingering overly long and ducked her head. She wanted to learn more before she even tried to talk to that group of women.

"She is here! Enoki took her aside for a minute, but she'll be here." Birch assured the other elves. "Of course, we are going to have to get her to agree. I don't think it'll be that hard, but I still have my reservations..." Birch trailed off. "Elder Acacia, you're the only one that's done this ceremony before, this isn't going to hurt her, is it? She did me a big favor."

"Don't worry," the elder soothed. "I'll be there to ensure nothing goes wrong."

"Sounds like we've got a party then!" a new voice called out.

"Don't get too excited. We need to approach this calmly. I'm sure you've all seen what this mushroom does to a non-elf when they eat it," Elder Acacia warned.

Lilah could only just hear a few murmurs from the elves.

"But half-elves are *half elf*, so isn't it supposed to be okay for them?" another elf asked.

"There's always a risk. I hear it affects some more powerfully than others. It might be just a delicious morsel to you, but to her it will be an experience that will require a strong trust in us. I wouldn't be afraid if she ran away just after hearing our pitch!"

Lilah leaned back to look at her escape route. She could sneak away if she wanted. But... No. She was too curious. What exactly could they be offering her?

"I'll go get her, I'm sure Enoki is done with whatever it was."

"Yeah, go get her! I want to see if she lives up to your hype!"

A few more cheered. Lilah probably wasn't getting out of this without disappointing a whole bunch of pretty ladies. She took a deep breath and finished walking up the ramp to the gathering. "Hello! Are you looking for me?"

The elves all turned. Dark elves, wood elves, even some high elves! Elves never got along easily – that they all cohabitated in a camp was even more impressive.

A high elf woman squealed and pushed through the assembled group. She strode up to Lilah, a bit of a sway to her hips. She was probably the least muscularly defined that Lilah had seen of the group. She looked quite soft by comparison. Her long blonde hair fell in front of her face

giving her an artificial feeling of sexiness. She looked down at Lilah before lifting her up with ease.

The half-elf squirmed. “Hey, you can’t just—mmf!” Lilah struggled for a second against the tight hug before resigning herself.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, I’m Cadeth. And you’re so adorable.” She put Lilah back down on her feet before crouching down to be eye level. “Wow, you are weird.” She reached out and grabbed Lilah’s ears.

“Hey!” Lilah shouted, though it didn’t deter Cadeth. “Those are sensitive!”

“They stick kinda... *out*. Weird.”

“Cadeth!” Birch swatted Cadeth’s hands away from Lilah. “Be nice! And behave!” she scolded. She turned sweet as sugar as soon as she looked back at Lilah. “Oh, Lilah, I’m so happy you came! We all wanted to talk to you about something really important.”

“Yeah, I heard! Some ceremony, right?”

Elder Acacia laughed. “None of you even looked. I swear, you’re taking it too easy.”

“We’re just excited!” an elf protested.

“Come here, Lilah,” Elder Acacia waved the half-elf over.

Lilah glanced around. She was used to feeling short among her clan and even humans, but this just felt ridiculous. Everyone towered over her! She craned her neck just to keep eye contact with Acacia as she approached. At least all the women were letting her by and *just* staring. She didn’t mind Birch, but if Cadeth was the sort of physical treatment she would get, she’d rather pass.

“So what is this ceremony?” Lilah asked.

“There is a special mushroom that grows within this forest. It’s rather rare, but it’s quite delicious. Very savory—but that’s not what’s important. What’s important is how the mushroom will affect you.”

“Yeah?” Lilah’s eyes darted from Elder Acacia to the elves around her. They were just so excited. None of them were going to do anything to harm her – she could at least do something silly like eat a mushroom for them.

“Half-elves who consume the sylvan mushroom enter a state that bends and twists their perception. With hand and mouth, we’ll heighten the raw sensation you feel with a focus on

sensuality. You might fully lose sense of yourself for a time, but we'll be here to pull you back. This is an experience only half-elves can have, and the two I've seen through the ceremony walked away with a fresh, new smile on their face, blessed with knowledge only half-elves can glean."

Lilah avoided eye-contact. It was hard to get used to these elves. The ones back home were mean to her more often than not. They treated her like a pet at best. It's one of the reasons why she decided to travel. But as she looked around, all she saw were eager faces. Not a single one was looking down on her. At least metaphorically.

"And you promise nothing bad will happen?" Lilah finally brought her gaze back to meeting Acacia's.

"I can't promise that." Acacia shook her head. "I can only promise we'll try our hardest to make sure nothing will."

Lilah looked up toward the sky. It was getting kind of late. "Okay! Let's give it a try, it sounds fun!" she chirped.

The elves let out a collective cheer. Birch stepped forward and patted Lilah on the head. "I knew you would want to do it! This is going to be such a good reward for saving my pride," she threw back her head and laughed.

