



What Once Was Lost Shall Never Be Found

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*“To the forest, I go.
To the forest, I go, I go.
Sleep with the trees;
Sleep in the calm, gentle breeze.
Dance with the deer.
Dance along the seas.
Nothing to fear;
Nothing to fear.
To the forest, I go.
To the forest, I go, I go.”*

“To the forest, I go...”she continues to sing while cradling herself in her bed. While softly humming the same tune, she closes her eyes and falls to sleep.

“Ruvanna... Ruvanna... sweet, Ruvanna, where are you? Why aren’t you here? Come to me, Ruvanna. We need to be together. You saw what those elves had done to me. Come to mother,” she hears her mother’s voice calling her. However, her mother has been dead for a year and a fortnight.

“Mama? Mama, I am here. It’s your Ruvanna. Where have you gone? Why did you leave me, Mama? I remember that day when the elves took you away. When will we be together? I don’t want to die yet. Mama?!?” She begins to shed tears down her soft cheeks.

“I am not gone. I am merely away. Away... but not forever. Soon, you will be here with me. Do not forget me. You will see. The elves will call for you. The elves know you are here. Do not be afraid. You will see,” her mother’s voice slowly fades away.

She gasps and suddenly awakes, crying and squealing.

“Maaaaaaaaaaaaammmmmmmmmmmmaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa”

No answer. Still in shock, Ruvanna springs out of bed and flees outside to her stable to find her pony, Chestnut. Chestnut is her tawny brown pony with white patches and a diamond nose. Ruvanna received her as a gift from her father when she was very small, and they have been inseparable since then. Chestnut is six years old, and Ruvanna is twelve.

She reaches the stable post-haste and panting.

“Chestnut? Chestnut, you’re okay, right?”

The pony softly whinnies and nuzzles Ruvanna’s pale, tear-soaked face.

“Oh, Chestnut... Mama came to me in another dream. That’s the fourth time this week, and it’s only High Hump Day. I think she’s calling for me. She needs her baby. What should I do, Chestnut? I miss her. I miss her ever so much. I wish she did not die. Stupid, evil elves... They killed her. I hate being part of them. Why do they need me? Maybe we should try to find her. But isn’t she gone? Gone forever? She said she’s not but I saw her buried into the ground. Her spirit must live on, I--I guess. I do not understand. I cannot understand this. This is all too much for me. Do you understand, Chestnut?”

Chestnut looks confused and sighs.

“I should probably just try to go back to bed. Mama is starting to haunt me, and I do not know to handle that. I shall try to talk to father about this. I do not wish to bring him anymore burden though. You sleep well ‘nessnutt,’ okay? Night, night,” she slowly trudges back to her room and goes back to sleep.

The next morning, Ruvanna’s father, Morgan asks her at breakfast if she slept well. She gently nodded her head. She has not told him about any of the dreams she’s been having about her mother. Her father is a very strong man. Since Nadiael (wife, Ruvanna’s mother) left him for another world, he has been still as cheery as possible. You would rarely see Morgan without a smile on his face, but everyone knew that sometimes it was more sincere than others.

“You seem worried, dear,” Morgan said to Ruvanna while passing some fresh fruit towards her. “Is there something that I can help you with?”

“It’s mama. She’s coming to my in my dreams. Has she ever visited you? Am I missing something?”

“Well you see, Ruvanna, your mother was very powerful with dreams. She can influence the mind through a dream. All of the elves in her town had this power. Heh, that’s even how she got through to me. She sought me out, and I totally fell for her. She may want something from you or you, yourself. You will just have to wait and see,” her father calmly explained while shaking his cup of tea. He fears that something evil will come out of this. He knew of his wife’s power through dreams, but never thought that it would be affecting his daughter.

Ruvanna decided that the day will come when she will search to find the answers to her awkward dreams. She is not zealous enough and capable yet, though, she thinks about her

*You will be there where I go.
Day by day,
Night by night,
You will never be out of my sight.
Laugh by laugh,
Pain by pain,
You and I will never go astray.*

Even though her song was soothing, Chestnut was still aggravated by the load she has to now carry. Ruvanna sensed this because she knew what Chestnut was always thinking, and being able to speak to animals allows her to bond even closer to her.

“Oh Chestnut, I know it may seem like a lot, but what happens if we get stuck somewhere and cannot return home right away?”

The pony just snorted and bowed her head. She still felt that the pile was too much.

The sun was at about high noon, and Ruvanna finally finished loading the pony, and got onto Chestnut’s back. They set out northeast in the forest back to the spot when her mother was slain.

