

# **The Escape**

By C. Jade Wyton

*The diary of a feline woman fleeing her abusive husband.*

***Mentions of mature content and domestic abuse.***

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## **Horial 9<sup>th</sup>**

First page in a new diary. I'm glad to finally have one again. After Nygua found my old one I wasn't sure I was ever going to have another. But he dragged me to the markets today and I managed to swipe one when nobody was looking.

I know stealing's wrong. Obviously. But I need to get this out before I go crazy. I can't bear not having an outlet. It's been eating at me since Nygua burnt my last diary. I can't stand knowing I'll leave nothing behind.

I need to leave SOMETHING. Even if it's just a badly bound notebook filled with my crappy thoughts.

My name's Glyo Coszki. I'm a feline from Froanta who's now regretting her decision to ever move to Sapious. My name used to be Glyo Lanskayp. I'm going to change it back if I ever get up the courage to leave my husband. Or maybe not. He might be able to find me again if I do. I guess it depends. Maybe I'll change it to something else entirely. Either way, I'd not keep it as Coszki.

If I ever turn up dead it's because of my husband. Nygua Coszki. He's foxen. Dark skin. Black hair. About 4'5". Don't let his height fool you though, he's stronger than he looks. I should know. Though it doesn't help that I've never worked out a day in my life.

He was nice at first. Or I think he was. He's been so terrible lately I'm having trouble remembering what made me like him in the first place.

Anyway. I managed to steal some biscuits from the shopping after we got home. I put them in the usual spot under the house. Nygua was looking for them earlier and I think he thinks he left them at the store. I think. I should be okay as long as he

doesn't catch me with them.

## **Horial 10<sup>th</sup>**

Nygua's locked me out of the house because I got home late. Before I could get my jacket of course. I had to beg him for a blanket. Which he didn't give.

He knows I can't stand the cold.

Laugh it up, asshole.

## **Horial 13<sup>th</sup>**

I nearly had a heart attack this morning. I came downstairs and Nygua was reading from a notebook that looked EXACTLY like this one. I thought he'd found it. But it was just bound the same.

It was some old recipes he'd gotten from his friend yesterday, so that's why I'd never seen it around the house before.

Scara, if he'd managed to get ahold of this? With what I said about him on the 12<sup>th</sup>? I'd be blind for a month. Or dead. I think he might actually fucking kill me if he read that page. I've torn it out and made sure it burnt in the fireplace. I lost the 11<sup>th</sup> because it was on the back of the same page but that's fine. It's fine. It's okay. It's not like it was important.

## **Horial 14<sup>th</sup>**

Last night was shit.

Nygua got angry at me because I didn't want to have sex. Accused me of "withholding" it from him.

Maybe I wouldn't "withhold" things from you if you didn't beat the shit out of me and acted like a decent fucking Sentient.

Either way, he won. It was easier to just give in.

He's left for a friend's place so at least I get the house to myself again today. I think I'm going to use this time to "lose" something of his. Or maybe I'll pour some vinegar on his garden and suffocate his plants. Or put soulstone in his pillow.

Anything will do at this point.

## **Horial 15<sup>th</sup>**

Okay. I'm actually doing this. I CANNOT back out now.

But Scara where to start?

I stole Nygua's coin purse. Completely emptied it. Took as much food as I could cram into a bag and bolted before he got home from work.

I'm taking a boat to Canis La'Can in the morning. The tickets were expensive but a human woman helped pay the difference. I sketched a quick drawing of her son to return the favour. She seemed to like it a lot and said I was a good artist. It's been a long time since I've heard that said to me.

I'm really worried Nygua will notice what I've done before tomorrow. I'm praying

to the Mighty Five he just thinks I've gone to get drunk again.

He'll definitely come looking for me tomorrow after work. But the boat leaves in the morning so he'll have to skip his shift to catch me.

I was going to camp out in the streets but one of the waitresses from Weni's café found me in the alley while taking out garbage at the end of her shift. She recognised me and offered to let me stay the night at hers.

Mani. She told me that's her name. I can't tell if she's alk or avio or what. She said she's half-human but otherwise I have no idea and I don't want to be rude by asking. Not when she's being so good to me.

It's not ideal, but a blanket and a couch is better than a mouldy shirt behind a dumpster.

That's 2 nice people since leaving Nygua. It makes me think of what my brother used to say.