No one joined in.

"We still need to talk about that, Birch," Acacia scolded.

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"Do I really have to be naked?" Lilah sat in front of the elder while trying her very best to keep herself modest. She had one arm wrapped around her chest, and she kept her legs as tightly together as they would go.

A few of the amazons whispered to themselves. The slight buzz of excitement made Lilah feel all the more exposed.

"You would be removing your clothes after a few moments anyways," Elder Acacia laughed. "Enoki found the mushroom, and she's brewing it into a tea for you. She will be here any moment. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

"Well... not really. You're sure this will work? I've eaten lots of different kinds of mushrooms, and nothing has ever really happened to me. Except this one time when I was little – I ate a mushroom and it made me really sick! This isn't going to be like that, right?"

The elder laughed. "Of course not! I promise, you won't get sick from this. You'll feel great after twelve or so hours."

"Twelve hours!? That's a long time! Are you sure I'll be okay? Surely sure for sure?"

The elder stepped forward and pulled the naked half-elf into a hug. Acacia was warm. And tall. Lilah felt nostalgic, but she didn't know for what. "I'll take care of you. *We'll* take care of you."

"I'm here with the tea, already steeped," Enoki walked out from a nearby home in the tree village. "You ready?"

Acacia held Lilah by the shoulders. "Are you?"

Lilah nodded. "Yeah. I'm ready," she said. She started to walk toward Enoki, but Acacia grabbed her by the shoulders. "Huh? I need to drink it, right?"

"Sit down," Acacia ordered. She tugged Lilah toward the ground and smiled when she assented. "This is a ceremony, girl. You need to stay right where you are, and we need to form a circle around you." She snapped her fingers, the elves quickly formed a circle. All but Enoki.

"Enoki, you may bring her the tea." Enoki walked through the circle and kneeled down to sit with Lilah. She presented the drink with both hands.

Lilah looked from the steaming tea to Enoki. She nodded and took the tea. She took three calm breaths before she sipped at the tea. "Oh!" she expected it to taste bad, but it was a nice, earthy taste not too far off from regular mushrooms. She drank the tea and held the cup for Enoki to take.

"How long does it take to start working?"

"It's pretty quick. You should start noticing soon," Enoki snarked before kneeling next to other elves.

Lilah frowned. Were they all just going to stare at her while waiting. She took a deep breath and closed her eyes. In. Out. In. Out.

The air felt crisp. So fresh. She was used to the smells of the forest, but it seemed... well, *more* at the moment.

Her heart thumped with joy. She felt good. Happy! Happier than usual. She tilted her head to look up into the darkening sky, now taking a wonderful orange tint as night slowly embraced the world. Lilah giggled. Her braid bounced behind her when she threw back her head and openly laughed.

The elves around her joined her, giggling and smiling, sharing the happy moment of Lilah slowly losing her sense to the psychedelic mushrooms.

Chieftess Acacia said something, Lilah knew it. She could feel her words gracing her ears with a beautifully melodic tone, but whatever she said, Lilah couldn't understand. She lowered her head and the sky blended into the trees – all around her. The browns and whites of different trees and even the shadows they cast danced and swirled. She couldn't tell up from down or left from right.

“Lilah,” Enoki said. Her voice lodged itself deep in Lilah's mind, bouncing around and scrambling what was there before. “I'm going to start now.”

Enoki's face was vibrant. Gray skin as smooth as could be, her face serene and caring yet her mouth curled in an ever so slight teasing grin. She was so beautiful Lilah felt like crying. How didn't she notice before?

“Start what?”

Enoki didn't answer. She pushed Lilah down onto some gathered blankets and lifted her leg. Lilah felt her warm hands slowly tracing upward, all the way to the ball of her foot. Lilah gasped at feeling a warm, soft cheek pressed against the sole of her foot followed by a slow kissing up her leg.

“Relax,” Birch called from behind. “Things are supposed to, like, get really strange.” She took one of Lilah's hands, rubbing the half-elf's fingers against her cheeks before kissing each and every fingertip.

More elves came over, cooing into her ears, telling her it would be okay. They took her limbs, nuzzled her feet, her hands, her thighs, even lavishing attention to her underarms with little licks and kisses. They worshiped along her sides and her breasts.

“Well Birch, since we found her, we should get the best part,” Enoki called over the throng of giggling elves.

“Oh, you're so right.” Birch relinquished Lilah's arm to another elf and moved to the side of Lilah's head. It took some repositioning, but eventually Birch and Enoki were in a position to torment the poor half-elf.

Lilah gasped in pleasure from the nibbling along her ears. “What's the good part?”

Neither replied. A sudden tension filled the air. All the gentle massaging and worshipping stopped. A hand grasped her ankle rather tightly. Another her wrist. She was held tightly between all the muscular elven women.