“Chestnut, do you remember the way to the evil place? The place where mama was destroyed? I sure do. I remember the whole thing as if it were yesterday. Perhaps we will find clues there?”

Chestnut began to gallop through the forest as if some instinct took over where she had to go. Yet, she suddenly remembered the heavy load that she was bearing on her back which caused her to stumble and slowed to a canter. The closer they arrived to the slaughter-site, the darker it seemed to get. The sky resembled the same dark gray as she recalled the day her mother was killed.

“This is not right. It is the middle of the day. Why are the skies turning gray like this? I am scared. This has never happened before, at least not anytime recently. It is familiar. There’s not lightning this time, so maybe it is coincidence. Chestnut, should we go back home? No... we must go on. The darkness must be a sign. A sign that what happened here was wrong. I must find out. I must...” She lit a lantern from her pony pack to assist her with the dark aura around her.

The sky was charcoal and navy when they reached the exact spot where Nadiael was burned. The clouds darkened and rolled over the area where she was, blocking out most of the

sunlight. The clearing was not that difficult to find because it looked as if nothing has grown there since the sacrificial death had happened. The land was dead and dry, and the trees swayed away from the direction of the ceremonial circle. The only thing that was left was a faint shimmer in the dirt reflecting from her tiny lantern. Ruvanna dismounted Chestnut and went over to the shimmer in the earth.

“What could this be?” she said all confounded and leaned down to the ground.

“Oh Chestnut, look at this!” she picked up a small ring that was covered in dirt and began to examine it closely. She then realized that it was her mother’s wedding ring, and she did so, tears started to roll down her cheek.

“Mama... I miss you. I wish you were here.”

She placed the ring on her finger on her right hand and stood up. She then, fell back to her knees and dug her fingers into the earth. As she was drawing circles with her fingers she began to incant a spell to transform into a hawk:

“Flicker, flying, fighting, higher, turns me into a bird with wings of fire. Feather, falling, freely, hiding, away in the skies, nothing binding.”

When she was done, all that was left was a beautiful rust colored hawk in mid-flight in the sky. There was just enough light that she could see ahead on top of the trees. Chestnut was reared onto her hind legs and snorted loudly due to fear, but then she realized that it was her master flying above her.

“I do not know, but possibly there is something important I can see up here better than looking through the trees.”

As she gazed with her piercing eyes, she saw a small town just ahead about a mile from where Chestnut and she were currently. She flew ahead for a lake’s length to get a more in-depth look at the town without being noticed. Ruvanna called back to Chestnut to advance and follow her. The pony started running after her, and stopped when she saw Ruvanna drift down from the sky and land right in front of her. Ruvanna changed back into her normal shape, and leaped on Chestnut’s back.

“Well Chestnut, we are here. This must be Killarnia. If we die, we die together. No turning back from here. The answer is at our fingertips, err...hooves too. Let’s go.”

Slowly, Ruvanna and Chestnut move towards the city. They saw a huge cast-iron fence that was about as tall as two stacked ponies and with rusty, sharp spikes at every tip. It looked

like the entrance of a cemetery, than an elven city. The town did not look inviting at all, and it showed on Ruvanna and Chestnut's face that they were afraid.

Before they even made it to the gate, a small, hooded figure, robed in a dusty gray cloak, came to meet them.

"You must be...Ruvanna," said the hooded thing in a raspy, dark voice. "Follow me. We have been waiting quite some time for you. We knew you were in the woods that day. You saw the skies. We allowed you to decide when the time shall come for your fate and the skies and the raven were your key. This way..."

The person, elf presumably, walked gradually back to the gate and re-opened it. Ruvanna, still on Chestnut, pursued the elf cautiously.

"Who are you? How do you know my name? Where are you taking me? What is my fate?" Ruvanna hastily asked questions while following through the gate. As she passed through, it slammed harshly behind her. As she was walking, she seemed to recall the appearance of this elf. Yes! It was the same exact elf that she saw so many years ago killing her mother! That hood, that dark hood that covered his face, and his hands that held the sword that cut her were the images running through Ruvanna's mind. The adrenaline pumped through her veins, but she still was rather hesitant as she advanced after the dark elf.

"No need to ask. You will see. Time will tell. You will see. Oh, my name is Kreienen. I am an elf of this town. That is not important. You will answer to Moriavena. She will explain. She will cease this vile will of yours. I am surprised your mother did not explain to you already. She wanted you here. She wanted you to be with her in the after-life. Moriavena and Nadiael wished for it. Keep following."

