

It's nearly night, the view of the setting sun is a thing of beauty in a world of anything but. Viola, Charry, Crimson, and Fauna have set up a makeshift camp with the supplies they have, the journey ahead of them is looking to be one of great length, and horrible survival odds, but they need to find the far-off kingdom of the elves in order to cure Crimson of a curse placed upon her, and they're determined to do so.

"I think this'll have to do at this point." Viola says as she looks at their camp, if it could even be called that.

Their last tent was violently assaulted by a group of assassins, and all they have left are its scraps, and a few blankets, which they've hung on some low hanging tree branches, so that they drape over each side, enough to touch the ground, making a very spacious "tent" of sorts. The dirt below would have to be their mattress, but at least they have some privacy, and should be able to keep some warmth in.

"I think it would be better if we just wrapped our blankets around us at this point." Fauna suggested, a look of uncertainty on her face.

"Crim could start a fire in the middle normally, but..." Charry's face gains a worried look, the other's faces do too.

Crimson's quite distanced from the rest, clutching her eyelid beneath her eyepatch in pain, an action she's been doing obsessively for quite a while. The rest seem hesitant to approach her, but Viola eventually bites the bullet and goes to check on her, as the other two go off to collect materials to make a fire manually.

Viola stands herself next to Crimson, she doesn't say anything, but she pulls her into a small, gentle side hug. The two stand like that for a while, Crimson doesn't seem to be reacting to Viola in any way in particular, and Viola simply stares off towards the horizon, the sun almost set now.

"It's getting worse..." Crimson quietly states.

"We can tell." Viola replies gently, but firmly.

"Thank you." Crimson says, looking up towards the taller girl.

"What for...?" Viola asks, meeting her gaze.

"Where do I even begin?" Crimson says with a dull, yet pure chuckle.

Just then, Crimson starts clutching her eye again, this time yelling out in pain, and falling to the ground. She wasn't lying, after getting shot in the eye with the corrupt magic used by the former king of Tillariya, the town she used to live near, she's been seeming less and less herself each day. No one was more worried about this than Viola.

"Crimson?!" Viola immediately ducks down to the dirt beneath them as she watches her friend fall, a look of relief on her face as Crimson recovers. "What should I do to help?"

"We need to keep moving. I can feel the energy trying to get to me... It's feeding off of my pain, trying to make me its vessel." Crimson explains, trembling as she tries to stand herself back up.

“You need rest even more than the rest of us do. It’s been a long day, and you’ll need energy for tomorrow.” Viola says calmly, in an attempt to ease the other’s nerves a bit. “Now, let’s get you to the camp so we can rest, alright?” Viola helps the witch up as she stands back up herself, ready to lead them to their shelter.

“You don’t understand it... I feel less and less like a human as the days go by... I’m worried I’m being killed from the inside, or corrupted, or changed, or something!” Crimson’s mind seems to be trying to come up with more possibilities, but nothing else comes to her. “We need to find the elves as soon as we possibly can, they’ll know how to fix this!” Crimson exclaims, before yelling out in pain once more, this time being held tightly by Viola in order to prevent her from falling.

Soon, Charry and Fauna return, Fauna carrying sticks and stones, and Charry holding a single small stone in his mouth.

“Sorry we took so long... Charry was insistent that he carry his pebble all the way back.” Fauna replies with a sheepish giggle as the cat drops his small, flat stone for what must have been the 40<sup>th</sup> time.

“I was just trying to be helpful, besides, your hands are full.” Charry takes note of the other two, and then specifically Crimson. “Is she okay?”

Viola looks down at Crimson, then back at Charry and Fauna. “We need to go. Now.” Viola firmly states.

The others nod, placing down what they had gathered and Viola lifts Crimson into her arms... The quartet were running out of time and it was clear now that they needed to make the most of however much of it they have left.