It was just the tiniest little nail scratching against the sole of her foot at first. Then another finger, another – soon she was giggling. The amazonian elves took that as their moment and all started tickling the poor half-elf!

Lilah squealed and shook, but there was nowhere to move. Her laughter rang out through the forest as tongues joined fingers, licking her toes, her underarms, her thighs, wriggling into her ears – Lilah burst out laughing, but was unable to stop it. Her squeals only encouraged the elves to push further, tickle more.

Fingers and tongues beset every part of Lilah! Careful, manicured fingers dug between her ribs, a tongue circled around her belly button before dipping in it. All the while, Lilah let out laughter that slowly grew hysterical! “Hyhahahahaah! Wait! Waaaait!” she cried.

The faster her heart thumped, the stranger her surroundings became. She tried to spy individual faces, but everyone was sort of melding together into some many-handed, many-faced elven abomination! The strange beast that Lilah now perceived spiked her heart rate higher.

The sky warped above her. The oranges and distant blues and purples melted.

What had they given her?

“Gyehehahahaha! Hheeehehehe!” Lilah tried to speak, but she couldn’t manage to get a word out. The worshipful abomination that assaulted her from all sides – even pinching at her nipples with its teeth – was becoming too much to bear!

With the sensations melding together between tickling and pleasure, Lilah could feel her brain starting to fray and lose grasp on reality.

The mushroom finally started to peak, and Lilah wasn’t prepared.

Through the laughter, with her heart pumping blood as fast as it could, through the beautiful forest around her, the sky above, all the elven women gathered around her almost as if they were a conjoined entity – it all starts to swirl and mix. Impossibly vibrant colors swirled in a vortex around her. She heard a lovely melody that felt as if it was being sung by the world itself.

And the warmth of all those fingers and tongues on her – she could feel each and every one in isolation and again in unison. She knew she was laughing – she could feel her jaw aching – but she felt disembodied, distanced from it all.

“She’s ready,” a voice rang out. Lilah’s ears twitched to the radiance of the voice’s melody. The tickling ceased, instead turning into gentle massaging and rubbing that felt as if it were melting Lilah’s stress away.

“Lilah,” intention reached Lilah’s mind and formed into words. Her name, easiest to connect her to the radiant being before her. “You can see me, can’t you Lilah?”

Lilah found herself in a meadow with a large tree at the center of it. Between Lilah and the tree sat a beautiful half-elven woman radiating a golden light. Her hair a beautiful green, a toned physique, and the cutest face. She looked familiar, but Lilah’s mushroom addled brain couldn’t figure out why.

“There’s a secret to tell you, Lilah. One only for half-elves. The gift of a long life but the nature to stay in the present. A secret you’ll forget as soon as I tell you, but will root itself deep in your soul. Something you should be told, again and again. And some day, you’ll find someone to do just that. But for now, let me tell you a truth you need to know.”

The half-elf crawled forward and pinned Lilah. The flowers of the meadow rose around them and bloomed. Lilah blinked a few times and looked up at her own face...?

The doppelganger leaned in and gently pressed her lips to Lilah’s. Not quite a kiss, but a warm gesture that made Lilah feel like she was melting. The doppelganger moved her head to the side and whispered into Lilah’s ears and whispered “There’s a home where you belong. Find it.”

Lilah’s eyes widened. Her heart raced. Did she just—Everything melted around her. The doppelganger on top of her vanished, the meadow melted right before her eyes. Everything started shaking.

Lilah gasped. Her eyes opened. In front of her was an assembly of elves and Acacia in front of them. The rays of the morning sun warmed Lilah’s face.

“Are you okay?” Acacia asked.

Lilah stood up. There was something important, something on the edge of her tongue that she needed to spit out. A secret, but one she couldn’t quite grasp. Why was it so hard to remember? “Yeah, I think I’m okay. A little wobbly and...” Lilah took a few awkward steps before tripping. Acacia ran forward and caught Lilah, sweeping her up into a bridal carry.

“You’ve been awake a long time. I think it’s best that you take it easy for today. We’ll attend to all your needs,” Acacia laughed. “So relax.”

“Okay,” Lilah yawned.

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“Bye!” Lilah waved. “You’re all great! Thank you for the experience! I’ll never forget it!”

The elves waved from their city, calling out for Lilah to “take care of herself” and to “stay safe and come visit.”

Lilah whistled as she walked through the forest. She didn't have a direction to go, but she was close to the edge of the forest. Maybe she'd go visit some of the nearby towns.

But as she made her way to the nearest human settlement, she felt a strange calling in a different direction. The longing was so strong that Lilah couldn't ignore it. She nodded and began walking, following a trail where she didn't know the destination.