With the traveller & Paimon

->>> insert location description?

“Ah, there she is!” Paimon says, spotting Furina walking off in the distance.

Furina looks back, spotting the travelling duo that had only just taken her country by storm, and immediately quickens her pace.

“Hey, wait up!” Paimon shouts. “Why did you suddenly start going faster?”

Furina continues on her way, ignoring the Paimonial cries behind her to the best of her ability. She quickly realizes, however, that it would not be possible to outlast the famously strong traveler and her flying companion.

She stops, takes a deep breath bracing herself, and turns around.

“Ah, you finally stopped! Paimon almost thought you were trying to get away from us.”

“Oh, perish the thought!” Furina said, flicking her hair back. “How could I, the great Furina de Fontaine, ever feel the need to escape from someone?”

“The great? You know you’re not fooling anyone with that anymore – and especially not Paimon!”

Furina winces a little, reminded of what had occurred in the Opera Epiclese not long before.

->>> check timeline, does ‘best travel guide’ check out?

“I guess the best travel guide in Teyvat isn’t *that* easy to fool,” she says, pulling herself back together.

“Haha, well, I suppose Paimon really is the best.” Paimon responds, laughing embarrassedly.

“Hey, wait,” she doubles back, realising the sarcasm, “that’s not a compliment at all! Ohhh, you’ve made Paimon mad now! One ugly nickname, coming right up!”

“No ugly nicknames, Paimon,” the traveller suddenly says, stroking Paimon’s head.

While Paimon’s looking confused, Furina tries to take back whatever initiative she might have mustered.

With a barely concealed sigh, she says, “So, what brings you all the way out here? Surely, you did not chase me down just to laugh at this disgraced archon?”

Summoning all the courage she could muster, Furina daringly looks straight into the eyes of her prosecutor, as if challenging her to do her worst.

The traveller looks right back at her as the tensions rise.

->>> tell don’t show?

Then, she bows her head.

“I’m sorry for what happened at the Opera,” she says.

“Huh?” Furina stammers confusedly in response.

“Come on, you too Paimon,” the traveller than says to her companion.

“Huh?” Paimon stammers confusedly in response. “Um, well, Paimon doesn’t really know why, but Paimon’s sorry too.”

Furina stands still for a few brief moments in astonishment.

“Ha!” she then says, picking herself back up. “Have I really become so pitiful that even my fated rival becomes apologetic?”

->>> fated rival?

The traveller doesn’t respond, and neither does the still a-bit-too-confused Paimon. Furina could see, however, the sadness in the eyes of the indominable traveller. While the pity was palpable, she could tell that, far deeper, there was a profound sense of remorse.

->>> combine sentences?

In face of that honesty, that vulnerability, even Furina felt she could drop the façade for a moment.

“I heard the whole story from Neuvillette,” she says. “You only did what you had to do.”

“Even so,” the traveller responds. It seems like she would say more, but nothing comes out. Instead, she reaches into her pocket, pulling out a wooden card of sorts, attached to a thin, purple rope adorned with a jade-coloured gemstone.

“While it’s nowhere near enough, I want you to have this.”

“A Realm Dispatch!?” Paimon pipes up, her loud voice bursting through the heavy atmosphere. “You barely have any of those left, don’t you?”

The traveller doesn’t respond, opting only to rub Paimon’s head again.

“It’s beautiful,” Furina, who’s received all manner of beautiful offerings in her time as archon, notes. “What is it?”

->>> kinda weird??

“It’s an entry to the Sereniteapot, the traveller’s magical pocket realm created by the Adepti of Liyue!” Paimon excitedly says. “It’s a reeeeaaallly beautiful place, where the only limit is your own imagination.’

“I’ve cordoned off a place especially for you, where I won’t intrude either. That way, you have a quiet place for yourself, away from the prying eyes of the people.”

While she didn’t say it, the traveller’s implication that she was, herself, included in those people was not lost on Furina. She stood speechless at being given such a rare and beautiful gift by her once-enemy.

->>> could be better – also overuse of beautiful

“I don’t know if this is good for you at all, but,” the traveller trails off a bit. “This is all I can do for you now.”

Furina feels hapless still, faced with a bit of a whirlwind of emotions in such an unusual situation. After all, who wouldn’t be confused when the person that just tore you down comes to apologise, before giving you a rare and exquisite gift.

->>> what are you even talking about man

“I’ll take it then,” she finally says, retreating to her familiar façade as she snatches it from the traveller’s hand.

