

Title-Less

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When Solest finds herself in a strange new world where humans are kept as slaves, she must figure out a way home. Solest, with her friends, venture out to find the only person who can send her back home. If there is a being on Gyrna with such power...

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“Solest, is that you?” My mother called as I closed the door behind me.

“No.”

“Come in here please, we need to talk to you.”

I rolled my eyes at the wall and made my way to the kitchen. My mother, and my stepfather Ian were waiting for me. My father died when I was eight – I still missed him.

“What?”

“We got a call from your principal today.”

“And?”

“He wants us to in for a meeting tomorrow because of all your truanting. He said he was thinking about expulsion.”

“Good. It’s a hole anyway.”

“Solest! Do not say things like that!”

“Why? Its true.”

“Look missy, if your principal does decide to expel you, and I’m starting to see why right now, you will be going to an all-girls reform school.”

“What?!” this had gotten me. “You cant do that!” I looked at Ian desperately, trying to get him on my side.

“Sorry. Your mothers right.”

“Don’t worry sweetie. You’ll have fun there. They do all sorts of fun things, they just don’t allow mobile phones, or the Internet.”

“WHAT!” I took a step back. “Are you trying to kill me?”

“Don’t be silly. And, while you’re there, you’ll be staying with Aunt Cal.”

Aunt Cal was my fathers little sister. She also had a daughter my age – Taylor. She was the ‘popular’ girl – pretty, vindictive, mean – and she hated me. She could have been my twin. We had the same jet-black hair, and ice blue eyes. Taylor wore hers short though, and considered herself so much better than everyone else.

“Not Taylor. No. I’ll go without complaining, just don’t make me stay with her.”

“You’ll see her at school anyway.”

This is when I snapped. “I hate you!”

I turned and ran out of the house, leaving the door wide open. I ran behind the house, into the meadow. It was spring, so there were flowers everywhere. I threw myself down into the grass belly down, sobbing angrily. I lay there for what felt like hours, but could have only been minutes. Either way, I had completely lost track of time when the first set of hooves thundered past. I lifted my head slightly. There was a herd of wild horses. We didn’t have wild horsed in my part of Australia. I sat up, and looked around. Over under a clump of trees that hadn’t been there yesterday, was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen.

“Where am I?”

“Don’t you know?”

I shook my head, resisting the urge to say something else.

“Why, you’re in Gyrna.”

“Gyrna?”

“Yes.”

“That’s not possible. I live in Queensland. There’s no Gyrna in Queensland.”

“Queensland?”

“Its in Australia.”

“Australia?”

“This is real cute, but I need to get out of here. Just point me in the right direction, and I’m gone.”

“I don’t know where you’re talking about.”

“Well, you’re a great help aren’t you?”

The girl narrowed her eyes. Then roots broke free of the ground and snaked their way up and around my legs.

“Hey, what’re you doing?!”

“Don’t get snippy.”

“I’m sorry!”

The roots stopped moving up, but didn’t start receding.

“Thanks, I think. I’m Solest.”

The girl smiled. “I’m Sympathy.” She took a step closer, and peered at my face. “Are you…human?”

“Uh, yeah. What else would I be?”

“I’m sorry. It just that I haven’t seen one of you like this before.”

“Like what?”

“Free.”

“Wait, what?”

“In Gyrna, humans are slaves to the Anthro.”

“Anthro?”

“Oh, yes. They’re half animal, usually a predator. They don’t really like any race other than their own.”

“what other races are there?”

“Well there’s yourself, myself, the Anthro, and the elves.”

“I’m confused.”

“Of course you are. You’re only human, after all.” Sympathy smiled patiently. “I’m a Nymph. A Forest Nymph to be exact. The Nymphs and the Elf Clans have been friends since the beginning of Gyrna. Then there are the Anthro, whose pretty much harmless. But the most dangerous thing in Gyrna, for everyone, are the Spooks.”

“Spooks?”