"For every scumbag you meet you'll find at least 10 decent folks."

I wonder how I'll meet the other 8.

## **Horial 16<sup>th</sup>**

I was SO lucky that I managed to get on the boat today.

One of the shopkeepers said Nygua was in the markets, asking around about me. That he was absolutely furious and I was lucky I'd not been a few minutes earlier.

I asked what they'd said about me, and he said that Mani had dragged him away to the church. I owe her so much. My whole life.

Nobody else said anything. I guess there's only so many times you can walk around with bruises and not have people notice.

I got on the boat without anything happening.

It's nice. I mean, it's garbage. It was a 100 gold ticket, so what else could I expect? At least food was included so I don't have to worry about eating for the rest of the trip. It's just two weeks. 8 days. Then I'll be in Canis La'Can's royal city. Ryala.

I'm a bit nervous though. Not about getting there. Once I get there I'll be fine. Even if I don't get a place right away.

It'll just be like I've been locked out of the house again, right?

But there are suitcases on the other 5 beds here. I don't know who they are and they haven't come in all day. I didn't see them at lunch either. And I just missed them after dinner, because all their stuff's been moved. It's really freaking me out. I wish I knew who they were.

I don't know if I should leave and talk to some other people or stay in bed and try and sleep. I'm not sure I'll be able to until I know who my roommates are. But I guess I'll just have to try.

## **Horial 17<sup>th</sup>**

Woke up in the middle of the night with a kid cuddled into me. It was a shock but at least I know who my roommates are. It's a small avio family. 4 mothers and their son.

I want to write their names down so I don't forget them when the trip is over. I know it's silly but it might help me remember them and how good they've made me

feel today.

Big'Smile, Luck'Love, Happy'Dance, Flower'Song, and their son Sweet'One.

They were nice. Though I think they noticed that I was on edge.

Big'Smile saw I didn't have any clean clothes and gave me some of hers. They really don't insulate well but they're comfortable and clean. And the netting's really familiar. I think it's the same type of thread that's used in some felinic clothes.

After so long in Sapious I'm actually starting to feel like I'm a felinic again. It's strange.

But anyway. That's 7 nice people I've met now. Though I don't know if avio count? I mean, they're AVIO. Being nice is their whole thing.

But really what are the chances of this happening to me? I think The Goddess is really trying to make up for all those years I lost to Nygua.

Just 3 more people to go. Then my brother will be right.

## **Horial 18<sup>th</sup>**

I can't handle this.

An ocean port has been damaged and our captain had to stop to help and our entire ship has been delayed.

We're stuck in the middle of the ocean. Our boat's being used as an emergency float for the land-dwellers and freshwater Sentients who can't stay in the half-sunk port.

We might have to turn around and go back to Sapious. They said they'd refund us for the trip but that doesn't help if I have to go back to Nygua.

I can barely breathe.

Luck'Love has been dotting over me all day. I mean. All the avio have. But Luck'Love didn't leave my side until I asked for privacy to write in my diary. I was almost surprised when she left me. I guess I'm used to Nygua.

I don't feel like I'm going to be able to sleep tonight. I'm not alone though. At least I'm not alone.

## **Horial 19<sup>th</sup>**

I don't know what to do.

I've been too scared to talk about it or write it down. But I can't just ignore it now.

I was hoping I was wrong. That maybe I'd just been out in the cold too long or eaten something a little too old. But Big'Smile asked about it and now I can't not think about it.

I'm scared to write it here. It makes it feel too real. I don't think I'm brave enough to do it tonight.

Not when I might end up back with Nygua again.

Flower'Song said I'm welcome to stay with her and her wives. But I don't know.

She told me about avio relationships. They're not that different from felinic ones. Usually one spouse, but an open relationship with other casual partners. Though, Flower'Song and her wives are all polyamorous together. Apparently it's not the norm for avio. I would have thought it was if she hadn't said so.

Honestly it's very familiar. Their relationships are almost the same as felinics. The biggest difference I saw was the words they used.

Like "kissed one." That's what they call their partner. At least in the International translation. "Kissed one."

It's such a nice phrase. It makes me think of back home, where we called each other "life partner," not wife or husband or spouse.

Life partner. Kissed one.

I still want another life partner. A good partner. My heart hurts when I think I might never have another one. And the hair stands up on my tail when I think that I might end up with another Nygua.