“Huh?” Paimon exclaims in offense at her casualness, “Do you even know how rare this is? You-”

“Paimon.” The traveler interrupts, sternly.

“Ah, sorry…’ Paimon says, looking a bit dejected.

“I hope it’ll treat you well,” the traveller continues, unfazed.   
“Then,” she says, pre-empting the Furina that still does not quite know what to say, “I’ll be going now.”

She makes to leave, but not before beckoning Paimon along with a, “You too, Paimon.”

“Ah, traveller,” Furina says in a bit of a panic, feeling like she couldn’t just let her go without saying anything – but without knowing yet what to say. “That is, well…”

“Thank you.”

Whether it be for the gift, for her help in saving Fontaine or something else entirely, that is what ends up coming out of her mouth.

The traveller only smiles reassuringly in return, before continuing on her way.

“What was that all about?” Furina can hear Paimon saying off in the distance.

“I’ll tell you later, okay?”

“Grr, you’re making Paimon mad, leaving Paimon out of the loop like this!”

The somehow almost-familiar sounding banter fades further and further into the distance, while Furina tries to come to terms with her feelings about possibly the first gift ever given to her, Furina, rather than to the ‘hydro archon’ – and about her ex-enemy who gave it to her.

“Cheer up, Paimon. How about we go all out and eat at Hotel Debord tonight?”

“Oh, oh, how about we call it a celebration and invite Navia and Clorinde and Charlotte and Wriothesley and Sigewinne too?”

“That’s a great idea, Paimon.”

“Haha, of course! But don’t think Paimon will forgive you so easily next time, okay? Paimon’s just in a festive mood today!”

Furina remains unsure, but, all things considered, she can’t help but show a reluctant smile – her worries at least a little less than they were before.

With Ms. Yun

Furina sits on a stone at the edge of an island in the realm within, looking off into the clouds in the distance. Paimon was right, it truly is a beautiful and tranquil place. Furina’s been here quite a few times already now. It had quickly become a habit of sorts to come whenever she wanted some quiet time to reflect.

She sings absentmindedly as she looks off into that endless distance that seems to suck one into its throes.

As promised, she hasn’t seen the Traveller around even once while she was in here – something Furina was not sure she was happy about or not. However, she has noticed more and more Fontainian items and furnishings popping up in this place the Traveller had set out for her – no doubt an effort by the Traveller to make her feel more at home.

She’s not sure it’s working, but she feels appreciative of the effort, at least.

Then, a sound as if air being sucked out suddenly rings behind her. When she looks around to find its source, she finds instead a lady, adorned in an intricate pink, dark purple and blue dress, carrying herself with palpable poise and elegance. It reminds Furina a bit of the way some ladies in Fontaine dress their poodles.

“My apologies for disturbing you,” the lady says, with a graceful curtsy upon spotting Furina.

Before she can respond, a sudden thought jumps into Furina’s mind.

The way she had associated with people since the trial had been a bit unusual and strained – she just didn’t know how to approach her interactions now that people know she isn’t a god, but have always treated her as such before.

And so, right now, she’s stuck questioning whether this person knew of her as an archon or not. As she ponders the question, the lady continues to stand, waiting patiently on her. When it dawns on Furina just how long she’s kept her on hold, she, in a panic, throws caution to the wind.

“Don’t worry about it,” she says, in her ‘normal’ voice.

“It is good to hear I did not interrupt anything,” the lady responds, before quiet falls upon the conversation – if you could call it that. The visitor has said her piece, and Furina is still a bit too flustered to know what to say.

“May I introduce myself, if it would not disturb you further?” the lady says, choosing to break through the lull herself.

“Ah, of course,” Furina responds, a bit awkwardly.

“My name is Yun Jin, hailing from Liyue. You may call me Miss Yun, if you would like.”

From Liyue – a place Furina had never been to. It’s very possible that she’d also never been to Fontaine – or, if she had, that she hadn’t seen Furina herself.

“Might I have the privilege of knowing your name as well?” the lady asks, while Furina was still thinking.

“Oh sorry,” she says, as she braces herself for the moment where she’ll find out for sure if she’ll be recognised. “It’s Furina.”

“A very beautiful name,” the lady responds, without missing a beat. There was no moment of realisation or dawning to be found in her eyes, from which Furina concludes that, surely, this ‘Miss Yun’ doesn’t know of ‘the hydro archon, Furina’.

