2. Letting Our Loneliness Out Into The Atmosphere...

A week had passed since Eriwen’s awakening. Food was scarce; most of the land surrounding the old hive had been destroyed. Almost nothing survived whatever had eradicated her home, save small animals that she had to completely drain to even remotely slake her hunger. No ponies wandered the ruined village outside of the jungle mountains she’d once called home. There, too, were skeletons, which contained no lingering energy she could consume. Eriwen needed a plan, she needed to survive. For her mother, if nothing else.

Eriwen had wandered another few days until she found a patch of untouched forest a ways North of her old haunts. Therein were non-sapient creatures such as deer and rabbits a great deal stronger than the withered beasts back home. Eriwen took only what she needed, as she was trained. While most other hives were bottomless pits of hunger, Eriwen’s mother had always taught her to respect those Changelings needed to feed upon to survive.

“Everything is a cycle, Eriwen. When one part of the great machine of life loses its balance, the entire ecosystem will be destroyed in time. We must respect the beings we feed upon, as the ponies must allow their fields of grass to grow again or the squirrels must allow their trees to grow new nuts.”

Needless to say, it was an unusual lesson for a Queen. Most of the other Princesses Eriwen would meet at the Queens’ Summit would tell tales of how they’d killed ponies by taking too much, or hunted lone ponies in the woods to take them prisoner. She was not like them, and would instead keep silent of her sylvan lifestyle as her mother always asked. Eriwen looked back on those lessons fondly, but supposed her mother simply wanted to retain some semblance of dignity in front of their peers... A Queen was always going to be a Queen, no matter their values.

After Eriwen had what she needed to survive, she moved on from the wooded land with some hesitation and wonder. How was it that such a beautiful place had been protected from the blast that had seemingly destroyed everything?

Eriwen needed a plan... She couldn’t survive off of woodland critters and hope forever. A plan, a plan...

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