The thought of it makes me ache right down to my bones.

## **Horial 20<sup>th</sup>**

I think I'm brave enough to say it now. But I'm not sure. I guess we'll see if I can bring myself to write it down by the end of today.

I'm not sure I've done the right thing running away.

I mean. I know it was the right thing to get away from Nygua. But I didn't plan. I just ran away. I left everything behind instead of fighting for myself. I feel like a coward for just running off.

Luck'Love says I'm brave. But I don't feel it. I feel pathetic and useless. Not even able to stand up to a man who barely reaches past my chest. Happy'Dance said it's not my fault. It was nice hearing it but I don't know if I believe it. I feel like it was just my hormones running wild on me. With me being pregnant.

Oh Goddess Scara. Writing it makes it feel fully real.

I wish it weren't real.

I've always wanted kids. But not like this. I wanted it to be with someone I loved. Someone who loved me back. I wanted to look forward to raising a baby. Not have anxiety and fear and chest pain.

Maybe I should take the girls up on their offer. They'd help me look after it. They'd know how after having Sweet'One.

## **Horial 21<sup>st</sup>**

I'm finally on the move again. Though not how I expected.

A luxury cruise ship passed by on its way to Canis and offered to take everyone to shore. It's a boat from the Gallamor. I'm surprised they're allowed to just pick us up without needing passports or identification or something.

It must be to do with the International Alliance.

Thank The Goddess for the Alliance.

It's really nice here. It feels like I've gone from a cargo-bay stowaway to first class royalty. Though we're not going full speed or directly to Canis I feel really good about the pace. It's better than nothing. Or backwards.

The boat's a little cramped because it was already fully booked and we've had to share rooms with some of the other passengers.

I got put into a room with another felinic. Well. A felinic/wolven mix. He's huge

and a little scary. But he's given me space and hasn't tried to talk to me more than to give me his name. Jurial Buischi.

I'm not going to complain that we're moving again. But I do wish I was still sharing a room with the avio family.

## **Horial 22<sup>nd</sup>**

I spent most of the day playing Seek the Runner with Sweet'One and his family. A few of the other passengers joined in, but I don't think many wanted to play a voice-based game with avio. Not when they can do that whole speaker thing.

They were great about it though. Flower'Song was probably the worst one; she mimicked EVERYONE'S voices and lead Big'Smile straight into a wall!

I didn't even know avio were able to do that sort of thing. I thought they couldn't, with the whole "unable to be evil" thing. Though I guess practical jokes aren't evil. Especially when they're with someone you love.

Sweet'One's been copying my voice ever since. It's only sort of funny to hear myself call out from down the hall. Mostly creepy. Especially since he sounds different to what I hear of myself. Everyone says he got it exactly though. I guess it's just like memoryshare recordings.

I can hear Jurial in our bathroom. He's taking a bath and humming. I know the tune but can't remember the words. It's something from that old children's band that was popular back home when I was a kid. The Short-Tail Sabres or something like that.

I'm not sure if I should ask about it or not. I'm a little nervous. I'll try and pluck up the courage, but I don't have high hopes for myself.

## **Horial 23<sup>rd</sup>**

I took some scrap paper from the bin and drew on it. It was just a few sheets that Jurial had written some notes on and then crumpled up and thrown away.

My art looks so fucking awful now. I feel like I'm going to cry. I can't draw anything that I'm not looking at. And even then it looks wonky and off and not as good as I know I can do.

And my heart is racing too. I stuffed the drawings into the bottom of the bin and I'm hoping Jurial doesn't notice. I should have thought about how he might react before I did it.

I'm so fucking scared.

## **Horial 24<sup>th</sup>**

Jurial saw my drawings. They were unfolded on the desk when I came in.

I pretended to be asleep when he came back into the room. Now he's asleep. I think. Unless he's just pretending too.

I feel like I'm going to throw up.

## **Horial 25<sup>th</sup>**

Words cannot express the relief I felt today when Jurial had gotten up and left before me.

My drawings were gone from the desk and not in the bin. I wasn't sure where he'd put them until Happy'Dance gave them back to me.

She said that Jurial had talked to her family about me. That he was worried because I seemed so highly strung.

Apparently they didn't realise I wasn't telling people about the pregnancy. I should have said that to them. It's not their fault but I wish they hadn't said anything. Especially not about Nygua. I was too scared to ask how much they told him.

