

12. The Couple In The Forest

The man and woman looked ahead. The path extended way beyond them, closeted by trees, flowers and bushes, almost emphasising only the one way they could go. They should not walk back, not yet. There had been some innocuous chatter between him and her until the break in the foliage and the invasion of the light. A *natural* break he would say, to her wan smile in return. Time had stretched long already following their decision to explore further, and though both had slept very deeply, unusually so, they were not as refreshed. Like babies new to the world and recovering from their birth shock.

He had not ventured as deeply before, and would have likely not if it were not for her encouragement, almost entreating, which he responded to unconsciously. Something he may well have to get accustomed to. Yet, he sensed she may be regretting how far they had actually travelled. She had a slight tendency to mischief, he thought, this one, and it was again a facet of her he would get used to. He had no real choice. She was looking at him, curious, 'what are you thinking?', written all over her face, no need to ask it. 'I was debating as to whether we continue or return, it's getting late, the light has changed before the dark, and I don't know about you, but I'm thirsty and getting a little hungry.'

'Ah, your stomach,' and she gave a little mischievous laugh, 'that seems very important to you, I get the impression.' And then she danced around him, flapping her arms slowly and twisting balletically, looking like a wood nymph, in and out, closer and then further away. 'Well, is it water and sustenance, or more exploring, then?', as she continued her dance, slightly sensual, slightly mocking him. He followed with his eyes, twisting his neck slightly as she danced towards and away from him. 'Okay, let's push on a little bit, then we'll find our way back', he responded flatly, again feeling like he didn't really have a choice. *Wonder what trouble she's going to get us into some day*, he thought to himself.

She squealed with delight, grabbing him in an embrace, and startling him so that he stepped back. He smiled slightly, holding her for a moment, feeling her warmth upon him. Then he started walking on, avoiding anything further developing, feeling an array of sensations that felt quite fresh and intriguing. He rustled bushes, pink and purple flowers, with his hand as he walked, a kaleidoscope of emergent colours that neither of them could name, but beautiful nonetheless. She followed, lightly holding his left hand, closer to him than when they got to the junction, and maybe more than just physically. She also was feeling emotions and a yearning for the first time, quite nice and invigorating, but also interfering with her thoughts, her inner voice amplifying the signals from her body.

As they continued, she leant further into him, stroking his forearm, a sensation that he liked, leaning into her, too. The vegetation looked to be getting thicker, the pathway narrower, further accentuating their physical proximity to each other. The light was dimmed by the forest, but also the warm, yellow orb in the sky above was much closer to the ground, heading for its sleep again. This seemed to be a regular cycle here, wherever and whatever 'here' was. Intuitively, they both picked up on a need to return back to their origin from when the yellow orb had risen from its sleep in the sky, moving away from the horizon.

They picked up the pace a little, though both had nothing to fear here, it was all quite idyllic, but fatigue was setting in, as well as the end of light period hunger for vegetation, fruit or nuts. They were practically cuddling and walking now, her long hair covering her own and his shoulder, her head resting on his. There was a mutual sensation of being contented, of being in tune with their surroundings, and of nothing to concern them. 'Won't be long, I'm sure, then we can eat and rest', he uttered softly. She heard his words, thought that perhaps they may do other things as well, but couldn't quite describe them in her mind. 'I am hungry, I could eat a luscious apple, from that tree nearby', she ventured, followed by, 'what do I call you, you have a name? *I'm Eve*', though she was not sure where that came from. 'I'm *Adam*, and you, *Eve*, must not take the fruit that *Our Father* has forbidden', admonishing her, feeling a twinge again between his ribs.



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