Furina feels some sort of excitement bubbling in her, coming from somewhere she couldn’t locate. This might be the first time she’s talked to someone who didn’t know of her as the hydro archon, after all.

“Miss Furina,” the lady then says with a serious face. “May I say something?”

“Huh?” Furina responds, a bit confused. “Go ahead.”

“The truth is, when opening the entrance to the teapot, sounds from inside already travel through.”

“Okay?” Furina says, nonchalantly. Then, she remembers what she was doing just before, and immediately feels herself getting a bit flushed.

“You didn’t hear anything, did you?” she asks.

“I certainly did.”

An amount of panic she wouldn’t have thought likely welled up in Furina. She’s sung in public many times, yet somehow being overheard like this felt much more embarrassing.

“Miss Furina,” the lady continues before the situation can sink in too deep, “you are a very talented singer.”

“You don’t have to flatter me.”

Somehow, the sudden change to praise did not make Furina feel less bashful.

“I certainly am not flattering. Both your voice control and range are truly superb. I’d almost go so far as to say that, surely, you have done this on a bigger stage before?”

“Ah, well, I guess you could say that,” Furina says, awkwardly.

The lady nods, as if affirming to herself.

“I would be hurt if you were that good without having worked professionally.”

Furina stares blankly for a few seconds, not sure whether to try to advance the conversation.

“Um,” she finally says, “could it be that you also…?”

“Certainly,” the lady responds to the trailing question. “I am a singer working in the opera business, you see.”

“Really!?” Furina says, getting a little bit too excited at the mention of opera.

“That’s right.”

“Ah but,” Furina continues, “I’ve heard operas in Liyue are quite different from the ones in Fontaine.”

“You are from Fontaine, then? I have heard much of their prolific opera scene.”

“That’s right. I’ve stood on stages with people packed in like sardines!” Furina says with a laugh.

“Ah, so you were a singer after all?”

“Yes, that’s right…” Furina says, twiddling her thumbs. Somehow, she’s only just realised her own sudden shift in tone before.

“I would be delighted to witness one of your shows then, once,” the lady says.

Furina immediately becomes dejected.

“Sorry, I…I don’t do shows anymore.” She almost chokes up. Ever since her last ‘performance’ at the Opera Epiclese, she’s felt so scared of the stage whenever she’s thought about it. Just having it in her head is enough to bring her back down to those depths – even though she felt so happy hearing opera come up just before.

“I see,” Miss Yun says with an understanding nod. “In that case, might I extend to you the opposite offer?”

“What do you mean?” Furina says, getting herself back together.

“You see, I came here today to invite the Traveler to the dress rehearsal for my upcoming show. Seeing as she is not present, I would love, instead, for you to come.”

“Huh? Really?” Furina feels herself getting excited at the prospect. Cautiously, but excited nonetheless.

“Certainly. While it is not my first time performing this show, I still have not been able to help myself being a bit nervous about doing the tale justice. Having someone as enthusiastic as Ms Furina present would go a long way to quell my fears, I do believe.”

“…you think I’d be of help?”

“Most certainly.”

Furina thinks about it. It’s quite a pointless act, however – she’s clearly already made up her mind.

“In that case, I’d love to come along.”

“That is very good to hear,” Ms Yun says – although her face doesn’t betray any strong emotions. Somehow, Furina feels a bit annoyed about being so easy to read in comparison.

“If you’d please come with me, then,” Ms Yun continues, beckoning Furina along the way she’d entered, herself.

The piece performed was called ‘The Divine Damsel of Devastation,’ a story about a girl who protected her home from a great calamity, but became an outcast in her community after. It was a great performance, but the subject specifically touched Furina to her core. It felt almost eerily like it was echoing her own experience – with the prophecy and everything that happened at the Opera Epiclese.

In the end, the girl was accepted by some close friends and became happy, fighting together for a common cause.

Sitting alone in the benches, Furina had become worried. While the whole encounter with Miss Yun, taken at face value, would be nothing but benign – if she read into it, however, it could just as well be a roundabout way devised by the Traveler to tell her ‘everything will be fine.’ It wouldn’t have been the first time the Traveler did such a thing to her, at least, and it certainly isn’t a sentiment Furina was in the mood for. She’s had more than enough of pity – getting more from *another* outlander would be enough to drive her crazy.

She didn’t have more time to think it over, however, as Miss Yun quickly approached her seat.