I'm going to pretend to be sleep again tonight if Jurial comes in. I know it seems bad but I just don't want to deal with things right now.

And I put my art back in the garbage where it belongs.

## **Horial 26<sup>th</sup>**

I couldn't avoid Jurial today. He was working when I got up and didn't leave his desk. No matter how long I pretended to be asleep.

It must have been hours, because it was dark when I woke up and light by the time I tried to sneak out of bed.

Jurial heard me get up though. He gave me my art back and said I shouldn't throw it out. I didn't argue and stuffed it in my bag.

Then when I came in tonight he was reading. I saw his ear twitch but he hasn't said anything the entire time I've been back. He keeps looking at me though. From the corner of his eye. And he hasn't turned his book's page in at least 20 minutes.

I'm wondering if I should say something. But I think I'm just going to go to sleep.

## **Horial 27<sup>th</sup>**

So Jurial decided to talk to me today.

He was reading when I came back from dinner. But he put the book down when I came in.

He's a very gentle man. Calm. Soft. His voice sounded like if a pillow could talk. And he didn't bring up my pregnancy or Nygua or anything else. He talked about his daughter, mostly. Her name's Penel.

He said she's 23. Just a year older than I am. She's an artist too. He showed me a few of her drawings that he keeps with him.

They were amazing.

Apparently she got commissioned to paint a portrait of Queen Distro. By the queen herself!

I'd believe it, too. Her art's that good.

He said she lives in a town called Balannsuire. Apparently it's got a beautiful landscape and a perfect view of the setting sun. Which makes it pretty obvious why she moved there.

Jurial said he can see I used to be really good with art. That I should pick it up again. I think I might if things go well.

I guess Jurial is the 8<sup>th</sup> nice person I've met. Two more to go.

## **Horial 28<sup>th</sup>**

Felt too sick to go outside much today. I think it's the pregnancy crushing my gut to make room.

I thought I was going to be alone all day but Sweet'One lived up to his name and brought his books in and read them to me to try and make me feel better.

He left when Jurial came back in. Warned him that he better look after me because I was "feeling like a thirsty flower," which was an adorable way to put it. I don't think I'm ever going to forget that phrase.

Jurial and I spent the rest of the night talking. I told him I was just seasick and not to worry about it. He obviously knew it was a lie. I know he knows that I'm pregnant. But he seemed to understand and didn't say anything.

Instead he told me more about his daughter.

She's a painter. Mostly oils but also a bit of watercolour and some charcoal sketching of fantasy scenes. Jurial said she gets commissioned to paint a lot of werewolf art. Apparently not all of it is "appropriate for public display."

He very obviously meant that it was pornographic.

Penel sounds like a fun person.

## **Horial 29<sup>th</sup>**

We're almost at Canis. We dock tomorrow afternoon. Everything feels way too real now. The weight of what I'm doing is squeezing me like a vice and I'm not sure I can handle it.

I don't want to say goodbye to everyone. I've only just met them but they're the best friends I've had in years. I wish we got delayed again. Forever. So I don't have to leave everyone.

I asked Jurial what he's going to do once we've docked.

He said he's going to go see his daughter. That she's recently broken up with her girlfriend and he needs to make sure she's alright. He didn't say much about the breakup. Just that they separated because they "didn't want the same future."

He told me Penel's seemed happier since leaving her partner, but he wants to make sure she's not just putting on a brave face. It hit really close to home hearing him say it like that. I'm not sure if he did that deliberately but it's given me something to think about.

I asked him why he didn't get a faster boat to Canis if he was so worried. Why he went with a round-about trip? And he told me it was so he could justify it to Penel if she argued. He could claim he was just enjoying a holiday and decided to drop by and visit.

Cheeky of him. Sweet. But cheeky.

Makes me miss my parents.

## **Horial 30<sup>th</sup>**



I broke down when we docked. I didn't mean to, but I really didn't want to leave the ship and lose everybody I've met here.

Jurial and the avio family were so good about it though. They didn't shout at me to stop crying or anything else that Nygua would have done. They just sat with me and let me cry until I felt better. Then we talked and decided what I'm going to do now.

Sweet'One's family are staying at a hotel tonight, and they're letting me and Jurial stay with them. It's a really nice place. Feels a little cheap after the boat, but the staff are nice and the beds are clean. The blankets are silk, too. Jurial said that's normal for wolveren bedding.