Ruvanna still looked concerned and pondered why her mother wanted her dead as she followed Kreienen through the town. Everything was dark. It was still the afternoon. The gray slated houses seemed to loom over her and Chestnut, even though there were small. No lights were on in the residencies. At the end of the path, there was a huge building made of a gorgeous blue-tinted stone. Ruvanna recognized it from stone that her father has worked with before. Kreienen was taking her straight to it. The mansion was built of a dark blue stone with slim windows. The design in the stone looked vaguely familiar to her father's work with the smooth etchings and sharp edges. Obviously, it must have been the home of the nobles of the town. As

they reached the mansion, Kreienen stopped at an altar outside the front of the building and began to speak in that dreadful, raspy voice again.

“You will stay here. I must guarantee if she is prepared for you. Wait and I shall return.” He walked into the mansion, and closed the heavy doors behind him.

Ruvanna shuddered at the words coming from the elf’s mouth, but did not make a move. She was scared, and she did not know what to do. At that moment, her heart began pounding, and she thought that she would make a run for it. This was her chance. These people were after her, but they would not bother her unless she came to them. They seemed like they wanted to end her life like her mother’s, but they were willing to let her live her own life if she chose to. Surely, they would have come after her sooner than this if they just wanted to kill her. She did not want to lose her life, like her mother lost hers, even if it seemed that it was her mother’s will behind all of this. Ruvanna’s time was not now. She suddenly turned Chestnut around and began racing back to the other side of town. When they reached the gate, it opened for them as if the city wanted her to leave. She did not stop riding until she was back to her cottage. Chestnut was about drained from the dashing in shock.

Chestnut’s keen instinct found its way back to her home. Panting, the pony was done for the day. Stunned, Ruvanna led Chestnut into her stable, and walked back to her room. She laid down in her bed and sang to herself:

*Tomorrow is another day,
They are coming; they are coming.
I mustn’t run away,
They are coming; they are coming.
What should I do? What should I say?
They are coming; they are coming.
Is my fate nearing as I pray?
They are coming; they are coming.
There should be no price to pay,
They are coming; they are coming.
I need to dream this all away,
They are coming; they are coming.*

As she wafted away to sleep, she began to dream. She was about ten years old again, and she was with her mother sitting under the weeping will tree. Her mother began to sing and play the mandolin, just like she would always do. The sky turned that dark gray yet again, as if it was the darkness outside Killarnia that she experienced earlier that day. When Ruvanna tilted her head up to see her mother, she was burning and torn apart. Pitch black filled the area, and Ruvanna could see nothing, but heard the dreadful screaming of her mother. Ruvanna woke up.

“I must go NOW!” she screamed as she raced to the stable for Chestnut. “That’s it! The walls, the buildings....the stone...all like my father’s work. That’s why they allowed me to leave. That has to be the reason. My father does not want to lose me now.”

She pulled herself onto Chestnut and they headed straight back to the forest, the very spot where Nadiael was killed once more and hopefully for the final time. It was naturally dark now for it was the middle of the night and when she looked up the only thing she could see were the faint whiteness from clouds and stars. The only light the earth possessed was the glimmer of the moon, and the trees soaked up most of the shine.

“Stop here, Chestnut. I need to think.”

She laid down onto the ground in the center of the circle and stared into the sky. She closed her eyes and raised her arms up as if almost in a trance. Unexpectedly, she heard voices calling to her.

“Ruvanna...stay away....Your death is here. Stay away. We are the stones of the enchanted rock. We watched over you as you came here. Your father needs you. He helped build this city. His life is not locked here, and nor is yours. Let her go. Beware the fate that lies beyond this gate,” the voices seemed to be coming from within Killarnia. It was as if the walls were warning her, and trying to keep her far from them.

While still in a meditating reverie, Ruvanna abruptly opened her piercing eyes, and they glowed with an azure aura. She gazed out into the woods and inhaled deeply. The smell was fresh, wooden, but new like after a recent rain when the air is clean. A new life was found.

“I am Ruvanna Norovir, daughter of Nadiael the elf and Morgan the human. I am the half-breed, the one who must be destroyed according to my mother’s wishes. I shall not pay my life to her, no, not now. I am needed in this land, this forest, but not in that place. Moriavena, I do not worship you. You do not own me. Remember that, for I am done here.”

She transcendently bellowed and began to stand slowly. It was now near dawn, and the sun was coming above the horizon with a misty fog settled between the trees. She gaped into the sunlight and got back onto her pony. She rode back home with the clear mind that she has never had before. She has completed her task, made her choice. She is not her mother.