The two locked eyes as she got closer. But, after arriving, she doesn’t say anything, as if sensing Furina has something of her own to bring forth first.

“Miss Yun,” Furina says, somewhat resolute.

“Ms Furina,” Ms Yun responds.

After the few uncomfortable moments of silence that follow, Furina swallows her fears long enough to choke out a sentence.

“…did the Traveler tell you anything about me?” she asks.

“She did indeed,” Ms Yun responds, affirming Furina’s fears. Before she can say anything else, however, Ms Yun continues speaking.

“She said there might be a beauty with lovely white-blue hair, fashionable attire and a gorgeous singing voice in the teapot, and to try not to be a bother if I did encounter her.”

“Huh?” Furina can only say in response, suddenly baffled. “She said that about me?”

“Only the last part.”

Ms Yun lets out a soft, dignified laugh.

“I apologise – the rest was my own addition.”

“Oh,” Furina stumbles out, feeling embarrassed at the sudden praise – and the change in demeanour of the one who’d been so serious until now. Somehow, her worries had gone to the back of her head, just like that. “Um, thank you?”

“That is not what I came to you for, however,” Ms Yun then says, with a much more intented expression.

“And what could that be?” Furina asks, even though the answer is obvious.

“I want to know your thoughts, of course.”

“Uh, well,” Furina says, trying to gather them – her mind had been a bit unfocused during the performance, after all.

“I thought it was a great story, and your singing was fantastic.”

Even the stoic Miss Yun can’t hide her dissatisfaction with the response.

“If I may be a bit harsh,” she says, “that is also not what I came to you for. I have little need for petty praise of things I know full well are good.”

She looks Furina dead in the eyes.

“What I want from *you,* Miss Furina, is to know what could have been *better*.”

Furina is a bit taken aback.

“…I don’t know if you’ve come to the right person,” she says, sheepishly.

“Ah, but I *do* know I’ve come to the right person,” Ms Yun returns. “Well, know may be a strong word – I have quite a hunch you’re hiding a deep well of knowledge on both operas and performing in you, Miss Furina.”

Furina is even more taken aback. She’s been praised aplenty before in her time as archon, but, somehow, it’s never been like this. Never to *her,* at least.

“So, I ask you again,” Ms Yun continues, before Furina can gather herself any further. “What are your thoughts, Miss Furina?”

Furina swallows her worries and fears – at least for this moment with Ms Yun.

“Um, for one, I think your voice was a bit weak here and there,” she says. “But I’m sure you noticed that yourself, too?”

“Certainly. The fact you did too, shows I was not wrong to place my faith in you already,” Miss Yun responds, taking that criticism with pure grace.

“Um, I also think that, even though the story was great, the presentation wasn’t quite as much?”

Although she said that, Furina feels hesitant to get into further detail. She’s already feeling like she’s saying something unbelievable, after all.

“Go on, then.” Ms Yun presses, noticing that hesitancy.

“Um, well, in operas in Fontaine, at least the successful ones, an important part of telling your story is how you get attention to it. By being bombastic in your performance, you pull the audience along with your story, rather than them just being bystanders.

“While this is the first opera I’ve seen from Liyue, I have a feeling they are intended to be a bit more subtle and less ‘in your face,’ so it seems harder to do so.

“I think the concept does show in your presentation just before the appended tale: you goad them into thinking you’re on the way down, then pull them right in – I think only a fool wouldn’t have their full attention on you then.

“So that’s a point to consider maybe,” she finally says, as she rapidly begins to lose confidence in what she was saying. “Or something like that…”

“I see,” Miss Yun says, nodding along. “I really was right to get your opinion.”

“Huh? Really?”

“Certainly. Might I ask, perchance, if you also possess some idea on what we might do to rectify it?”

“What? No, no no no, I couldn’t possibly,” Furina stumbles out faster than she realised she could talk. “Isn’t the final show coming up next?”

“That only means this is our final opportunity to hear it before the performance. Besides, we can only decide after hearing it whether we would like to implement it.”

“What? But…” Furina goes on, before being interrupted.

“Miss Furina,” Ms Yun says, sternly.

“Yes?” Furina responds almost instinctively, in a half shout.

“You of all people would know the most important factor for a lead actress, surely?”

“Um,” she lets out, left too on the spot to respond immediately.