I've never wanted to steal something more. Not even when I was a teenager and going through my rebellious phase. But I don't want to upset anyone. I DO wonder if I could get away with it though, because tomorrow Jurial and I are going to take a train to Balannsuire to meet Penel.

He said she'd love to meet me. And that she'd help me get back into the art world.

I really hope so. I didn't even think about how I was going to make a living. I just wanted to get away from Nygua.

Maybe if I make some money I can pay everyone back for everything they've done for me.

## **Horial 31<sup>st</sup>**

I panicked today when I saw the dragon that was going to pull the train. It was SO BIG. It was terrifying. Jurial was confused until I told him I'd never seen a train before. Then he just laughed and told me train-pullers are all herbivores.

Apparently dragons like this are SUPER common in the Gallamor and nothing to be worried about. It made me almost embarrassed to be from Froanta.

But Jurial said it was fine. Apparently I'm not the only one who's been freaked out by giant fire-breathing animals I've never seen before.

The train is pretty fancy. The seats are all silk and velvet and made so you can sleep on them. It's apparently really fast, too. It's turning a three-day cart-ride into an overnight trip.

I feel like I could have just gotten a train back in Sapious instead of a boat. But I'm so glad I didn't.

Big'Smile gave me the address her family's moving to. Said I can write and visit as much as I want. I'm definitely going to keep in touch.

We've got another roommate on the train as well. He's a dassen. Skin as blue as the sky. Said he's on his way to see his parents in the stop after ours. He taught me how to play Troubling Travels. Though I think he deliberately let me win the last time.

He brought me ice cream from the food trolley while Jurial was asleep and we spent a long part of the night talking about different plants and flowers. It was cool to talk to someone who grew up in a jungle town like I did.

His name is Talimina. And he's the 9<sup>th</sup> nice person.

Just 1 more to go.

## **Horial 32<sup>nd</sup>**

Made it to Balannsuire safely. Had to say goodbye to Talimina. He was pretty cryptic about maybe seeing me again someday. He said he had prophet blood in him from his family living back in Heck'ne years and years ago. Then he made ghost noises and sauntered away like a drunk.

Dassens are weird.

But still. We made it to Penel's house. She's not home. Jurial says she's probably out at a bar or delivering paintings to customers.

He set me up in the spare room saying that Penel won't mind and that he'll stay on the couch in the lounge. He's so nice. And he knows the house well. Apparently he used to visit a lot. He couldn't find where Penel kept the salt though, which was pretty funny.

I LOVE Penel's paintings. She's got a really unique style. And her decor is so... FELINIC. It's good. I've missed being surrounded by felinic things. Nygua and his foxen bullshit was too much.

Not that I have anything against foxens. But it would have been nice to not have my own culture thrown away to make room for someone else's. Nygua's left a bad taste in my mouth and I'm not sure I'm ever going to be able to get rid of it.

I hope I can. I don't like feeling hate like this.

At least drawing's been helping me feel better. Jurial pulled out some blank sketchbooks and charcoal and told me Penel wouldn't miss them. I've spent all night practising. I can't believe I haven't drawn in charcoal for over three years now. It was always my favourite medium. And my stuff looks so much better than the pencil sketches I did the other day!

I feel really good.

## **Horial 33<sup>rd</sup>**

I slept in today and missed Penel. Apparently she came home in the early morning and left before it got light. I just slept right through it.

Jurial thinks it's the funniest thing in the world. I don't. I was really looking forward to meeting her.

She even came in and saw me. Painted a gold star on my face and I didn't notice! It's from about my ear to my jaw. In shiny gold paint, with silver swirls around it. It's beautiful and I really don't want to wash it off. But I have to. I haven't bathed all month. I should have on the boat but I was too anxious and sick. And now that there's no more salt in the air I can smell myself and it's making me feel like an animal.

So I'm going to take a bath and get an early night so I can be awake when Penel comes home tomorrow.

## **Horial 34<sup>th</sup>**

I've fallen in love.

Penel was just! So!!!!

I can't even describe her!

Her voice. And her laugh. And her art. And her sense of humour. And

EVERYTHING. EVERYTHING about her is BEAUTIFUL!!

She's nice person number 10. And probably 11 through to 35 as well.

