

Epics of Isavoire

Chapter 3: Concert for a Crow

The Archives of Heofonia was one of the most expansive libraries there was, rivaling the Library of Babblersock, where history, legends, and recovered texts spanning many generations had been stored.

The archive, unlike the Library of Babblersock, was maintained by the Heofonian Scribes and was visited on a daily basis, by those who thirsted for knowledge or desired to learn from the past.

While many found awe and wonder in the Archives, which were both wide and tall, some were not so captivated by its beauty.

One such example was Helah, the Heofonite Scribe. Helah's mind was elsewhere as she walked, faintly hearing the clacking of her sandals against the floor and the swishing of her dress as she advanced. She followed behind her mentor, Elaius, as they ascended a flight of stairs.

"Helah, I need the records of the Flor Migrations and the Scroll of Gaea. Will you fetch them for me?"

"Yes, sir." The raven-haired woman began to look around. The white and gold covered structure was relatively big, and several other scribes were walking or flying in order to attain the needed texts. Eventually, Helah remembered where the records she needed were kept.

Spreading her wings and taking flight, she began to search the third floor, careful to fly over the guard rail and next to two other scribes. It took Helah a moment or two before she found the shelf that held the text she required.

Reaching for the scroll, she managed to grab it from the shelf before flying off to another wing entirely to locate the Tome of Gaea.

Eventually, she managed to land on the first floor of the building in an isolated corner. The book was relatively large and heavy, even by the standard of ancient tomes.

Picking it up with one hand, she wrinkled her nose. Even the clean nature of the Archives could not fully eliminate the eventuality of mustiness, and the old book was no exception.

“Don’t see why we can’t just write down a new copy of this...” Helah muttered, but as a scribe, she knew that if she brought it up, she would likely be the one given the task of transcribing every word onto a new, blank tome.

Holding both texts close, she flew back to her mentor, who was waiting at a work table with parchment and quills out.

“Good. Now that I have these, we can begin. I’ll need you to write down everything I tell you, and no daydreaming this time,” Elaius instructed sternly. “Is that understood?”

“Yes, sir,” Helah said halfheartedly. Already, she could tell the task would be a long and boring one.

Mechanically, she began to use the quill, copying down every bit of information her mentor dictated to her onto a piece of parchment. Helah recorded every bloom that happened a year and every supposed sighting of Gaea. While she was a foreign leader to the Flor, bordering upon idol, the Heofonites had found her

teachings relating to nature and its connection to elements and living things to be worth studying.

Helah absentmindedly began to write down something about roses and apples and the redness of blood that the book mentioned before she began to draw a flower upon the paper. Her mind had already begun to wander, and she desired the freedom to fly, away from her work, to fly unrestrained and with nothing to hold her back.

As she thought, a smile came to her lips, until Elaius coughed.

“Helah, are you paying attention?”

“Yeah. You mentioned that statement on the fragrance of flowers and the flavors of fruits, neither as precious as the flow of life. While we should enjoy the redness of apples and roses, we should take heed of the shedding of blood...right?”

“Something to that effect. I’ll ask you to pay closer attention, however, otherwise I’ll have to relieve you of your duties and seek a replacement.”

“Yes, sir,” Helah muttered. She began to resume writing seriously. For several hours, she focused on her work, before at last she had written everything that Elaius had needed.

It was later when Helah exited the archives, walking along the stone path built upon the Substant Clouds. Looking to the distance, she saw other Substant Clouds, structures of stone and marble crafted upon them, and the occasional figures of art that were formed from gold.

Everything upon the cloudy nation was bright and brilliant, warm and welcoming. Yet, Helah could not help but feel a heaviness in her own heart.

Trudging along, the black-winged Heofonite noticed a figure flying awkwardly towards her.

For a moment, she wondered what it was. It was far too small to be another Heofonite, but her curiosity caused her to fly towards it. Eventually, she reached the figure and saw that it was a crow.

“What are you doing all the way up here?” Helah asked the crow. She could see the creature’s wing was damaged and that it was having trouble flying. It was both strange that it had made it so far up and miraculous that it had not fallen out of the sky. Reaching with her hand outstretched, Helah tried to give the creature a chance to rest. “Come here, you won’t be hurt.”

The bird began to roost on Helah’s hand, its talons upon her palm. It cocked its head at her while she snickered.

“Don’t worry. I’ll give you a chance to rest someplace more safe. Hang on tight.” Flying on carefully, Helah returned to the Substant cloud and went to her home.

Helah’s house was one that was modestly made, though it possessed a kind of humble grace to it. The gray building had a few comforts within, but amongst them was Helah’s own harp.

Putting the crow down on a basket she had placed pillows in, Helah picked up her harp.

The shape of the instrument was odd, as unlike most harps, it had a handle connected at the top, making it resemble a guitar.

Picking it up, she began to strum upon the harp, sitting down comfortably and enjoying her music.

The crow looked at her while she played, seemingly transfixed by the tune she played.

Helah paid no mind to the crow's actions, though, as she was completely lost in the sounds of her instrument. Her eyes were closed, her mind focused, but she was aware of what she did. The gentle tones of the harp slowly became more intense, more rapid and passionate. Helah's fingers moved faster and her focus intensified.

Soon, the music went from gentle and slow to a louder, more fast paced tune. It continued for several minutes, until Helah opened her eyes.

"That should do it," she said calmly. She looked at the crow and it looked back at her. "I hope you enjoyed the music, my friend."

The crow cawed, though Helah had no idea what it was trying to communicate. Instead, she went to her cabinet to bring bread back for herself and her new guest.

Once Helah returned, she broke tiny pieces from the loaf in order to feed her new guest. She laughed when she saw how fast it began to feed. "Glad you're enjoying the food, at least. I forgot how fun it was to have a guest."

When the crow was fed, Helah began to eat, too. In the back of her mind, she worried about her work. She would have to return to being a scribe in order to continue to better the lives of others. However, a thought crossed her mind. In

trying to help others, doing something she felt unfulfilled with, was she truly helping herself?

Looking at her harp, and then her guest, she began to ponder her life...