“That would be confidence, of course,” Ms Yun continues. “If you show doubt as the lead, it will only sow that amongst your fellow performers – and end up at the audience. So,” she says.

“So?” Furina responds.

Miss Yun pulls out a prop flag that was used in the performance and uses it to push Furina’s leg.

“Put your legs together, firmly,” she orders.

Furina complies, for some strange reason.

“Puff your chest out,” she goes on, poking Furina’s side lightly.

“Yes!”

Finally, she uses it to push Furina from behind.

“Keep your back straight,” she adds. “And step!”

Furina takes a step forward.

“Very good,” Ms Yun says, as she puts the flag away.

“Huh?” Furina can only ask, standing awkwardly with one foot ahead. “And now what?”

“Now, we go backstage,” the confident performer responds, as she begins to walk. “The director will want to hear this too.”

“No, no, I still can’t!”

“Furina…”

Ms Yun looks back into Furina’s eyes for a moment. Then, she shows a reassuring smile.

Somehow, it pushes Furina over the edge.

“O-Okay,” Furina responds, with some semblance of confidence. “But I’d better not hear any complaints!”

“Naturally,” Ms Yun finishes, as the pair begin to make their way.

Furina sits nervously in the now-full benches among the roaring crowd, as the members of the Yun-Han opera troupe do their bows on stage. Ms Yun somehow makes eye contact from on there and, with a graceful and subtle gesture, invites her to come to the back.

At least, that’s what Furina hopes, as she hesitantly swallows her worries once more, following the path she took together last time.

“Ah, there you are,” Miss Yun says, perking up a bit as Furina enters the room. “I was just wondering when you’d arrive.”

She deposits a few more of the stuffy-looking costume pieces, before prancing towards Furina.

“Um, yeah,” Furina sputters, unsure of what to say.

“I must admit, your advice worked wonders, Miss Furina.”

“Really?” Furina responds, more excited that she would’ve thought at the positive response.

“That’s right,” Ms Yun continues. “I have performed this piece many times now, so I could immediately tell – the crowd was clearly more enamoured at the start, as you had said.”

“I didn’t think you’d really go through with it. I was freaking out in my seat when you did that all of a sudden!”

“Oh, I noticed,” she teases.

“Huh?” Furina lets out in surprise. “You could see that?”

Ms Yun lets out a small laugh once again, while Furina once again ends up just feeling embarrassed.

“Miss Furina,” Ms Yun says, firmly.

“Yes?” Furina responds, shocked out of her bashfulness.

“We simply must visit a performance from this other troupe – I would love to hear your thoughts on their set designs.” Ms Yun says, a sudden departure from her usual, more reserved demeanour. “Oh, but I would certainly want to see a Fontainian opera as well. Ah, and maybe attend one of Xinyan’s rock shows? I feel like there’s so much I would want to experience with a fellow enthusiast like you.”

“Oh, um,” Furina lets out, taken aback by the sudden outbreak, as if a dam had shot open.

“It’s getting quite late, so I’ll really have to head back soon,” she responds in the end.

“Ah, of course,” Ms Yun says. “My apologies, I tend to get ahead of myself when I make a new friend – especially someone as knowledgeable as you.”

The word ‘friend’ hits Furina like five-ton waterbus – somehow, in her 500 years of life, it’s a concept she’s never really had the luxury of identifying with.

So if what Ms Yun said is true, and she does consider her a friend, that might be the first one Furina has ever made – at least as herself.

Almost giddily, Furina says, “Miss Yun?”

“Miss Furina.” Ms Yun responds.

“Can I come see one of your shows again?”

Ms Yun just smiles.

“I’ll tell you a little secret,” she then says, as she makes to whisper in Furina’s ear.

“My friends get free admission to all my performances.”

Furina lets out a quiet laugh.

“I’ll definitely come again, then,” she says, with a smile on her face.

“And I would have it no other way.”

Furina takes a moment just to look at her new friend, revelling in this new feeling.

“Then,” Ms Yun says, pulling out her Realm Dispatch, “I shall open the way back for you.”

“Ah, yes, of course,” Furina stumbles out, having totally not forgotten about needing to go back through the teapot.

“Miss Furina,” Ms Yun says, after activating it.

“Miss Yun,” Furina responds.

“I pray we shall meet again before long.”

“Yeah,” Furina says. “I’ll see you soon.”

