Torn Diary Page #2 (20/2/1567)

20/2/1567 6ae

I’ve never been this seriously happy to find a piece of charcoal. Now I can finally write in my diary again! Did you miss me? I’m sorry I neglected you for the past few moons!

But of course, it’s not like I'm scott-free anyhow. The only way I can write to you is at my bedroll in the dead of the night with a small candle. Spirits forbid if I get caught by one of the other guys…or worse. The teasing still hasn’t stopped. As a matter of fact, it’s gotten worse ever since they found out that I'm 2 years older than the other recruits. There’s even more reason to look down upon me now…knowing that I can't even compete with the younger kids. It’s not like I'm not trying or improving though! I’ve stopped crying! Because I know soon I’ll be able to go back home. It’s almost been an entire year since the men came to my village. Ma said their leader is my father, even though he seems so harsh and distant. It’s the duty of every man in the village to leave once we’re of age, and to protect our aether-dense woods from invaders and any other threats. It’s supposedly our way of giving back to nature as she supplies us with her bounty. So every 2 years or so, they revisit the village to resupply, visit their lovers or make new ones, and pick up any children that have reached the right age. I…uhh…managed to skip the year where I was supposed to leave, because I technically was not of age until my weird-ass birthday (which came in the summer after recruitment). But it was kind of pointless, because here I am. Recruited with the boys almost 2 years younger than me and learning things that I should have learned a long time ago. One more year, one more year of suffering and hard work and teasing, and then I can go back home. And see Ma and give her the biggest hug. And maybe…just maybe…ask Camie for…well… It’s getting late. If i don't get enough shut-eye i’ll be fucking up training all day tomorrow. Not like it matters, I know I'll screw it all up anyways.

22/2/1567 6ae

My..uhh…dad…called me to his tent today.

I hadn’t actually interacted with him in a long time. I've tried to avoid all types of conflict with our elders, since I didn't want to be called out for being mediocre. But at some point today, during our spear training, he leaned in and whispered his invitation to me.

I remember shuffling my way in nervously, looking around the room. All I said to him was, “What’s up Pa? Ya need something from me?” He looked at me and squinted. Folded his arms and tilted his head back, looking down at me. “I need to make one thing clear.” He said. “It matters not what your goals are here, how much effort you decide to put into your training, so on and so on. Only the strong will survive. And you are far from it, that much is plainly obvious. However, I didn’t summon you here to state what we all know is true.” He turned his gaze away, toward the tent wall, and it was here where I felt my heart sink. “You’ve referred to me as ‘Father’, ‘Pa’, and other such names. During training, during hunts, during scouts. I believe I’ve made myself clear to you during your recruitment a year ago. I will not, and cannot, treat my men any different from each other. I cannot afford to play favorites, we are all equal in status and all share the same burden.” He turned his head halfway and glared at me with the corner of his eye. “Despite what your mother has told you, I am not your father. Refrain from calling me such names in the presence of others. Focus instead on your training, then maybe someday someone will be proud enough to make you their son.” Then he made a shoo-ing motion, signaling me to leave. I didn’t say anything, I just left with my eyes glued to the floor. I mean…I get why he would say that. Out here, we can't afford to be all buddy buddy, right? Family is just gonna slow us down. A-and I'd understand, I too would be ashamed if my son was a loser like me. It’ll also affect the morale of the entire team too, I can’t force my father to play favorites. So that’s fine. From now on, I won't refer to my father as such. It’ll be tough to hold back, but that’s okay. As long as I have my diary, I have someone I can always talk to.

26/2/1567 6ae

Archery! The worst! I just. Don’t. Get. It.

I managed to improve hitting stationary targets, but when they start moving I just keep seeing double. Whether it's the wooden targets or live targets, I feel like I'm seeing where it goes before it goes there. And they tell me to predict where the target will move and aim at the future spot, but it almost feels like…i'm predicting maybe a bit too far? I’m so confused. And frustrated! I actually tried so hard today and all I got were laughs from the other boys. Screw them all!

And the worst guy….I can’t even remember his stupid sounding name. He knows Camie. And he brags and brags about how she’s the trophy of our village. And he says he’s going to ask her…to….to… *Below the paragraph is a heavily scratched line of charcoal*

I won’t let him touch her.

2/3/1567 6ae

I found something interesting out in the woods. A camp of some sort. I saw what I thought were...humans? They look kinda like us, but with no ears. And a ton of them were wearing suits of metal, reflecting the light of the sun. I haven't told anyone about it yet. Maybe I can use this as an opportunity to elevate my status. Is that wrong? I’m thinking about taking out their leader. If it

came to it, I'm pretty confident with my physical strength. All I'd need to do is get a clear shot first...and then rush in for the kill! And then I'll call

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