She said I can stay here as long as I want. So I asked if she was okay with the baby. Turns out Jurial hadn't told her like I assumed he had. Which was SO good of him but Scara it made things a little awkward.

Apparently that's why Penel left her girlfriend. She wanted to adopt and her girlfriend didn't.

It's really sad. But at least I know Penel's going to be alright having a baby around.

She and Jurial started cleaning up the house to set up for it. I can't believe how welcome I am here! I actually cried. I didn't want them to see but I couldn't stop bawling all day and when they came to get me for dinner I was a mess.

But it was okay.

It's all going to be okay now.

## **Horial 35<sup>th</sup>**

Penel took me to an art store. It was like breathing in pure passion. Which apparently smells a LOT like glue. She brought me sketchbooks and charcoal and paint and pencils and just! So much stuff!

We went to a cafe afterwards, too! It was really funny to watch Penel try and balance her 12 canvases on the extra seat. She drew a smiling face on one of them and when the waitress came to take our order she pretended it was our friend and ordered it a chocolate sundae and a milkshake, which we took home to Jurial after lunch. I honestly thought they would melt before we got back but it was so cold today that it didn't! I forgot that Canis La'Can has Southern seasons. It's going to be Snowfall in a few days!

Jurial said it's probably going to start snowing tonight. I think I can see the first few flakes out my window, but I'm not sure. I've never seen snow before.

## **Horial 36<sup>th</sup>**

The ground was blanketed in snow today. It wasn't heavy but it was there. So white and cold. It was weird and I had to explain to Jurial and Penel I lived in the warmer parts of Sapious. Right above Fallen Cloud. And before that I was in a hot jungle.

I miss Froanta.

Penel thought it was funny that I'd never seen snow and showed me how to make snow angels. It was SO. COLD. And sort of hard for me to get up. This baby is growing faster than I thought it would. I thought I'd only just gotten pregnant but I must be further along than I realised. I talked to Jurial about it and he said I look about 4 months. 4?! I've only just started noticing it! I don't think I'm 4 months pregnant. I can't be. I hope I'm not. Not with how much I drunk before leaving Nygua.

I need to see a healer.

## **Gfro 1<sup>st</sup>**

I spent all day drawing. It took a while to get used to it again. I haven't been able to practice because Nygua never let me, but Penel's been helping me get used to it again. She showed me some fun techniques to practice.

And I watched her work on some commissions. It was amazing to see how she handled her paint.

I talked to her about maybe seeing a healer sometime, and now that's our plan for tomorrow.

## **Gfro 2<sup>nd</sup>**

The healer said I'm already 6 months pregnant.

6.

6.

I'm just letting that sink in.

I'm halfway through the pregnancy already.

I asked him why I didn't notice sooner and he said it's probably just because it's my first time. And that foxen babies are small. And we talked about stress and how I'm constantly gaining and losing weight from it. It makes sense that I didn't notice sooner. But I wish I did.

I'm really worried that something's going to be wrong with the baby. I've drunk SO MUCH in the last 6 months. The healer said it's okay. That because the baby is half foxen it shouldn't have too many negative effects from a bit of alcohol. But I'm so scared I've broken them and ruined their life before they're even born.

Jurial's been worried about me all day. Penel's been in and out with food and water and comforting shoulder-pats.

I think I'm going to try and get some sleep. See if I feel better in the morning.

## **Gfro 3<sup>rd</sup>**

I wish I was dead!!!

I was so tired. I had no idea what I was doing!!

Penel woke me for breakfast. I think she was just trying to be gentle with me but I was so tired and not thinking straight and I just fucking KISSED HER! ON THE LIPS!!!

I've never been so EMBARRASSED in my life!

She took it well. I think. She laughed about it.

But by The Goddess.

I'm never coming out of this room again.

## **Gfro 4<sup>th</sup>**

I couldn't bear to face Penel today.

Jurial brought me breakfast. And lunch. And dinner.

He told me not to worry about it. That Penel thought it was cute.

But it was SO EMBARRASSING!

Penel came to see me and I just. I couldn't. I pretended to be asleep and ignored her until she gave up and went away.

I can't handle this.

### **Gfro 5<sup>th</sup>**

Penel woke me up before the sun rose. She threatened to shove me out of bed if I tried to ignore her. So I didn't really have a choice and had to get up.

She took me outside and set up some canvases, and we painted the sunrise together. It was breathtaking.