With Neuvillette

->>> tenses  
Furina has gotten into the habit of strolling around the outskirts of the Court of Fontaine. While the traveller’s teapot is a beautiful and serene place, staying in Fontaine itself helps her feel more connected to the land itself, whereas the teapot always remains an otherworldy place.

After getting a distance away from the Court, Furina checks if there’s anyone around. Once she confirms the lack of presences, she starts with her hidden, additional reason to steer clear of the teapot: training.

While just having a vision can already qualify her as an elite fighter in her own right, she’s still a complete amateur with it. She doesn’t want to be caught lacking by the traveller in her own teapot, so she opts to do it elsewhere.

In other words, she’s embarrassed.

“Come on, mademoiselle Crabaletta – you’re meant to hit the tree, not everything around it!” she yelled in frustration, after failing to control her powers exactly once again.

She lets out an exasperated sigh, wondering if she’ll ever be able to get it right.

“I see you have already made remarkable progress, lady Furina.”

In shock, she quickly turns around, to find the one and only Lord Hydro Dragon standing directly behind her.

“Neuvillette? You…you were watching?” she sheepishly asks.

“Ah, my apologies. Was I not supposed to see?” he asks in return.

“Oh, of course there’s no issue!” she says, putting up her bravado. “Why would *I* have anything to hide?”

“I see,” Neuvillette replies blankly. “That is good to hear.”

A loud crash sounds out in the background. Furina looks over to find a certain seahorse facing its direction, with a suspicious trail of water.

“You were supposed to stop already, Surintendante…” Furina says, with an exasperated sigh. She turns back around to find Neuvillette still just looking over her.

“So!” Furina says, feeling awkward about the whole encounter. “What brings you to these parts?”

“I wanted to see how you were doing,” Neuvillette responds.

“You came all the way out here for that?”

“Yes. Was that wrong?”

“No, that is…well…” Furina says, stumbling over her words a bit, before shaking her head. “As you can see, I’m doing perfectly fine.”

“That is good to hear,” Neuvillette says in response. “I’ve heard whispers of your accomplishments as a creative consultant going around.”

“Huh, that? Well, I guess that’s going well too. Although,” she continues, “I still don’t really feel like I’m fit for the job…”

“Have you not watched and partook in more operas than anyone else, Lady Furina? Who could possibly be more fit than you?”

Furina breaks out in a laugh. Neuvillette stands before her, unsure of the cause of this new behaviour.

“Sorry, sorry,” Furina says. “That just sounds exactly like what Miss Yun would say.”

“Miss Yun?”

“Oh, she’s a…”

Furina pauses for a moment to consider her words.

“A friend of mine, from Liyue,” she continues.

“A friend?” Neuvillette responds. “It is good to hear you are making new companions.”

As the conversation goes quiet for a bit again, Furina attempts to scope her visitor out – she can’t see the Lord Hydro Dragon himself having come here just to chat. The man himself continues to simply stand there, looking vaguely in her direction.

“Still,” she finally pipes up, “surely the hydro sovereign himself wouldn’t deign to come all the way out here just to check up on a citizen?”

Neuvillette winces slightly – not from pain, but because she completely hit home.

->>> nah

“You are not a mere citizen, Lady Furina.”

“There you are with the ‘Lady Furina’ again.” Furina butts in. “I don’t think I have any title prestigious enough for the Lord Hydro Dragon to refer to me as ‘Lady’.”

“Lady Furina—” he starts.

“Furina,” she interrupts.

“*Lady* Furina,” he continues, headstrong, “in truth, I did indeed come here for a different reason.”

He hesitates for a moment, choosing his words.

“In my previous encounters with Miss Navia, I had learned that it is better to show my sincerity through actions, rather than words. As such, I have tried to show my appreciation in other ways – such as providing housing and funds.” ->>> miss?

Furina looks at him questioningly, not knowing where he seems to be going.

“However, I talked not long ago with the traveler, who told me it would be good to also put it into words. That is why I have come.”

“Lady Furina,” he continues, “you are not just a citizen. In my eyes, you are a hero who saved the nation of Fontaine through your incredible efforts.”

Furina doesn’t respond, standing dumbfounded.

“Huh?” she finally stammers.

“As such, I have come here to express my gratitude.”

“But, anyone would’ve done what I did,” Furina responds in continued exasperation.

“Very few would’ve done what you did, and even fewer would do it successfully. It is only thanks to your accomplishments that Focalors’ sacrifice was not in vain, and that the people of Fontaine were able to survive this crisis.