“Yes.” Sympathy looked around then lowered her voice. “the Spooks are shifters. They can morph into anything they choose, sometimes a combination of many things. You always know when a Spook is around because everything around them looks dead. They also drink blood.” Sympathy shuddered.

“Wow. But where do I fit into all of this?”

“How should I know? How did you get here?”

“How should I know?”

Sympathy grinned. “I’ll take you to see my Elder – she might know what to do.”

“ok, cool. Does that mean you’ll let me go?”

the roots disappeared as fast as they had appeared.

“Hey, Sympathy?”

“Yes?”

“Can I ask how you got your name?”

“It’s a Nymph tradition. Babies are named for the first emotion their fathers feel after their life-mate has given birth.”

“Really? That’s kinda cool.”

“Sometimes. But it can get repetitive. There are an awful lot of Sympathy’s in my village. A lot of Joy’s

too." Sympathy covered her mouth and opened her eyes a little wider, like she had remembered something.

"What?"

"I remember this one baby being named Fury. Her father didn't want her."

"but why name her Fury? Why didn't he say he felt something else?"

"because as soon as he felt it, she was imprinted."

I shook my head.

"Well, how did you get your name?"

"My mum and my dad picked it."

"That's it?"

"Yeah."

This time Sympathy shook her head. "I don't get humans."

"Well I don't get all of this!" I gestured with my hands.

"this is the village." Sympathy said. We had walked through the woods, and had come to a circular clearing. There were huts around, and a fire right in the centre.

"The elder is this way." Sympathy led me to the hut closest to the fire. "Elder Passion?"

"Come in." In the hut was another female nymph with long silver hair, and a wrinkled face, smiling in welcome.

"ah, Sympathy. Who have you brought?"

I stepped out from behind Sympathy.

"A human!" Passions weathered features were now shocked. "Sympathy, don't you know better than to bring a stray human here? Surely she is someone's slave, and they are looking for her."

"Oh, but she's not, Elder Passion! She's free. Because she's not from here."

Passion turned her gaze on me. "Is that so?"

"Yes. I'm from Queensland, Australia."

"Well, you're in Gyrna now sweetie." Passion turned back to Sympathy. "While she's here at least, you'll need to put her in slave's clothing, to avoid suspicion. What were you planning to do with her?"

"Um," Both Nymphs turned to look at me. "I just wanna go home. Sympathy thought you might be able to help."

"Hmm." Passion surveyed me. "Come back at sundown."

"Thank you Elder Passion!" Sympathy gushed, before grabbing my arm and pulling me out of the hut.

"Now, lets find you some gear."

Sympathy dragged me to another hut. "My house." She said absently.

"Sympathy?"

Sympathy went pale. "My parents." She whispered. She went mutely into the next room. I followed.

"Sympathy, we- who's this?"

I grinned sheepishly. "Hi. I'm Solest."

"Mother, Father, Solest is going to be staying with us tonight."

"Is she... human?"

"Yes. And," Sympathy went on quickly. "Elder Passion has already seen her. We have to go back at sundown. Right now, I have to find Solest slave clothes."

Sympathy grabbed my arm and flew out of the room.

"Why does everyone say 'human' like it's a dirty word?"

"We don't see humans all that often." Sympathy had her head in her closet, her green ankle-length braid trailing on the floor. Her bodice was a pale green, and laced up in the front. Her skirt was two pieces of fabric that extended to the ground – one at the front, one at the back. She also wore a pair of green and white striped stockings.

“this should do.” Sympathy held up a bodice and skirt like hers, but in shades of brown. “Slaves always wear brown.”

I eyed the skirt. “Don’t I get stockings too?” I asked hopefully.

Sympathy looked shocked and I was afraid I’d offended her.

“I’m sorry.” I apologised quickly.

“Its ok. I just forget that you’re not from here. They’re not stockings. The skin on our lower body looks like that.”

“Oh. Why?”

“Because we’re Nymphs.” Sympathy said like it was obvious. “Now, quickly, in these.”

I stripped off, and donned the clothes that Sympathy held out to me.