We didn't talk about the kiss.

Then she left to deliver her work to buyers and hasn't come back yet.

### **Gfro 6<sup>th</sup>**

Saw Penel's ex today. She came by uninvited to "pick up some things she'd left here" when moving out. Which was, of course, nothing. It was just an excuse to come here and cause problems.

Goddess, she was as bad as Nygua.

I sat with Penel in her room while Jurial dealt with her ex. There was a lot of shouting. And she threw a chair through a window.

Penel was shaken. She handled it better than I would but that's not saying much at all.

I hope she's alright. She went for a walk with Jurial and they're not back yet.

### **Gfro 7<sup>th</sup>**

I think yesterday shook Penel up more than she wants to admit. She sort of went off the rails today.

She got drunk. Very drunk. Then took me shopping for baby supplies. She brought three prams even though I protested. Then she drank some more and started painting.

She used a 70-inch canvas and made a watercolour werewolf orgy. Then she passed out on the couch.

The painting is surprisingly good considering how wasted she was.

### **Gfro 8<sup>th</sup>**

Helped Penel with her hangover today.

She lost it when she saw the painting she'd made. She's titled it, "What I Think of When I Cry" and is thinking of hanging it up in the main room.

Goddess she's amazing. Even as a wreck.

### **Gfro 9<sup>th</sup>**

I'm such a dumb shit.

I misread Penel again. And kissed her.

AGAIN.

This time I couldn't even say it was from waking up!! It was the middle of the day and we were sitting in the lounge talking about art. And I just kissed her clean on the lips.

Why do I do this?! Why am I like this?! What is WRONG with me???

I'm never leaving this room! I'M NEVER LEAVING THIS ROOM AGAIN!!!

## **Gfro 10<sup>th</sup>**

Penel woke me up before sunrise again. I was so nervous. I thought she was going to ask me to paint with her but she said she had to go deliver some of her work to a commissioner.

I was confused why she'd woken me up until... She kissed me. On the lips. And I either died for a minute or it lasted longer than one.

Have you ever felt like you're melting? Because I felt like I was ice cream and she was a hot pan slamming into my face.

She told me to wait for her tonight. My heart is beating so fast and hard. I don't know if I'm ever going to sleep again I'm so giddy.

## **Gfro 11<sup>th</sup>**

I fell asleep while waiting for Penel last night. I must have just passed out. I have no idea when. I just remember feeling excited and then just waking up the next morning.

With Penel curled up in bed with me.

I almost died.

I didn't know what to do. Whether to wake her or not. So I waited for Jurial to come in with breakfast and asked him what to do. He told me to "not hold back" and to embrace how we feel about each other.

I think I will. I think I'm going to ask her to be my life partner.

If not today. Then tomorrow.

For now, just looking at the sunset we painted together seems like enough.

## **Gfro 12<sup>th</sup>**

I asked Jurial if he'd help me find the local council house so I could make my leaving Nygua legal. I wasn't sure if I'd be able to divorce him from here in Canis or if I'd have to go back to Sapious and see him again.

Thank the Goddess for the International Alliance. I was able to just explain my situation and fill out some documents and the government officials are going to handle it from their end. I don't have to see Nygua ever again.

Sudden divorce papers are more than he deserves.

One month and I'll be free. I'll be Glyo Lanskayp again.

## Gfro 13<sup>th</sup>

Today was fantastic.

I asked Penel if she would be my life partner.

Jurial told us we should wait before getting serious. But we didn't. We spent all day together. And all night. And now that Penel's asleep under my arm I don't feel anything but safe and comfortable.

## Gfro 14<sup>th</sup>

Penel decided today that she was going to send "What I Think of When I Cry" to Queen Distro.

I asked her if she thought that was a good idea and she told me that the queen would love it. Apparently Distro's sense of humour is pretty crude. Which I'm not surprised Penel knows since she would have had to spend so much time with her when painting her portrait.

I'm going to send this journal along with it. I know it'll probably just get thrown out but. You know? Maybe someone will enjoy reading about this part of my life. And it'll be nice to pretend I'll be remembered after I'm gone.

## Scribe's Note:

At the time of this book's imprinting (5<sup>th</sup> Jasfe 12,577 AE) "What I Think of When I Cry" by Penel Buischi was available for public viewing in the Canis Royal Library.

—END—

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