“Therefore, as the Hydro Sovereign, representing the entirety of Fontaine, I extend to you my sincere gratitude, Lady Furina.”

“I…” she stammers, “I don’t know what to say… I’m a bit overwhelmed.”

“You need not say anything. It is good enough that you have heard what Icame here to say.”

“I see…” she says, trailing off.

“If that is clear, then, Lady Furina, I shall be on my way.”

Neuvillette turns around to leave.

“Ah, wait!” Furina says, calling his attention back.

“Is something the matter?” he asks.

“Well, uh,” she speaks out, “I know you just said all that, but…” ->>> speaks out? Really?

“But?”

“I’d like it more after all if you just called me Furina.”

“I see,” Neuvillette says. “Then, Furina, I shall be on my way.”

“Yes,” she responds, awkwardly. “I’ll see you around.”

Without any further words, the Lord Hydro Dragon makes to return to his rightful place as the ruler of Fontaine, while Furina goes back to her training with a newfound sense of strength.

“Ah, one more thing,” he speaks up, turning around once more. “When I spoke with the Traveler, she said she would be leaving the nation soon. If you have anything more to say to her, you may want to look for her now.”

“Okay,” she says. “Thanks for letting me know.”

Neuvillette nods and goes back on his way. Furina, as she continues her training, starts to consider what to do with the Traveler.

Quite frankly, her thoughts have lingered more and more on the Traveler. Somehow, the world-famous Traveler’s arrival in Fontaine seemed like the catalyst to the storm that followed. In the end, Furina was exposed through her doing – an event that led directly to the predicaments Furina’s been in, trying to find a new place for herself. On the other hand, Furina feels strongly like, without the Traveler, there’d be no Fontaine left to find a place in.

Besides, the Traveler was the first one to reach out to her when she was at her lowest. The Traveler always did her best to stay out of her way, but by now Furina would have to be an idiot not to notice all the things she was doing for her – it was thanks to her that Furina got to meet Ms Yun and make her first friend, it was thanks to her that she got involved with Aurelie’s troupe and got over her fear of the stage, that she got to hear Neuvillette’s thoughts, that she’s had a place to find herself again.

Furina bets she even had something to do with those letters she sometimes got from people that were at the trial, too.

In the end, Furina feels like she has a lot to say to the Traveler – positive or otherwise – but she doesn’t move to find her. Somehow, she feels strongly that, even if it isn’t now, they will meet again.

Maybe then, Furina will truly open her heart to her.  
  
->>> first one? Anyone else maybe?

Just as she thinks that, however, she hears the rustling of leaves.

“What are you doing! She’ll find us out!” a clearly audible whisper sounds out.

She’s not heard that voice often, but somehow Furina recognises it immediately. Speak of the devil, she thinks, as she moves in the sound’s direction with a sigh and a barely contained smile.

“Ah, look at what you’ve done. She’s coming here now!”

“I can hear you, you know.”

As soon as Furina says that, it goes completely quiet again.

“Oh, I guess it was just the wind after all,” Furina continues, in her least convincing act. “Well, since I’m here anyway – might as well turn this bush into my next target dummy! Mademoiselle Crabaletta, if you would.”

“Ah, wait wait wait!” Paimon says, flying frantically out into the open, with the Traveler soon to follow. She clearly has a soft smile on her face as she looks Furina in the eyes.

“Oh wow,” Paimon then says, barely hiding the monotony in her voice, “what a coincidence running into you here!”

The traveler, in the meantime, begins to pull the loose leaves out of Paimon’s hair.

“A coincidence? You were obviously eavesdropping!”

->>> crosscheck with in-game scene

“Wha- Wuh--” Paimon stammers, “Eavesdropping? Us? No way! We were just out here, uh, gathering clockwork mechanisms.”

She points to a collapsed pile of components on the ground off in the distance – remains of what clearly used to be a gardemek. Furina is reminded of the crash she heard earlier, and the penny quickly drops. In her head, she apologises to the Surintendante for her false accusation.

“Really now?” Furina says, questioningly.

“Yup, yup,” Paimon says. “Isn’t that right, traveler?”

“We were eavesdropping,” she responds.

“Wha- Traveler!”

Furina can’t help but let out a laugh.

“Okay, look,” Paimon continues, “we really were just leaving, okay? But then, we happened to see you and Neuvillette all the way out here, and we couldn’t contain our curiosity!”

--im happy to see you (excited)??